

City of Winsted
City Council Work Session
Lewis Room
Tuesday, July 15, 2014
5:00 p.m.

Present: Deputy Mayor Bonita Quast
Council Member Tom Ollig
Council Member Max Fasching

Absent: Mayor Steve Stotko
Council Member George Schulenberg

Staff Present: Mr. Clay Wilfahrt, City Administrator
Ms. Deborah R. Boelter, City Clerk-Treasurer
Ms. Lena Guggemos, Administration Intern

I. Call to Order

Deputy Mayor Quast called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. Southwest Initiative Foundation Presentation – TABLED.

III. Rental Housing License Transfer

Mr. Wilfahrt stated that at the July 1, 2014 City Council Work Session, the City Council discussed Rental Housing License transfers. The City Council directed staff to research the process specifically regarding potential liability and the costs of the inspections.

Mr. Wilfahrt stated that he spoke with Mr. Rob Beckfield of Metro West Inspection Services, Incorporated, who conducts the City's Building and Rental Housing License inspections and he did not see any liability issues if the City would transfer a Rental Housing License without completing another inspection. Mr. Beckfeld indicated that Metro West Inspection Services, Incorporated charges \$50 per unit to inspect rental properties. That is the same fee that the City charges rental property owners for a Rental Housing License.

Mr. Wilfahrt stated that he contacted the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) regarding any liability issues the City may incur if they would go to a process of transferring a Rental Housing License without an inspection. He continued by stating that the LMCIT indicated that there would be no added liability to the City since the original term of the License is being followed.

Mr. Wilfahrt stated that in the meantime, a Public Hearing notice has been sent out for August 19, 2014 and the City Attorney is working on drafting the new language.

The City Council discussed and agreed to proceed with the Public Hearing scheduled for August 19, 2014.

IV. Waste Water Treatment Facility

Mr. Seth Peterson, the City's Engineer for the Waste Water Treatment Facility's (WWTF) Improvement Project, Bolton and Menk, Incorporated, addressed the City Council. He continued by giving a brief overview of his memo dated July 7, 2014.

Mr. Peterson again presented the two (2) options for the City Council to consider in regards to the WWTF improvements and the more stringent phosphorous limits recently established by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

- Option One (1): Reject the bids the City received and redesign the WWTF Improvement Project to meet the new phosphorous limits established by the MPCA. Then, again request bids and have a fall, 2014 bid opening.

- Option Two (2): Accept the bids the City received and proceed with a reduced scale Improvement Project. However, Mr. Peterson stated that the City would still need to address the MPCA's stringent phosphorus limits in the future and it may be possible that the Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) funding would not be available.

The City Council discussed the two (2) options.

Council Member Ollig stated that the City's residents needs to be informed of the following:

1. What is happening with the WWTF Improvement Project.
2. Why the WWTF Improvement Project needs to be completed.
3. How the Project will result in an increase to their sewer billing from the City.
4. They can contact their Minnesota State Legislators if they have some concerns with the MPCA's stringent requirements.

Council Member Fasching asked what the impact will be to the resident's sewer billing. Mr. Wilfahrt stated that at this time, he is unable to determine the impact it will have on the City's future sewer billing. However, when the City prepares to bond for the WWTF Improvement Project, he will have more information for the City Council and the City's residents on the approximate increase they will see in their future sewer billing.

Council Member Quast asked how many years the City would have to pay for the WWTF Improvement Project. Mr. Peterson stated that bonds purchased to fund this type of Project are typically a debt of twenty (20) years.

Council Member Ollig stated that it is important for the City to begin informing its residents on the impact the proposed WWTF Improvement Project will have on their future sewer bills.

Mr. Peterson and Mr. Wilfahrt recommended that the City Council proceed with Option One (1).

Mr. Peterson gave a brief overview of the timeline if the City Council would decide to proceed with Option One (1).

