

City of North Saint Paul
March 16, 2021
Approved Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The meeting was conducted via Zoom and in person.

II. THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Thorsen
Council Member Petersen
Council Member Cole
Council Member Wong
Mayor Furlong

Staff: City Manager Scott Duddeck, Electric Director Brian Frandle, City Attorney Soren Mattick, Deputy Clerk Jennie Kloos.

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as submitted.

V. PRESENTATIONS

Veteran's Park Committee Award

Mayor Terry Furlong presented a plaque to the Veteran's Park Committee. He presented certificates to each of the Committee members who were present.

Mayor Furlong introduced the Committee members as he distributed the certificates: Bruce and Sandy Fabio, website designers; Kari Erpenbach, communications; Kerri Blees and Pat Swanson, Daughters of the American Revolution; Mayor Terry Furlong, City Liaison; Sandy Furlong, Treasurer; Angela Strong and Jarrod Kunze, Events Coordinators; Don Schroeder, Events; Carl Hurtgen, Committee Co-Chair; Merrilee Carlson, pavers coordinator; Archie Vickerman, American Legion contact; Carrie Fisher, Graphic Designer; Scott Duddeck, City Manager; David Wilkinson, ROTC Liaison with North High School; and Paul Anderson, historian.

Mayor Furlong thanked the Committee for their hard work. He added the City Council is honored and proud to commemorate their accomplishments. He noted the Veteran's Park benefits the whole community.

VI. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Thorsen requested that Consent Agenda Items D and H be moved to the Regular Agenda.

On motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Petersen, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the consent agenda, Resolution No. 2021-030 as amended, consisting of:

- A. March 2, 2021 workshop meeting minutes.
- B. March 2, 2021 regular meeting minutes.
- C. March 2, 2021 closed meeting minutes.
- D. General accounts payable: \$940,196.62. **Moved to City Business**
- E. EDA accounts payable: \$1,272.88.
- F. HRA accounts payable: \$1,517.97.
- G. Church of St. Peter Gambling Application. – Resolution 2021-034
- H. Purchase of Energy Savings Kits. **Moved to City Business**
- I. MMPA's 2021 Payment Rate for Distributed Generation.

VII. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

Shawn Rivet stated he met with Mr. Duddeck and Mr. Dawley recently, and he is working on getting photos from the second flood. He added he is concerned that the City intends to build another home on the site, which he believes is a bad idea. He noted he is still upset about the pond and 2 homes behind his house. He asked how he can get a copy of the recording from last week's City Council Closed Session.

City Attorney Soren Mattick stated the City Council can hold closed meetings when they are discussing the purchase or sale of property. He added the closed meeting recording can be made available to the public when a decision is made. He noted a data practice request can be submitted to the City Clerk.

Mr. Rivet stated he did not ask to be bought out, and he wants to stay in his home. He added the situation has been very stressful for him, and he just wants the street fixed. He noted the City has made it clear that they will not fix the street. He asked how much it will cost to fix the street.

Mr. Rivet stated he would like to show the photos to the new Council Members so they can see what he is going through. He expressed concern about the high water levels, which were up to his truck door. He added that is not normal.

John Schmahl stated he did not receive an email notification regarding this evening's meeting. He added he usually receives an email from the City on the Friday before a meeting. He noted he also did not receive an email notification before the March 9, 2021 City Council workshop.

Mr. Schmahl stated he spoke with another resident who also did not receive an email notification from the City. He added he believes the email notification system is not working. Mr. Duddeck agreed to look into it.

Mr. Schmahl stated, at the March 9, 2021 workshop, a proposed layout of the downtown area was presented. He added he noticed there are no proposed handicapped accessible parking spaces near the post office. He noted handicapped parking spaces near the post office should be considered. Mr. Duddeck agreed to follow up on this issue.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no scheduled hearings.

IX. CITY BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Body Worn Camera Purchase

Mr. Duddeck reviewed the proposed purchase of body worn and in-car cameras under the State purchasing contract. The City currently uses Panasonic arbitrators, and car video and sound equipment will be upgraded to digital this year. The quote is for 23 body worn cameras and related hardware, as well as extended warranty and licensing period. Data will be stored in the City's servers through Metro-INET group, rather than in the Cloud, which requires proprietary software.

Mr. Duddeck stated the total equipment cost for body worn and in-car cameras is \$56,606. He added City Staff recommend approval of this purchase. He added the proposed contract for the in-car equipment ends on March 31, 2021, after which there will be a price increase.

