

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
Monday, June 19, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Worksession Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 220 N. Hastings Avenue, on June 19, 2023.

The Worksession Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Council Vice President Butch Eley with the following members present: Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Steve Huntley, Brad Consbruck, Jeniffer Beahm. Absent: Matt Fong, Joy Huffaker.

City Officials Present: Mayor Corey Stutte, Shawn Metcalf, Jesse Oswald, Lori Vorderstrasse, Adam Story, Erik Nielsen, Kevin Johnson, Roger Nash, Jeff Hassenstab, Lee Vrooman, Amy Hafer, Marty Stange, Tony Hermann, Kim Jacobitz, Chad Bunger, Marina Richards, Kevin Kubo.

Others Present: City Hall Committee Members - Trent Kelly, Hastings Public Schools, Chris Wissing, Johnson Imperial Homes, Troy Keilig, CMBA Architects.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Official Notice of the Worksession was published in the Hastings Tribune on Friday, June 16, 2023. 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 of City Hall Options.

Council Vice President Eley began by addressing the Council and reiterating that they aren't here to discuss problems from the past regarding City Hall. He stated that the most important thing was to get employees out of what he would term a sick building and, thanks to Shawn Metcalf, City Administrator, that was accomplished. He also mentioned to the Council that Mr. Metcalf is looking at a building maintenance program for the future care of City buildings so this won't happen again. Mr. Metcalf introduced the City Hall Building Committee of Dave Rippe (not present at the meeting), Trent Kelly, Chris Wissing, Lee Vrooman, City Engineer, Marty Stange, Environmental Director, Kim Jacobitz, City Clerk and also Troy Keilig of CMBA Architects.

Mr. Metcalf began a power point presentation on City Hall Building Options. He expressed to the Council that he was excited and optimistic about where they are right now. He stated they have done community engagement with many responses from citizens and City Hall tours and that it has been a good process and he has learned a lot. He began with some important points: reducing the cost of the project was important, the drawings before the Council are not set in stone, locating City Hall downtown was the number one want from residents as well as keeping it centrally located. Mr. Metcalf reviewed the aspects of City Hall that citizens felt were important and then the grading of those aspects in relation to the different building options. Mr. Metcalf discussed the building options. He stated that with the Repair Option (\$2,000,000) they defined "repair", indicated they still couldn't come into compliance with some city codes and staff would not want to come back with this option. Councilmember Huntley questioned which codes could not be met. Troy Keilig, CMBA Architects, indicated bathrooms would not meet ADA standards and the stairwell and elevator also would not meet codes. Mr. Metcalf spoke on the North Denver Option (\$10,363,855) stating it would be a benefit to staff to be all under one roof, repair and maintenance would be lower, however, City Hall would not be located downtown. He discussed the Renovation Option (\$8,461,139) and stated they defined "renovation" and he told the Council that the unknowns are the biggest concern on this option. Councilmember Huntley questioned if structural engineering studies had been done on the building and he referenced an Olsson structural study done on the building some years ago. Mr. Metcalf reviewed the New Build Option (\$8,858,170). He indicated it would have the newest technology, no wasted space and potentially it would be faster to build than renovation. He spoke about the construction timeline being around two years with three years being more realistic. Mr. Keilig spoke to the going rate for a new build. He said that a similar style of build would

be around \$400.00 to \$430.00 per square foot for commercial construction and that it has gone up quite a bit. He indicated there has been about a 7% increase and that could be higher or lower depending on if contractors are looking for work or not.

Mr. Metcalf asked Roger Nash, Finance Director, to go over how the project could be paid for. Mr. Nash indicated that they have options because of the cash reserve balance. He talked about municipal improvement bonds which are bonds that can be issued if you are working on improvements to a City owned facility as an option. He explained they could use cash reserves as well as bonding a portion of the cost. Councilmember Huntley asked if the bonding needed to go to a vote of the people. Mr. Nash indicated it did not.

Mr. Metcalf asked for the Committee's thoughts.

Mr. Kelly began by stating that he felt the current building was not designed for a City Hall and indicated for longevity he felt a new building would just be better. Councilmember Hartmann questioned whether the school buildings were still functioning when they were renovated. Mr. Kelly indicated that was correct. Councilmember Hartmann indicated that renovating the school buildings was a viable option. Mr. Wissing stated that on the new build you get exactly what you need and explained that when you renovate there are a lot of things you can't do to bring it up to new standards. He also mentioned that the basement does the City no good and there are so many unknowns with a renovation where the new build would be cheaper in the long term. Councilmember Hartmann stated that Mr. Wissing's area of expertise is very important. Mr. Wissing stated that if you build something brand new, you get exactly what you need for the people you are housing and you have something that you really don't have to mess with for 60 or 70 years with just regular maintenance of the building.