Mr. Wilfahrt stated that the design work that has been completed by the City's engineers for the initial bidding process will be used if the City Council agrees to proceed with Option One (1). The equipment needed to treat the phosphorus discharge to the new levels required by the MPCA will require minimal design from the City's engineers.

Mr. Peterson stated that if the City Council agrees to proceed with Option One (1), the City would have to continue with the Pond Decommissioning requirements as a separate Project beginning in fall of the year 2014.

V. City Survey

Ms. Lena Guggemos distributed a draft survey that she prepared to be made available to City of Winsted residents. She asked the City Council to make any edits to the draft survey on the paper copies that she distributed and then return them to her.

Ms. Guggemos stated that the City last conducted a Citizen's Survey in the year 2010. At that time, just over twenty percent (20%) of the City's approximately 900 residents who received the survey returned the year 2010 surveys.

Ms. Guggemos stated that in order to increase the percentage of survey feedback, she created two (2) versions of the year 2014 survey – paper and electronic. She continued by stating that she believes the convenience and immediate service of an electronic survey will produce more results, giving the City a more accurate read of citizens' concerns. The paper surveys will continue to serve those who prefer tangible goods. Ms. Guggemos stated that the electronic survey will be available on the City of Winsted's official website and Facebook page, and the results are automatically sent to her via Survey Monkey.

Ms. Guggemos stated that the survey questions address topics of interest and/or concern for City of Winsted residents. The survey will also allow residents to comment on the services provided by the City.

Ms. Guggemos asked the City Council to review the survey questions and provide her with any feedback.

Council Member Ollig shared his concerns of an individual completing the electronic survey several times. He continued by asking Ms. Guggemos to find a method with Survey Monkey that would allow each Internet Protocol (IP) address to only complete the survey one (1) time. Ms. Guggemos stated that she would research the capability of restricting the completion of the survey only one (1) time per IP address.

The City Council reviewed the proposed survey questions and provided Ms. Guggemos with amendments and/or additions.

Ms. Guggemos stated that the surveys will be due at City Hall on August 10, 2014; so, a copy will be included in the July, 2014 Water and Sewer billing.

The City Council complimented Ms. Guggemos for the preparation of the survey.

VI. Personnel Policy Changes

Mr. Wilfahrt stated that the City employs a number of employees to carry out the goals set by the City Council. All of the employees are subject to a Personnel Policy which outlines expectations of staff and the City. The document has not been formally revised since the year 2007, during which time changes in Federal and Minnesota State employment law have necessitated revisions. City staff conferred with the City Attorney to update the Personnel Policy to be consistent with changes in these Laws.

Council Member Ollig asked if the Winsted Volunteer Fire Department's (WVFD) firefighters were considered employees. Mr. Wilfahrt stated that they have their own Personnel Policy and By-Laws. Mr. Wilfahrt stated the City Attorney will be evaluating the WVFD Personnel Policy and By-Laws in the near future to insure that they comply with Federal and Minnesota State laws.

Mr. Wilfahrt stated that also as part of the update, City staff is recommending a few other items that are not required by Minnesota State or Federal law. Mr. Wilfahrt reviewed the following proposed changes to the Personnel Policy:

