

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL**

For the Regular Meeting of **MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2005**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Shores and City Clerk Betty Morlock called Roll.

Present: Councilmembers Hodges, Mathews, Pfaller, Mayor Pro Tem Myers and Mayor Shores.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager David Pasquale, City Clerk Betty Morlock, Chief of Police Jim Valentine, Public Works Director Dan DesJarden, Planning Commission Chairman Clark Jahnke, Fire Chief Frank Martin and Lowell/Rockford Ambulance Boardmembers Roger Morgan and Matt McConnon.

IT WAS MOVED BY HODGES and seconded by MATHEWS to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2005 regular meeting minutes as corrected.

YEA: Councilmember Hodges, Mathews, Pfaller, Mayor Pro Tem Myers and Mayor Shores.

NAY: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY PFALLER and seconded by MYERS that the bills and accounts payable be allowed and the warrants issued.

YEA: Councilmember Hodges, Mathews, Pfaller, Mayor Pro Tem Myers and Mayor Shores.

NAY: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

<u>BILLS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (12/19/05)</u>	
GENERAL FUND	\$82,364.67
MAJOR STREET FUND	651.47
LOCAL STREET FUND	607.23
DDA FUND	314.67
CITY HALL CONSTRUCTION FUND	49,722.50
AIRPORT FUND	1,891.76
WASTEWATER FUND	2,430.98
WATER FUND	3,475.47
EQUIPMENT FUND	3,887.40
CURRENT TAX FUND	13,897.66

Item #1. **KENT INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT – COLLECTION OF SUMMER PROPERTY TAXES FOR 2006.** As in previous years, the Kent Intermediate School District has requested the City collect the summer property taxes for the district (4.6453 mills last year). As part of a continuing resolution, the City collects the KISD property taxes at no fee, but is able to keep the interest earned during the bank deposit before distributing these monies.

City Manager Pasquale recommended the current policy for collecting summer taxes be maintained and a resolution passed.

IT WAS MOVED BY PFALLER and seconded by HODGES to approve the resolution collecting the Kent Intermediate School District summer property taxes for 2006.

YEA: 5. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Pro Tem Myers inquired if there has been a calculation on what the collection brings in revenues to the City. Pasquale stated he would provide the information at the next meeting.

Item #2. **APPROVAL OF CONTRACT WITH NORTH KENT TRANSIT FOR FY 2005-2006.** Utilizing Federal Community Development Block Grant funds administered through Kent County, a contract with the City, County and North Kent Transit Service (Hope Network West Michigan) authorizes a budget of \$6,000 to assist senior and handicapped ridership. The program year runs from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006.

IT WAS MOVED BY MYERS and seconded by MATHEWS to approve the contract with North Kent Transit and Kent County allocating \$6,000 in Federal Community Development Block Grant funds for 2005 – 2006 assisting the handicapped and senior citizens.

YEA: 5. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Myers commented on the service report provided. During the months of July, August and September, 89 rides were provided for City residents, 18 rides for Lowell Township residents, and 2 rides for Vergennes Township. He noted contributions have been received from the townships.

Item #3. **FIRE STATION – AMBULANCE ADDITION PROPOSAL – CONSIDERATION OF CONTRIBUTION.** Fire Chief Frank Martin explained Rockford Ambulance has been involved with the Lowell Fire Department since 1991. Expansion is needed in order to allow for additional offices for both departments. This will free the bays for the fire trucks as well as separate sleeping quarters for male and female rescue workers.

Rockford Ambulance Chief Executive Officer Roger Morgan requested an addition to the Lowell Fire Station. He explained Rockford Ambulance has been in the Lowell community since 1988. They have worked well with the fire department. He presented a proposal to seek funding for a 34 foot by 72 foot addition to the fire station. Rockford Ambulance has already committed \$70,000 to

the project. The department is also in the process of submitting a grant application to the Lowell Area Community Fund for \$125,000. The total cost of the building is \$243,000. Rockford Ambulance and the Lowell Area Fire Department are asking the City of Lowell to consider \$16,000 for the project. He suggested such funds be received over a period of three to four years.

Morgan noted Rockford Ambulance is present in Lowell 24 hours a day. Currently, there are no separate sleeping quarters for male and females. The City of Lowell has been very gracious by letting them use the public rooms within the fire station.

City Manager Pasquale stated the proposal building would be 2,248 square feet. He mentioned Rockford Ambulance covered the cost for the preliminary engineering and architectural work which was over \$3,000.

Pasquale stated the issue will be presented to both Lowell and Vergennes Townships. There will be an equal share split amongst the three units. A key component is the grant application. However, this will not be known for several months. He believed by an endorsement, some strength is provided to the application.