Mayor Furlong asked whether other cities use Panasonic equipment. Mr. Duddeck confirmed that Panasonic is widely used.

Council Member Thorsen stated there is only one quote. He asked whether three quotes are required, as the total amount is over \$20,000. Mr. Duddeck stated bidding requirements are different under the State contract.

Council Member Wong asked whether there is a cost difference between Panasonic and other equipment. Mr. Duddeck stated costs are virtually the same with other providers. He added cloud storage is substantially more expensive.

Council Member Petersen asked when the cameras will be ordered, and when the officers will begin wearing them. She asked if any training is required. Mr. Duddeck confirmed there will be significant training. He added the equipment order period is 6-weeks and the order should be placed before March 31, 2021.

Mayor Furlong asked whether the City Council could review the equipment. Mr. Duddeck stated the sample they have is not operational, but he would schedule a review for the City Council when the equipment is received.

Council Member Wong asked about image clarity of the body worn cameras. Mr. Duddeck stated the clarity and voice recordings are all included in one device and the quality is phenomenal.

On motion by Council Member Cole, seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to adopt Resolution No. 2021-031 Authorizing the purchase of Body Worn Cameras.

B. General Accounts Payable: \$940,196.62

Council Member Thorsen stated, with regard to the Credit Card summary on page 31 of the meeting packet, the City must follow adopted policies related to credit card receipts. He added there are missing receipts and forms that are not complete. He reminded City Staff that they have an obligation to follow the policies adopted by the City Council.

Council Member Wong asked whether the forms are digital or paper forms. Mr. Duddeck stated this is a paper form. He added City Staff is in the process of streamlining the system, and the receipts show up as recurring invoices. He reiterated that City Staff is taking steps to correct the problem.

On motion by Council Member Wong, seconded by Council Member Thorsen, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve General Accounts Payable of \$940,196.62 adopting Resolution 2021-032.

C. Purchase of Energy Savings Kits

Council Member Thorsen requested clarification regarding the bids on page 42 of the packet. He stated the City Council has an obligation to get multiple bids for projects. He added the bids are from AM Conservation Group in Charleston, SC with 2 estimates, and a quote from Creative Resources. He asked whether these are separate bids.

Electric Director Brian Frandle stated there are separate bids for the same items, although it is difficult to compare them. He added City Staff puts in a request and the bidders obtain quotes and bids, which they turn over to City Staff. He noted the bids are for the cost per kit.

Council Member Wong asked what conservation improvement programs have been implemented in the past.

Mr. Frandle stated this program is a State mandate that has been around for a while, although the program requirements have changed. The program requires the City to save a certain amount of energy per dollar spent. The City works with Avant Energy to run the program and collaborate on other programs, and the eco kit program has been in place for quite a while. The kits are distributed at City Hall, or by staff out in the field, and they are given to students to take home.

Council Member Wong asked whether the teachers are teaching a specific curriculum related to the kit. She added she works with youth, and often sending a kit home with a student doesn't mean it will make it home. She asked whether there is a connection to ensure the kits reach parents.

Mr. Frandle stated the kit includes educational materials for the students, but it is not a requirement that teachers must include curriculum to go along with the kids. He noted hopefully students are taking their kits home.

Mayor Furlong asked whether the McKnight Field lights could be retro fitted to LED, and whether City Staff have looked into that.

Mr. Frandle stated those light fixtures are 1500 watts per bulb which is very strong. He added the cost of replacing the lighting was prohibitive, although costs may have come down. He reiterated that prices are very high for large lighting fixtures. He noted the City receives credit for a portion of the total spent, and there are other State mandated requirements that must be met.

Council Member Thorsen stated the City Council discussed this issue, including fees and costs, at their workshop. He added the true cost of running the field lights would be helpful to know. He noted it would be advisable to switch to LED if there is a significant savings.

Mr. Frandle agreed to provide information regarding the current cost of the lighting and what it would cost to change it.

Council Member Wong stated she is interested in collaborating with City Staff to find a partnership in the community to provide energy education, although it is not a requirement of the Electric Department. She noted it is important to ensure that the City's investment of \$77,000 is being spent to actually build knowledge for youth, that they can take home to their families.

