

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA  
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION  
Tuesday, January 18, 2022

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Worksession of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted in the Large Conference Room (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) of City Hall, 220 N. Hastings Avenue, on January 18, 2022.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in Worksession by Council President Ginny Skutnik with the following members present: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Chuck Rosenberg, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm, 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; Finance Director, Roger Nash; Development Services Director, Lisa Parnell-Rowe; Museum Director, Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson.

Council President Ginny Skutnik led the group in recital of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Ted Schroeder to adopt current agenda for January 18, 2022 Worksession. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Chuck Rosenberg, Joy Huffaker, 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, January 14, 2022. 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.

### **1. Presentation of Heartland Pet Connection Annual Report.**

Jennie Theesen gave an annual report for the Heartland Pet Connection. She explained the reason that the total animal numbers do not match the specific animal numbers, is that every year there is a carryover of animals. She reported that this year's animal numbers are up, trending up over the last several years. Those numbers are higher for both animals served and adopted. She also mentioned that the recent 'Betty White' challenge brought in donations to the Heartland Pet Connection. They have facility needs which are being discussed at the committee level and will be announced in the future.

Dave Ptak commented that Heartland Pet Connection's contract with the City of Hastings expires next January. Those terms will be negotiated this year and he hopes to obtain another 10-year contract with them. Heartland Pet Connection has contracted with the City of Hastings since 2003, although they did not officially open until 2004.

One of the recent challenges faced by the shelter has been lower volunteer numbers, because of COVID. They are seeing an increase in the number of people coming to the shelter to pick up volunteer applications and are hopeful that long-term volunteers will return. The shelter also upgraded their outdoor space, adding 16 new outdoor kennels.

### **2. Presentation of Museum Annual Report.**

Teresa Kreutzer-Hodson presented the Museum's Annual Report. She pointed out that employee wages and benefits are their biggest expense. COVID has significantly impacted the museum. Property tax continues to be a large portion of their income. The museum was closed to visitors during last fiscal year

from mid-October 2020 to February 2021. Attendance has improved from last year, but is still 43% lower than pre-COVID. Memberships have also decreased from 1,100 pre-pandemic, serving approximately 7,000 people, to less than 600 last summer during the pandemic. The museum extended memberships three months during that time, which helped to some degree. The theatre continues to have low attendance, down 65%. The movie industry is slow to recover. Movies are streaming much quicker, going directly to streaming and not into theatres. That is making it more difficult to show second-run films. The museum is trying to figure out the new 'normal' for the theatre. Large format films are not rolling out as fast either. Education income was much better than last year, because the previous fiscal year the museum closed down during the height of their school season and they missed the summer fun season. During that time, staff took programs to the streets with bike tours, walking tours, digital scavenger hunts, and a digital murder mystery. They did not charge for those activities, but did ask for free-will donations. The increase in support and visibility was great and they continued to serve their mission. They joined American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) for ten Facebook Live programs and created a lot of social media content. They have continued to do digital learning environments with classrooms, since they aren't getting classes into the building. They have done community projects, trying to get the community involved and active. They have received funding from the CARES act for \$146,000 and an additional \$78,000 about a month ago. Museum stores did very well with online purchasing and curbside pickup. During the museum closure staff continued to work, creating murals throughout the museum, family restrooms on the second floor, performing maintenance and patio work. They are working with the Nebraska Department of Transportation on the I-80 signage to get billboards replaced. The new outdoor classroom is taking shape and is planned to be open by September 2022. There is a Museum Board vacancy and that should be filled soon. They are moving forward with designing their basement to consolidate and make additional classroom space. The Kool-Aid Exhibit is moving forward this year, after discussing with the Fire Marshal.

Teresa stated that annual membership has increased recently, up to approximately 900. The Naval Ammunition Display has been delayed as a domino effect from waiting to have room to move other collections. They are waiting on the Fire Marshal for guidance on a list of infrastructure renovations needed. She is hopeful that the Navy Ammunition Depot exhibit will be ready in the next few years.

### **3. Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Update.**

Lisa Parnell-Rowe stated that the Comprehensive Plan Update proposal submittal deadline was 3:00 p.m., November 15, 2021. The City Clerk informed her on November 15th that only one proposal was received. The City of Hastings returned the proposal unopened to the submitter and explained that only one bid was received. Dave Ptak and Lisa Parnell-Rowe decided to wait until after the first of the year to send out the Comprehensive Plan Update request to a list of consultants, in order to have a better chance at receiving a variety of submittals for review. The new date for submittal is February 21st at 3:00 p.m. for Request for Proposals (RFP). Questions about the RFP must be submitted to Lisa by February 4th, and she will then post the answers on the city's website.

The typical way we handle proposals is that a committee will review the proposals, then interview three of those top candidates. They will then return to the council with the suggested consultant.

When a consultant is chosen, she will begin by giving them areas of the code that are a concern. Staff and consultants will engage the public for their input via online and in-person meetings. This plan is the vision for the future. The Comprehensive Plan covers water and drainage, street character, zoning and how it is mapped out for the future, and subdivisions. The Comprehensive Plan from 2009 is a small book, so there are many ways we need to branch out and improve upon it. The plan is expected to take around one year or possibly longer to complete. The current comprehensive plan "Imagine Hastings" and the Parking and Transportation grant were discussed. Lisa stated that Kimley-Horne produced an updated draft of the Parking and Transportation plan, but staff has not reviewed it.

Moved by Shawn Hartmann seconded by Butch Eley to go into closed session at 6:02 P.M. for reason of personnel and litigation. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Chuck Rosenberg, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Butch Eley seconded by Matt Fong to come out of closed session at 7:23 P.M.  
Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Chuck Rosenberg, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.

Moved by Matt Fong seconded by Shawn Hartmann there being no further business to adjourn at 7:24 P.M. Roll Call: Ayes: Matt Fong, Shawn Hartmann, Chuck Rosenberg, Joy Huffaker, Butch Eley, Ted Schroeder, Ginny Skutnik, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: None. The motion carried.