If monies are given, a three year loan could be reviewed similar to what has been done with the purchases of fire trucks.

Councilmember Pfaller questioned if this was the only plan considered. Morgan stated yes. Pfaller believed such an addition would take a great amount of land from the park and eliminate where the big tent is placed for the Kent County Youth Fair. He felt the proposal should start with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Pfaller commented on the ambulance proposal made when the City Hall/Police Station was built. Such an addition was proposed to be attached to the Police Station. He questioned why this wasn't done two to three years ago when there was an opportunity. Morgan did not believe it was a good fit. Police Chief Valentine explained tentative plans were established to have such a facility at the east end of the complex. However, during negotiations issues were being reviewed regarding the VFW parking lot.

Pfaller asked if it would be feasible for the addition to be on the north end of the existing fire station as opposed to the park. Martin noted the storm drain runs on the north side of the station.

Mayor Shores believed the addition was a good fit. Sleeping quarters are needed for both male and female rescue workers.

Martin questioned a possible retaining wall being placed.

Councilmember Hodges agreed with Pfaller, noting this should be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The drawing needs to be extended further to include Broadway Street. Shores suggested moving the tent slightly. The tent is used one week out of the year, while Rockford Ambulance is here 12 months out of the year.

Councilmember Mathews believed it made sense to add onto the building. He agreed with the idea of discussing the issue with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Councilmember Myers questioned the reaction of Lowell Township. Morgan stated the township tabled the issue until the budget meeting is held after the first of the year.

Myers questioned if there was a lease agreement in place. Morgan stated there is a contract.

Myers referred to the cost presented being relative to the overall cost of the construction itself. He confirmed all equipment such as desks and beds would be at Rockford's expense. Morgan responded yes. He noted there is a \$10,000 contingency for the architectural drawings. Myers questioned the north elevation. He wanted the brick work continued.

Pfaller referred the agreement with Vergennes and Lowell Townships. He questioned who pays all the maintenance and utilities on the building. Martin was unsure. He believed at the end of the year it is split three ways. He was unsure of the utilities.

Myers supported the concept.

IT WAS MOVED BY HODGES and seconded by MATHEWS to approve the concept as presented regarding the Fire Station – Ambulance addition.

YEA: 5. NAY: 0. NAY: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Pfaller suggested Ron Wenger from the Kent County Youth Fair attend the next Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on January 14.

Item #4. **APPOINTMENT OF CITY CHARTER REVISION SUBCOMMITTEE.** As proposed by Councilmember Pfaller, a subcommittee of the City Council would review the City Charter and provide suggested amendments. Pfaller and Hodges volunteered to serve on such a committee.

By general consensus, Councilmembers Pfaller and Hodges were selected to serve on the subcommittee regarding the City Charter revision.

Item #5. **REPORT ON THE DECEMBER 15 BOUNDARY COMMISSION MEETING.** Mayor Shores, City Clerk Betty Morlock and City Manager Pasquale attended a State Boundary Commission meeting on December 15, 2005 in Lansing to discuss the proposed annexation property near the southeast intersection of Vergennes and Alden Nash. The Boundary Commission denied the request in October, but David Hollister, Director of Labor and Economic Growth, postponed his decision to sign the final decree asking the City and Vergennes Township to continue to negotiate for an agreement.

Representatives from Vergennes Township and Rob Munger of DuRay Development were present

to discuss the issue with the Boundary Commissioners. The meeting lasted nearly two hours and covered a variety of topics.

From this meeting, the Boundary Commission directed that a three member committee be formed representing the City, Lowell and Vergennes Townships, to prepare a framework for an area wide plan covering utilities, services and appropriate urban boundaries. The Commission asked for an update in 60 days.

By general consensus, the Council appointed City Manager Dave Pasquale to serve on the Committee representing the City of Lowell.

Councilmember Pfaller agreed with the process being taken. A plan needs to be established regarding growth of the area.

Item #6. **APPROVAL OF 2006 CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATES.** The following meeting dates were approved by the City Council:

Lowell City Council
2006 City Council meeting dates

January	3 17	(Tuesday) (Tuesday)	July	5 17	(Wednesday)
February	6 21		August	7 21	
March	6 20		September	5 18	(Tuesday)
April	3 17		October	2 16	
May	1 15		November	6 20	
June	5 19		December	4 18	

IT WAS MOVED BY MYERS seconded by HODGES to adopt the Council meeting dates for 2006 with Wednesday, July 5 as the first meeting date of that month.

YEA: 5. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #7. **MONTHLY REPORTS.** No comments were received.