Mr. Frandle stated local students are taken to the thermo energy plant in Faribault for an educational tour, and the City works with the Science Museum to provide educational programming for kids about energy and where it comes from. He added tours are provided to Century College students. He noted City Staff are willing to collaborate wherever it makes sense.

On motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the purchase of Energy Savings Kits adopting Resolution 2021-033.

X. REPORTS OF CITY MANAGER AND DEPARTMENTS

Mr. Duddeck stated windows are being installed in the downtown development starting today. He added excavation began last week on the Anchor View Apartments site, and concrete footings will be poured next. He noted Kwik Trip will be providing electric requirements so the City can be prepared for their equipment and operations.

Mr. Duddeck stated spring construction projects are starting up, and weekly meetings with downtown businesses will start soon. He added road restrictions are in place.

Mr. Duddeck stated City Staff met with School District representatives about ongoing collaborative use of different buildings around the City, including cost sharing. He added a new addition with significant changes is proposed to North High School, including new parking lots design and traffic patterns, and the loss of 104 stalls, which is very concerning. He noted the School District has agreed to provide documents and research to support their plans which include alternative parking.

Mayor Furlong requested an update on the Xcel Energy gas main. Mr. Duddeck stated the Public Works Department is following up with Xcel Energy, and sound studies have been completed. He added the gas regulator at South and Henry needs to be addressed as well.

Council Member Thorsen stated the infrastructure, while often noisy and unattractive, provides heat for people's homes, which is an expectation. He urged caution in making demands of Xcel Energy, as they must still deliver gas and services.

Mr. Duddeck stated some property owners have done their own sound studies, and noise limits are being exceeded. He added City Staff's only intent is to assist residents.

XI. REPORTS OF COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Council Member Cole stated the Parks & Recreation Commission is scheduled to meet on March 24, 2021 via Zoom.

Council Member Wong stated the Planning Commission is scheduled to meet March 18, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Council Member Thorsen stated the Economic Development Association (EDA) met on March 9, 2021, and meeting minutes and video are available on the City's website. He added the EDA discussed potential restaurant financial grants as well as updates from proposed flooding maps from the Watershed District and Minnesota DNR.

Council Member Thorsen stated the Business Association met recently, and hopes to continue to gather, as the weather warms up and more people get more involved.

Council Member Petersen stated she joined a conference call with the National League of Cities President, who stressed the importance of being futuristic and planning for the next 20 years, as there will be many changes that result from the pandemic.

Council Member Petersen stated the League of Minnesota Cities met on March 11, 2021. She added the June 2021 conference will be held in Rochester, and it has not been determined whether it will be virtual or in person.

XII. GENERAL BUSINESS

Council Member Cole stated several Council Members attended a recent Zoom meeting with State legislators and representatives of MnDOT. He added a major topic was the intersection of Highways 36 and 120, as well as the entire Highway 120 corridor from County Road E in White Bear Lake to I-94. He added there was a lot of discussion but no real movement from a timing standpoint.

Council Member Thorsen stated he attended the MnDOT meeting. He added a meeting recording link was emailed to participants, which should be added to these meeting minutes. He noted MnDOT indicated that the project is not funded and there are no plans to do anything except pavement preservation, although it is a State road. He noted the City should pass a Resolution in support of making the Highway 36/120 intersection a priority project for MnDOT, and work with other local cities and State legislators to get a bonding bill at the State level, and potentially reach out to federal representatives as well.

Mr. Duddeck stated State representatives are putting together a bill to try to get this moved forward and have agreed to contact federal representatives as well. Washington County offered to be the

lead on this project. He added something needs to be done, and State legislators are working on it.

Council Member Petersen stated she has gathered some information about the Art Council in Orange Beach. She added she attended their arts festival and will bring her ideas, thoughts and perspective to share with Mr. Duddeck. She noted the City Council has talked in the past about reviving the Arts Council, and she has a lot of good ideas, and she is very excited about it. She wished everybody a happy Easter.

Mayor Furlong wished everyone a happy St. Patrick's Day. He added he will be participating in the parade tomorrow.

Mr. Duddeck stated City Staff hopes to bring forward a Resolution for Council consideration at the next meeting to formally accept and provide recognition to people who make donations to the City. Ways to promote this will be considered, and recognition will be given on a monthly basis.

XIII. CLOSED SESSION

There was no closed session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Cole, Seconded by Council Member Wong, with all present voting aye (5-0), Mayor Furlong adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

Attest: /s/ Scott A. Duddeck, City Manager / Clerk