

**PROCEEDINGS  
OF  
CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE  
CITY OF LOWELL  
MONDAY, May 5, 2014, 7:00 P.M.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL.**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Acting City Clerk Suzanne Olin and roll was called.

Present: Councilmembers Jeff Altoft, Jim Hall, Sharon Ellison, Chris Schwab and Mayor Jim Hodges.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Mark Howe, Police Chief Steve Bukala, DPW Director Dan DesJarden and City Treasurer Suzanne Olin.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.**

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to approve the agenda as written.

YES: 5. NO: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S).**

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to approve the regular minutes of the April 24, 2014 meeting as written.

YES: 5. NO: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL that the minutes of April 28, work session meeting be approved as written.

YES: 5. NO: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE ACCOUNTS PAYABLE.**

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by SCHWAB that the bills and accounts payables be allowed and the warrants issued.

YES: Councilmembers Altoft, Hall, Ellison, Schwab and Mayor Hodges.

NO: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

<u>BILLS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (05/05/2014)</u>	
General Fund	\$32,399.88
Major Streets Fund	8,975.35
Local Streets Fund	1,033.30

Downtown Development	623.34
Designated Cont	375.10
Riverfront Development	12,556.66
Airport Fund	3,041.48
Wastewater Fund	3641.40
Water Fund	6,480.32
Data Processing Fund	1,435.78
Equipment Fund	2,898.32
Current Tax	508.41

5. **CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

No comments were received.

6. **OLD BUSINESS.**

- A. **Strategic Plan Update.** Howe reported on several updates to the strategic plan. He stated Prein and Newhoff will be preparing proposals for the lift station upgrade. He also mentioned DPW DesJarden has submitted updated plans for city facilities and these items will be incorporated into the budget. He mentioned, the utility improvement plans are incorporated in the budget presented this evening. Howe said the Valley Vista Trailer Park cleanup is tentatively scheduled for June 28 and July 29. Also, the pilot leaf disposal project is continuing to be researched. A kickoff meeting is tentatively being scheduled for May 30 to discuss the Downtown Development Plan.
- B. **2014 -2015 Budget Discussion.** City Manager Howe questioned if any members of the Council had questions on the budget. Councilmember Altoft suggested an additional budget work session be held on Tuesday, May 13, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the budget.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **KDL Presentation.** Lance Werner, Kent District Library Director provided an annual update report to the Council. He mentioned the library has received several awards including one for CPR training. He also mentioned the median age of the library user is increasing. Carol Simpson, KDL Board member mentioned at the August 5 General Election, the Kent District Library will be requesting an additional millage of 1.28 mills. She explained the millage increase would cost the average homeowner approximately \$30.00 annually. Josh Bernstein, Englehardt Library Branch Manager mentioned the great support the Lowell community provides. He added 4 out of 5 residents have a library card. He further mentioned the wonderful municipal support he receives. Councilmember Hodges appreciates the break out of the City of Lowell within their annual report. Hodges mentioned the City of Lowell is very proud of the Englehardt library.
- B. **RIVERWALK FESTIVAL FIREWORKS DISPLAY.** Liz Baker, on behalf of the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, mentioned this will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lowell Riverwalk. She requested approval of a permit for fireworks on Saturday, July 12, 2014. She added the the fireworks are sponsored by the Laurels of Kent. The fireworks will be launched at Stoney Lakeside Park.

IT WAS MOVED BY SCHWAB and seconded by ALTOFT to approve the request from the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce for a fireworks display on Saturday, July 12, 2014.

YES: 5. NO: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

- C. RIVERWALK FESTIVAL STREET CLOSURE REQUEST. Liz Baker, Chamber Director mentioned the Chamber is requesting several street closures relating to events that are part of the annual Riverwalk Festival.

IT WAS MOVED BY SCHWAB and seconded by HALL to approve the request from the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce to close Avery Street, west of Monroe Street, beginning on Thursday, July 10, 2014, at 6 a.m. through Saturday, July 12, 2014, ending at 6 p.m.; and to close Avery Street, from Monroe Street to Washington Street and to close Washington Street, from Main Street north to the Lowell Area Schools parking lot, on Saturday, July 12, 2014, from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m.

