

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
Monday, October 19, 2020

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Worksession of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 220 N. Hastings Avenue, on October 19, 2020.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in Worksession by Council President Paul Hamelink with the following members present: Matt Fong, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm, Mayor Corey Stutte Absent: None.

The following City Officials were present: City Administrator, David Ptak; City Attorney, Clint Schukei; City Clerk, Kimberly Jacobitz; Police Chief, Adam Story; Fire Chief, Brad Starling; Parks & Recreation Director, Jeff Hassenstab; Utility Manager, Kevin Johnson; Information Technology, Erik Nielsen; Director of Engineering, Lee Vrooman, Derek Pfeifer, Utility Department, Amy Hafer, Library Director; Rebecca Matticks, Museum Director.

Moved by Ginny Skutnik seconded by Matt Fong to approve current agenda for October 19, 2020 Council Worksession. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Paul Hamelink, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

PUBLIC NOTICE - Official Notice of the Worksession was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, October 16, 2020. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible written material which will be discussed at today's meeting is available. Also, a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted and accessible to members of the public.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Presentation of HPAC Annual Report.

Lorie Schiefelbein, Program Director Hastings Public Access Channel (HPAC), reported the City of Hastings continues to support HPAC with 1% of the cable franchise fees from Charter. She requested to receive 1% from the Allo franchise agreement, in addition to the 1% received from the Charter agreement. She reviewed revenues, expenditures, and assets for the year ended December 31, 2019 and year ending December 31, 2020. Included in the 2020 budget is \$15,000 for equipment, possibly updating audio equipment. Concerns were voiced over the large amount of funds projected for 2020 checking/savings accounts, and continuing to ask for the same amount of funding from the city.

The Producer Breakdown was Government 45%, Public 33%, and Education 22%. The Category Breakdown given was Meetings 38%, Sports 23%, Informational 20%, Music 7%, Religious 7%, and Political 6%. HPAC currently employs four part-time employees. Ms. Schiefelbein highlighted agencies and individuals using HPAC programming and organizations currently utilizing the Community Bulletin Board.

Council President Paul Hamelink voiced concern for future HPAC decreasing revenues, because of people moving from cable to streaming options, which directly impacts HPAC's singular source of income.

2. Discussion of horses on private and public property.

Dave Ptak stated this item was postponed from a previous City Council meeting, so it could be discussed at a worksession. The previous discussion had strong feelings both ways for and against prohibiting horses to be in certain city parks and on streets, with the exception of parades. Staff needs direction if council wants an ordinance drafted and brought to council.

Councilmember Rosenberg received a letter complaining that people were riding horses on the walking trail, making a mess. His concern is to prevent horseback riding on the streets and on the trail. He requested that owners be required to clean up their horse's waste.

Discussion was held on living in a rural area with horses being part of that life and recreational activities. We do not want to close off opportunities by eliminating horses. There are horse bags that can be mandated, but hard to police. It is a courtesy to pick up after your large and small animals. Jeff Hassenstab reported several complaints to the Parks Department from horse waste.

Mayor Stutte asked if there was anything we could write using the American Planning Association (APA), which has 'smelly dog' ordinances. Clint Schukei can write an ordinance about horse waste, requiring owners to pick it up. We can also mandate a bag on a horse. Councilmember Beahm voiced concern if this is a city-wide issue, or reaction to one owner in the area.

Clint Schukei pointed the council to the City Code Section 10-226 (below). He will obtain clarification for 'domestic animal' and bring options to the council to look at the issue again.

Sec. 10-226. - Animal waste.

(1) Any person having the custody or control of any dog or domestic animal, when walking the dog on property not owned by the individual, shall have the responsibility for cleaning up any feces of the animal and disposing of such feces in a garbage receptacle. It shall furthermore be the duty of any person having custody or control of any dog or domestic animal on or about any public place to have in such person's possession suitable equipment or materials for the picking up, removal and sanitary disposal of animal feces. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to a guide dog or to a service dog accompanying a disabled person or to a dog when used in Police or rescue activities.

3. Discussion of city-wide action plan for operation during COVID.

Dave Ptak reported that he met with Department Heads on Friday morning in light of the uptick in positive COVID cases seen in Adams County and the surrounding area. He feels a certain amount of responsibility for employee safety, so he would rather be proactive, rather than reactive. We have required masks to enter city buildings. We received very few complaints from citizens when previously closing buildings to the public. We will meet with citizens, per appointment. The recent Directed Health Measures from Governor Ricketts left more questions, than it answered. We have never been through a pandemic before and are being conservative and cautious.

Councilmember Skutnik stated we lead by example. Our employees are our biggest asset and we need to do what we can to protect them. Councilmember Schroeder recently traveled to another state and saw very few people not wearing masks. It is important right now, to make sure we do not end up in an upturn. Councilmember Beahm was concerned about how we are measuring how we will take offices to a closed status. If we set closures by a meter, public would have a warning on closing city offices. Councilmember Eley said there is confusion on why we are closing, if employees and everyone in the buildings are wearing masks. Councilmember Fong stated there is no playbook on how to manage the people we work with or our families. We are working to do what is best for our businesses and personal lives.

Mayor Stutte stated he wants to make sure employees and the public are safe. We need to set that example for our community. The City of Hastings has 400 employees. We need to keep each other safe. We will have plenty of time afterwards to go back and question how we handled things.

The group spoke of the tremendous job being done by employees, minimizing any spread of COVID. We must balance safety with the services our community counts on us for. We want to avoid complete department shutdowns, such as the County Courthouse has experienced, because of staff testing positive for COVID.

4. Presentation on Fisher Fountain - Derek Pfeifer, Utility Department.

Derek Pfeifer, Utility Department, gave a presentation on renovation of Fisher Fountain. Some of the current issues are: access/confined space, drain & clean weekly, cracked fountain floor, security cameras not usable at night, fence condition, and overspray/soggy conditions. There is deteriorating condition on the inside, pump and actuation is not functioning.

Derek gave a new design overview, which included moving equipment to a new building extension. They will replace electrical system, move pumps, replace drain, upgrade grounding and ventilation in the mechanical room. Pumps and Actuators will be a one speed pump that will slow and ramp up speeds to generate the fountain display. Filtration will run continually, which will reduce mold. Cameras will be upgraded to mega-pixel and will have night vision capacity. Fence will be replaced and moved further away from the water. There will be a wind control tied to new nozzles to help with overspray. Lights will be upgraded to LED.

We are planning to go out for bids October 23rd, with the bid opening on November 13th. The project award is expected to be at the end of November. We anticipate March 2021 construction start and eight weeks to complete. The renovation is budgeted for \$450,000.

Moved by Ginny Skutnik seconded by Scott Snell there being no further business to adjourn at 6:37 P.M. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Paul Hamelink, Chuck Rosenberg, Scott Snell, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.