- ✓ **Resignation** – Staff inserted language that each employee will have to voluntarily terminate employment and give proper notice prior to receiving payouts of either sick or vacation time. Currently no notice is required. Additionally, the employee will need to work with the City for over two (2) years to receive any sick or vacation payouts.
- ✓ **Waiver of Claims** – Staff is requesting that language be inserted which requires resigning staff to submit a waiver of claims in order to receive payouts of sick and vacation time. In essence, staff will need to waive the City of any future liabilities.
- ✓ **Sick Leave Accrual** – Currently the City allows employees to bank up to sixty (60) days and have thirty (30) days paid out upon termination of employment. The average Minnesota community with a population of 1,000 to 4,000 pays out forty-four (44) days at the end of employment. Staff would like to raise the amount of hours that can be banked to 600 rather than 480 which would mean that 37.5 days would be paid out at the end of employment. This is more consistent with similar sized communities in Minnesota.
- ✓ **Sick Leave Payout** – Currently the City pays out sick leave to an employee's COBRA at the end of employment. This is a cumbersome method for both the former employee and the City staff. It requires that the City continue to process monthly checks with the sick leave proceeds until the money runs out. Additionally, it restricts the former employee to one option, which may not be optimal. Since the City is already paying out sick leave, it can increase the value of this benefit to employees by simply paying in cash rather than to COBRA. Of the ninety-three (93) communities surveyed regarding sick time payout, only one (1) other community pays out in this manner. Nine (9) communities pay towards a Health Savings Account (H.S.A.), and eighty-two (82) pay out in cash.
- ✓ **Holiday Pay** – The City currently pays two and one-half (2 ½) times normal pay on Christmas and Thanksgiving and one and one-half (1 ½) times pay on all other holidays. Staff changed this to be two (2) times the normal rate of pay for all holidays.

- ✓ **Meal Reimbursement** – Mr. Wilfahrt stated that originally staff changed the meal reimbursements to reflect the Federal Government’s reimbursement rate for the Minneapolis, St. Paul area which is \$12 for breakfast, \$18 for lunch and \$36 for dinner. However, after discussing the reimbursements for meals with City Council members and Ms. Boelter, staff has researched the per diem rate from the Federal Government’s General Services Administration (G.S.A.) website at www.gsa.gov. Mr. Wilfahrt distributed a copy of the per diem rates for the State of Minnesota and also a copy of the breakdown for reimbursement rates for breakfast, lunch and dinner meals. Mr. Wilfahrt continued by recommending that the Personnel Policy state that employees will be reimbursed for meals at the per diem rates as specified by the G.S.A.

Council Member Ollig asked if an employee is required to submit detailed receipts to receive a reimbursement for meals. Ms. Boelter stated that she does not reimburse employees unless they have provided her with a detailed receipt. Mr. Wilfahrt stated that the Personnel Policy does not allow an employee to be reimbursed for meals until they provide the City with a receipt that shows what food and/or beverages were purchased. An employee cannot be reimbursed for alcoholic beverages.

Council Member Fasching asked if employees can be reimbursed for meals if they are included with the conference and/or training; but, the employee chooses to eat somewhere else. Mr. Wilfahrt stated that the Personnel Policy does not allow for reimbursement of meals that are included in the conference and/or training.

The City Council discussed the proposed changes to the Personnel Policy and recommended that Mr. Wilfahrt amend the section on **Meal Reimbursement** to state that employees will be reimbursed for meals in accordance with the G.S.A.

Council Member Fasching asked staff to research the possibility of implementing Paid Time Off (P.T.O.) instead of having vacation and sick leave. Mr. Wilfahrt stated that he would research it.

VII. Other

a) **Winsted Police Department – Applications for the Fourth (4th) Police Officer Position**

Mr. Wilfahrt stated that the City has received forty-six (46) applications for the Winsted Police Department’s Fourth (4th) Police Officer position.

Mr. Wilfahrt stated that he has been scoring the applications and the first (1st) round of interviews will be next Tuesday, July 22, 2014.

b) **Winsted Summer Festival – Maintenance of Lakefront Promenade and City Parks**

Council Member Fasching asked that the newly installed sod in the Lakefront Promenade be watered; and that Mill Reserve Park and Hainlin Park be maintained by the Public Works Department; so, everything looks nice for the annual Winsted Summer Festival the weekend of August 8, 2014 through August 10, 2014.

VIII. Adjourn

Council Member Fasching motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Ollig seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Bonita Quast

Bonita Quast
Deputy Mayor
City of Winsted

ATTEST:

Deborah R. Boelter

Deborah R. Boelter, CMC
City Clerk-Treasurer
City of Winsted