Councilmember Rowan asked about the school renovations and the cost. Mr. Kelly indicated that the bones were good at the elementary schools but he didn't think the bones were that good in this building. Councilmember Rowan indicated he had seen old buildings turn out nice and should they not have renovated the buildings. He asked why is it okay some place and not others. Mr. Kelly indicated he didn't feel this building was built for a City Hall and there is a lot of unused space and you'll be doing things to space you won't be using. He mentioned meeting ADA standards as well as other codes and indicated the school buildings were originally built for schools but this building was not built for a City Hall and he felt it would be more efficient with a new build.

Mr. Wissing indicated you would be spending the same amount of money on renovation as a new build.

Council discussed building demolition costs and what the demolition entails, recycling of concrete and other parts of the building, duct work not being able to be cleaned and adding extra offices for growth in a new build.

Councilmember Consbruck asked what is a City Hall meant to be built like compared to what a bank is supposed to be built like. Mr. Kelly indicated he didn't feel like the current building is a very functional building. Councilmember Hartmann indicated that there was a drawing of the proposed City Hall building before Council right now and he felt that question had been answered.

Councilmember Huntly stated he was disappointed that the Council wasn't brought in a little earlier to get their ideas.

Mayor Stutte thanked the committee members for their work and felt that their expertise was being discredited. He indicated he appreciated them volunteering their time and this is one reason why it is hard to get people to volunteer. Mayor Stutte indicated that he formed the committee to get an objective look at this with no politics in the process and they've developed some good options for the Council to look at. He went on to state that staff are out of the building so it gives the Council time to make a decision.

Councilmember Huntley asked the timeframe of getting this on the agenda. Mr. Metcalf indicated it could go on as early as July if the Council feels they have enough information. Mayor Stutte stated that he hoped the Council could come together and do what is best for the employees and the community and at

some point make a decision and move forward.

Councilmember Eley stated he felt the new build is the most responsible and that they should do it right. Councilmember Huntley mentioned it going to a vote of the people and Councilmember Eley indicated that he didn't feel everything should go to the vote of the people. It is a Council decision.

Councilmember Rowan asked about the financing and approving a roundabout, new jail, a \$8 million solar farm and a number of things, and is this a good time to do another \$10 million project. Mr. Nash clarified that the jail is a county project, the solar farm is utility dollars, not taxpayer money and the roundabout is a highway construction project and a different funding source if we would take out bonds to pay for that.

Councilmember Huntley indicated that the citizens deserve a voice in the decision on the building. Mr. Wissing indicated that Mr. Metcalf had meetings where people could speak and they did speak. Councilmember Hartmann stated they do need to go back to their constituents with the information they now have and find out what they do want. Councilmember Beahm indicated there was a lot to take in and two councilmembers are not here and maybe more time is needed.

Mr. Metcalf indicated that the General Fund has \$22 million in unrestricted cash, so with the highway project and this building project, we are in a good position and wouldn't increase people's taxes. We could do it all with cash and we are in a great spot and we have a lot of options.

Kim Jacobitz, City Clerk, indicated that one group that hadn't been brought into the conversation were the employees. She stated it is important to get it right, whatever is decided, but make sure it is a safe, healthy environment for your employees. She also stated that it is a competitive market out there and they are trying to get high quality employees and bringing them into this building can be embarrassing the way this building smells and looks.

Mayor Stutte stated he would like to see more discussion on the next workession and asked the Council to have their thoughts on the option they would like to see moving forward. He indicated they can try to figure out what needs to be reworked and what needs to be further investigated and if anyone has questions between now and then, get those questions to Mr. Metcalf. He indicated he thought it was important to continue the conversation.

Moved by Shawn Hartmann seconded by Jeniffer Beahm there being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m. Roll Call: Ayes: Shawn Hartmann, Marc Rowan, Butch Eley, Brad Consbruck, Steve Huntley, Jeniffer Beahm. Nays: None. Absent: Matt Fong, Joy Huffaker. The motion carried.