

City of Winsted
City Council Work Session
Lewis Room
December 6, 2011
5:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Steve Stotko
Council Member Tom Ollig
Council Member Bonnie Quast
Council Member Dave Mochinski
Council Member George Schulenberg

Staff Present: Brad Martens, City Administrator
Deb Boelter, City Clerk-Treasurer

I. Call to Order

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

II. Truth-in-Taxation Public Hearing – December 6, 2011

Martens stated that the Truth-in-Taxation Public Hearing will be at tonight's Regular City Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. and the purpose of the meeting is to give residents and/or business owners an opportunity to comment on the City of Winsted's proposed 2012 Budget and Tax Levy.

Martens stated that he believes that the purpose of the Public Hearing is for the City Council to listen to comments from residents and/or business owners. He continued by stating that he prefers that the City Council not evaluate each line item of the proposed 2012 Budget during the Public Hearing.

Martens asked the City Council to provide him with direction at the end of the meeting on how they would like him to proceed with the 2012 Budget.

Martens explained the process for the Public Hearing.

Mayor Stotko asked if the City Council would need to make a formal motion if they would like staff to amend the 2012 Preliminary Budget and Levy. Council Member Ollig stated that he believes that a motion should be made if they are going to ask staff to make amendments to the 2012 Preliminary Budget and Levy. Martens stated that there should be a formal motion for any actions that the City Council may ask staff to take regarding the Preliminary Budget and Levy.

III. Franchise Fee Update

Martens gave an update on the Franchise Fees. The Consent Agenda at tonight's Regular City Council meeting will request Public Hearings on December 20, 2011 to consider amendments to the various Franchises' Ordinances.

Martens stated that all Franchise Agreements have been finalized with the possibility of a few minor amendments.

Martens stated that if the Agreements are approved on December 20, 2011, the Franchise Fees would be implemented in April, 2012. Martens continued by stating that the 2012 General Fund Revenue Budget includes approximately \$37,000 in Franchise Fees and the amount received in 2013 will be approximately \$50,000.

Council Member Ollig stated that the purpose of the Franchise Fee is for utility companies to pay for the City of Winsted's right-of-ways that they are using for their cables, piping and/or any other equipment.

IV. Proposed 2012 Fee Schedule

Martens presented the proposed 2012 Fee Schedule.

Mayor Stotko asked about including a fee for the Winsted Volunteer Fire Department responding to an emergency fire call. Council Member Ollig stated that he attended a meeting with a Winsted Volunteer Fire Department Officer and the Officer asked that he tell the City Council that they are strongly opposed to charging for the Fire Department's response to emergency fire calls.

Martens stated that he did have a fee on the schedule for the Police Department for their response to false alarms; but, Police Chief Henrich indicated that there may need to be an ordinance developed regulating any fee for responding to false alarms. Council Member Ollig stated that he did discuss a proposal for a fee for responding to false alarms with a Winsted business owner who has had several false alarms and he was not opposed to such a fee.

Council Member Mochinski asked if there should be a fee to compensate the Public Works Department for hauling the City's picnic tables to various events and/or repairing them if they are damaged. Martens stated that there could be a fee. Council Member Quast stated that she believes that Winstock Country Music Festival should be charged for the use of the picnic tables.

Council Member Ollig stated that the fee could be discussed when Winstock Country Music Festival asks for their different approvals from the City Council in 2012.

Council Member Mochinski stated that the City of Winsted's taxpayers fund the picnic tables so if there is a fee, Winsted Summer Festival, a community event, should not have to pay a rental fee for the use of the picnic tables. He continued by stating that private events and/or festivals like Winstock Country Music Festival should be charged for the use of the City's picnic tables.

Council Member Ollig stated that there should be a fee if the picnic tables are going to be moved from the City's parks to a private event. If a family reunion is taking place in one (1) of the City's parks, they should not have to pay a fee to use the picnic tables.

V. 2012 Work Plan

Martens presented the proposed 2012 Work Plan. Martens stated that he will provide the City Council with quarterly updates. It can also be amended during 2012 if needed.

VI. Mayor's Task Force on Downtown Revitalization

Martens stated that Mayor Stotko would like to create a Downtown Revitalization Task Force to identify ways to revitalize the City of Winsted's downtown area.