Item #8. **CITIZEN COMMENTS.** Chief Jim Valentine, pointed out the Police Department is participating with 550 other police agencies in the State of Michigan in an effort to curb drunk driving throughout the holiday season. There will be extra police officers on duty from December 19, 2005 through January 1, 2006. All overtime pay will be reimbursed through a grant from the office of Highway Safety Planning at the State level. The Wyoming Police Department is the coordinating agency for the grant. Valentine estimated the reimbursement to be up to \$16,000.

Valentine commented on the discussion of licensing snow plow operators. The police department will probably come before the Council in the spring or early summer to pursue an ordinance which will license the snow plow company and place a sticker on all vehicles which are being used to plow snow through out the City. If there is an issue, they have recourse. If it can not be resolved, the City would have the right to suspend the company's operation within the City be it an individual or a fleet of snowplow operators.

Councilmember Mathews did not agree with snow plow drivers pushing snow across a street. He was in favor of some enforcement.

Item #9. **COUNCIL COMMENTS.** Mayor Pro Tem Myers appreciated the reports received regarding various meetings. He was pleased to see activity involving the ice skating rink as well as interest in a dog park. He was disappointed to see there was no response from individuals regarding the Skateboard Park. Councilmember Pfaller noted no individuals attended the last Parks and Recreation Commission regarding the Skateboard Park. Pfaller stated there was an informal discussion regarding the ice skating area at Richards Park. Parks Supervisor Scott Fosburg is obtaining prices regarding a concrete slab being placed. This would allow the rink to be used starting in approximately November.

Myers commented on his visit to Hastings and a possible Mayor Exchange Day.

Councilmember Hodges referred to an article in the Grand Rapids Press regarding Lowell Fire Department member Bryan Kimble being named Fire Chief at the Gerald Ford (Grand Rapids) International Airport. He congratulated him.

Councilmember Pfaller referred to the Manager's Report which states the townships and the City are each responsible for one third of the Fire truck loan totally \$48,000. However, no answer was received regarding the \$4,700 repair done on fire engine #5. Pasquale stated there are sources of revenues for the new pumper and repair of the 1988 pumper/engine #5 which include the grant received from the Lowell Area Community Fund, the bank loan, as well as an additional grant from the Lowell Area Community Fund adding up to \$134,000. Each jurisdiction will pay an equal share.

Mayor Shores commented on the skate park. DPW Director DesJarden stated Todd Phillips and

Bill McQueen have been working on the skate park. The rink should open within a few days, if there is not a thaw.

Shores wished everyone a nice holiday.

Item #10. **MANAGER'S REPORT.** City Manager Pasquale reported on the following:

1. The following boards and commissions meetings minutes were enclosed:
 - Airport Board meeting of November 1, 2005
 - Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of October 8, 2005
 - Lowell Area Recreation Authority meeting of October 12, 2005
 - Lowell Community Leadership Council meeting of September 15, 2005
2. In response to an inquiry from Councilmember Pfaller, attached is a financial sheet which details the recent purchase of the new pumper as well as the refurbishing of the 1988 County pumper. As noted, the City and the two townships are each responsible for one third of the loan involved.
3. A letter from Light and Power General Manager Tom Richards was received noting two modifications in the utility's electric rates as adopted by the Board on December 1. As noted under Section 16.6 of the City Charter, the Board has the power to fix all electric rates.
4. Jeff Linstrom of UBS Financial Services has requested the use of the second floor conference room for a Social Security Seminar in late January – early February one evening from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. He is willing to pay \$150. Mayor Pro Tem Myers stated the room has been available in the past during normal business hours. He questioned if perhaps Linstrom could coordinate with the Library for the community room during normal business hours. Morlock inquired if non profit businesses should still be allowed to use the facility. Myers did not understand giving non profit businesses a key to City Hall. He was not in favor of having individuals use the facility after hours without a City employee present.

It was suggested a policy be established for non profit organizations. Councilmember Mathews, Shores and City Clerk Morlock volunteered their time to serve on a committee in order to establish a policy for use of the City Hall meeting rooms. It was noted any current non profit users may continue to use the facility, until such a policy is established.

The Rotary Club has inquired whether a spinet piano could be placed in the back of the Council Chambers. By consensus, the Council was not in favor. Councilmember Hodges suggested a collapsible keyboard instead.

5. The Planning Commission will hold interviews with three firms on Monday, January 16 for the Master Plan Update project. The firms are Williams & Works, Gove Associates and McKenna Associates.

6. The City offices will be closed for Christmas on Friday, December 23 and Monday, December 26. Also, the offices will be closed on Monday, January 2 for New Year's Day.

The next Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 3, 2006.

IT WAS MOVED BY MYERS to adjourn at 8:41 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

Charles R. Myers, Mayor

Betty R. Morlock, Clerk