YES: 5. NO: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

- D. RESOLUTION APPROVING ACQUISITION OF TAX FORECLOSED PROPERTY. City Manager Howe reported when property is foreclosed because of non-payment of taxes, local units of government have the first right of refusal to purchase the property for the amount of the taxes owed on the property. Howe mentioned there is a parcel on Bowes Road between the Light and Power Substation and Walgreens, subject to the tax foreclosure process that is triangular in shape, available for \$2,660.07. Councilmember Ellison felt with road frontage it was a good price. Councilmember Hall felt the City should return the rock to this location that marked the first settlement of Dansville.

IT WAS MOVED BY HALL and seconded by ELLISON to adopt the resolution authorizing the purchase of property at 2560 Bowes Rd.

YES: Councilmembers Altoft, Hall, Ellison, and Mayor Hodges.

NO: 1. (Schwab) ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

- E. URBAN COUNTY CDBG PROGRAM/RENTAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM. City Manager Howe reported we have discussed for some time the idea of terminating the cooperative agreement with Kent County for the Urban County CDBG Program in order to qualify for the state's Rental Rehabilitation Program. There are a number of downtown building owners that are interested in the possibility of bringing the rental rehab program to Lowell which could spur significant investment in the downtown. At the same time, this action will result in the loss of about \$30,000 per year from the Kent County program. This revenue is not guaranteed, however, and there has been some discussion at Kent County about changing the program to make it more competitive and that projects would be more geared toward regional initiatives.

This seems to be a good time to pursue the rental rehab program as it has been very successful in other communities and is a crown jewel of the programs offered through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. In fact, the program has recently been upgraded to allow for an additional \$5,000 per unit (a total of \$40,000 per unit).

One concern is that we have contracted with Hope Network to provide a limited transportation program for the disabled. We have allocated enough in next year's budget to keep this program going for at least one more year and are working with local agencies to request that they blend this program in with other transportation services so this need continues to be met. Councilmember Altoft mentioned parking may be an issue.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to adopt the resolution terminating the cooperative agreement for the Urban County CDBG Program with Kent County.

YES: Councilmember Altoft, Hall, Ellison, Schwab and Mayor Hodges

NO: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Councilmember Schwab requested the Hope Network program provided by North Kent Transit Services, be continued to be funded by the City.

8. **COUNCIL COMMENTS.** Councilmember Altoft said the town looks nice and advised the City work on the west bank of the river.

Councilmember Schwab said he had nothing to report. However, Balls Ice-cream is open and the sun is out.

Councilmember Hall mentioned the Planning Commission and LARA have upcoming meetings. He mentioned the DDA passed their annual budget and that the library tree has been taken down.

Councilmember Ellison mentioned the trees to be planted at the BP gas station, as part of the Arbor Day festivities, has been postponed. She mentioned because of the safety concerns with the tree at the library, she is pleased it has been removed

Councilmember Hodges reported he attended the L & P Board meeting, Chamber meeting and a Look Memorial Fund meeting is scheduled for May 21. He mentioned County Commissioner Diane Jones attended the coffee with council and shared her ideas and thoughts for Lowell.

9. **MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Howe reported the Maple Tree in front of the library has been removed. He mentioned the trunk was very solid, however the large branches were hollow.
2. Howe stated he has been working with the Grand Valley Metro Council to ensure the current and proposed future trails in the city are included in their non-motorized plan. City has been spending a great deal of time working on employee health insurance in light of the changes due to the Affordable Care Act. We are currently taking input from employees and working with represented groups to come to a consensus. Priority Health will allow us to maintain our current plans for one more year, however, they will no longer cover retirees under these plans which puts retiree health care in jeopardy.
3. A pre-construction meeting with Rockford Construction on the bio-digester project was held in an effort to be proactive with companies looking to build and expand in the community. Howe added the first week in July the tank should be installed so please keep this in mind as the process will be interesting.
4. The first round of street sweeping occurred last week.
5. Council workshop will be held on Tuesday, May 13 to discuss the budget.
6. Howe prepared a power point presentation on letters received from the IBEW. He mentioned in terms of qualifications concerning licensed operators at our Water Plant, we currently exceed DEQ requirements.
7. Howe stated after the meeting, he will provide the Council with a written report prepared by Attorney Dick Wendt in regard to vehicle use at Light and Power.

10. **APPOINTMENTS.**

There were not appointments.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

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James W. Hodges, Mayor

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Susan S. Ullery, Deputy City Clerk