Martens gave a brief overview of the Task Force. He stated that members would be appointed. They would be given a limited timeframe so they would not have to continue to meet for an extended period of time. There would be a limit to the number of members, preferably seven (7), to maintain the effectiveness of the Task Force. The Task Force would not be lead by the City Administrator.

Mayor Stotko stated that once the Task Force is given a task the City Council must be committed to working with this group. He continued by stating that he would like the City Council to share their expectations with the Task Force, get them started, get them focused and then disband the group. Mayor Stotko also stated that if the City Council would need to establish another Task Force to implement the directives of the original Task Force, it could be done.

Council Member Ollig asked if the Task Force establishes a plan that requires funding from the City, how is the City going to fund it. Mayor Stotko stated they should be allowed to develop a plan and the City Council will have to decide if they can fund it. If another Task Force needs to be appointed to determine how the plan is going to be funded, the City can do so.

Council Member Ollig stated that the Task Force should be directed to be as creative as they can.

There may be grant funding available to help fund the plan they develop for revitalization of the downtown area. Council Member Ollig also stated that there are several other ways, beside the City budget, to fund their plan.

Council Member Ollig stated that there are several people that are interested in being on the Downtown Revitalization Task Force and if it is not established soon, they will become disinterested.

Council Member Quast asked if the Downtown Revitalization Task Force will be focusing on just the downtown area or the Industrial Park as well. Council Member Ollig stated that he believes that they should be directed to focus on the downtown area. Mayor Stotko stated he agrees with Council Member Ollig.

Mayor Stotko asked if the City Council would like the Task Force to focus on bringing businesses into the empty buildings in the downtown area and/or making improvements to the buildings. Council Member Ollig stated that the individuals interested in being on the Task Force might address both areas; bringing businesses into the empty buildings in the downtown area and making improvements to the buildings.

Council Member Mochinski asked Mayor Stotko if he has individuals interested in being on the Task Force. He stated yes. Council Member Ollig stated that there are members of the Winsted Area Chamber of Commerce and the Arts Council who would like to be on the Task Force. Mayor Stotko stated that the group needs to stay on task and focused and he has someone in mind that would do a good job of leading the Task Force.

Council Member Mochinski stated that he believes that the maximum number of members for the Task Force should be seven (7).

Martens asked if he should start by creating criteria for the Task Force. The City Council discussed and stated yes.

VII. Other

a) Additional Items Added to the Regular City Council Meeting Agenda

Martens presented the two (2) additional items that were added to the Regular City Council Meeting Agenda:

1. Resolution R-11-42 – Downtown Beautification Guidelines to update the guidelines and extend the program another year to December 31, 2012.
2. Resolution R-11-43 – Will Steger, the property owner of 141 Main Avenue West has applied for a forgivable loan through the Downtown Beautification Program to make exterior improvements to the building.

Council Member Quast asked if he has a business he wants to put in the street level of the building. Martens stated that he does not have a business interested at this time. He continued by stating that Steger is interested in completing improvements to the building that will make it energy efficient and then he will try to attract some type of business.

b) Kiosk Signage

Council Member Quast asked Martens if he was able to do any research on Kiosk Signage to be placed on County State Aid Highway(CSAH) One (1) identifying the businesses in the Industrial Park and the downtown area. Martens stated that he had not had the opportunity to research this type of signage.

Council Member Ollig stated that such type of signage may be a project for the Winsted Area Chamber of Commerce.

Council Member Quast stated that the City may be able to get one of the stainless steel companies in Winsted to build the sign and then the individual businesses could pay to have their name installed on the sign.

Council Member Mochinski asked if the businesses in the Industrial Park and/or downtown area have shown an interest in this type of sign. Council Member Quast stated that she was not certain and asked Martens to research the interest. She continued by stating that she did discuss the proposal with a few businesses and they thought the signage would be a good way to give them some identity of where they are located.

Council Member Mochinski shared his concerns regarding the size of the sign to be able to include all of the businesses. Council Member Ollig stated that it could be costly to construct the proposed sign. Council Member Mochinski stated that he would like to confirm that the businesses are able to contribute the amount of money needed to put their name on the sign.

VIII. Adjourn

Council Member Mochinski motioned to adjourn. Council Member Schulenberg seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Steve Stotko

Steve Stotko
Mayor
City of Winsted

ATTEST:

Deborah R. Boelter

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