

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 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 Mayor Hodges and roll was called by Deputy City Clerk Susan Ullery.

Present: Councilmembers Jeff Altoft, Sharon Ellison, Jim Hall, Matt Mayer and Mayor Jim Hodges.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Mark Howe, Deputy City Clerk Susan Ullery, DPW Director Dan Desjarden and Police Sergeant Chris Hurst.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.**

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

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 October 20, 2014 meeting as written.

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

IT WAS MOVED BY HALL and seconded by ELLISON to approve the closed session minutes of the October 20, 2014 meeting as written.

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

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

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

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

NO: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (11/03/2014)

General Fund	\$53,448.68
Major Street Fund	886.03
Local Street Fund	829.01
Historic District	2,100.00

Downtown Development	11,556.47
Designated Contributions	44.53
Airport Fund	4,182.26
Wastewater Fund	57,641.33
Water Fund	12,622.41
Data Processing Fund	360.63
Equipment Fund	1,063.41
Current Tax Collection	53,764.43

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

Tony Ellison of 407 N. Division thanked the Lowell Police Department as well as the Department of Public Works for their help on an issue he recently encountered. He thanked Water Distribution Supervisor Bob Robinson on his advice and words of encouragement. Ellison also thanked Greg Canfield on the same issue.

Rachel Phillips of 121 Tia Trail, wife of DPW employee Todd Phillips, commented on the retirement of Bob Robinson. He will be very hard to replace after having 26 years of experience. Phillips raised concerns as to why he was retiring four years prior to receiving his retirement benefit.

6. **OLD BUSINESS.**

A. Strategic Plan Update. An updated report was provided. City Manager Mark Howe stated a stakeholder meeting was held on October 23 with good attendance from a broad range of interested citizens, business owners and representatives from community organizations. The consulting team will begin preparing final plans for a public open house and presentation to the Downtown Development Authority. The next meeting is scheduled for November 20.

B. Pending Council Projects Report. Downtown Tower Removal – No bids were received. This is being re-evaluated and may proceed early next year.

Underground Electrical Lines – The Council discussed this at their previous meeting. Lowell Light and Power also provided a report.

Tree Issue – The Council raised concerns at its last meeting regarding diseased and dead trees. The City has been working with Laurels of Kent and the homeowners to address these concerns.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) Presentation. City Manager Mark Howe stated Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. had requested they be allowed to make a presentation to the City Council. However, they did not show.

B. Renew Lawn Mowing Contract. Zach Beachum of Clean Cut Lawn Care requested a one-year extension of the current agreement for lawn care. City Manager Howe provided the results of the bids when the three year agreement was awarded for 2012 through 2014.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to approve a one year extension of the lawn mowing agreement with Clean Cut Lawn Care of Lowell at the current rate.

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

- C. Improved City Bond Rating. Standard and Poors has informed the City that the bond rating has been increased from “A” to “A+”. This is significant given the fact that the City is pursuing bonds for the lift repairs and/or upgrade project as well as borrowing for equipment replacement.

City Manager Howe provided a power point presentation explaining the process of how the bond rating system works.

- D. Right Place Investment Agreement. Birgit Klohs, President and CEO of the Right Place, Inc. provided a presentation during the last Council meeting. They have requested our continued investment in services from the Right Place at a rate of \$2,500 per year. The City anticipated \$2,000 in the current budget to reflect our previous five year commitment.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to approve a five year investment agreement with the Right Place, Inc. for economic development services.

YES: 4. (Councilmembers Altoft, Ellison, Hall and Mayor Hodges) NO: 0.

ABSTAIN: 1. (Councilmember Mayer) ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

8. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Mayer stated the next Fire Authority Board meeting will be November 17th. A grant was awarded to them.

Councilmember Altoft was sorry to see Bob Robinson retiring early. He has brought up many times that City departments are understaffed. He also commented on his disappointment regarding Simon Kelly no longer being employed with Lowell Light & Power. Altoft stated he is also concerned with parking during the winter months.

Councilmember Hall stated the Planning Commission held a special meeting on November 1 to discuss the proposed Mixed Use District. The public and Planning Commission walked through much of the downtown area and discussed properties which could be affected. LARA will meet on November 12. Hall commented on the retirement of Bob Robinson. It is nice to see that he is able to retire early and do the things he wishes to do.

Councilmember Ellison expressed her gratitude to Bob Robinson and wished him well. Ellison also commented on the recent work session. City Manager Howe did an excellent job leading the Council through some tough issues. She thanked him for his leadership.

Mayor Hodges agreed with Ellison. Howe was very bold in leading the Council through the work session. He appreciated Howe’s leadership. The Look Memorial Fund has received its applications. The board will meet on November 18 to review and allocate these funds.

9. MANAGER’S REPORT

1. A group representing the city, business leaders, and the chamber visited Blue 35, an innovative space in downtown Grand Rapids providing temporary and occasional office space to working professionals. There is some discussion about bringing the concept to Lowell in some fashion.

2. The City will continue to work with the city attorney and Grand Rapids Foundation toward an agreement that would deposit a portion of the Look Memorial Fund with the foundation for investment purposes. A tentative agreement will be presented to the Look Memorial Committee for review and recommendation to the Council.
3. The City received a letter from Bob Robinson, Water Distribution Supervisor, that he will be retiring effective December 26, 2014. Upon his retirement he will have served 28 years with the City of Lowell. His departure will certainly be missed. The position is posted and there is an aggressive timeline to have an individual in place by December 22. Robinson has performed very well and it will take years for someone to fill his shoes.
4. A parking analysis has been completed. Within the next two weeks, Howe wanted to get business owners together to determine how the parking on the west side of town can be utilized and snow can be removed effectively.

10. **APPOINTMENTS.**

Mayor Hodges stated two positions are open on the Board of Review.

11. **CLOSED SESSION**

A. Union Negotiations

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to move to closed session at 7:46 p.m. as allowed under the Open Meetings Act MCL 15.268(c) to discuss union negotiations.

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

NO: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to return to open session at 8:05 p.m.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON to adjourn at 8:06 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

James W. Hodges, Mayor

Susan S. Ullery, Deputy City Clerk