

**PROCEEDINGS  
OF  
CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE  
CITY OF LOWELL  
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2015, 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, Treasurer Suzanne Olin and Police Chief Steve Bukala.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.**

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

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

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

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to approve the regular minutes of the February 17, 2015 meeting as written.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY HALL and seconded by ALTOFT to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2015 worksession as written.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

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

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

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (03/02/2015)

General Fund	\$15,636.18
Downtown Development	2,970.00
Airport Fund	223.30
Wastewater Fund	45,985.01
Water Fund	1,565.88
Data Processing Fund	349.11
Equipment Fund	4,792.84

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

Perry Beachum of 924 Riverside Drive stated Gilda’s Laugh Fest will have an event on March 7, 2015 at the Grand Volute. Also, as Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Beachum thanked DPW Director Dan DesJarden, Parks Supervisor Scott Fosburg and the DPW for the work done on the ice skating rink. He also thanked the LaCrosse Club, who has also been maintaining the rink on a daily basis.

6. **OLD BUSINESS.**

- A. Strategic Plan Update. The Downtown Development Plan has been presented to the DDA. The electronic copy needs to be uploaded to the website as well as the Stage Plan. Copies will also be provided to the Council.
- B. Pending Council Projects Report. A letter has been sent to the DEQ regarding lime disposal, with no response. Councilmember Altoft asked if any of the expenses would be recovered. City Manager Howe explained a final payment would not be made. Altoft suggested not making this payment until the issue has been settled. Howe stated he would summarize the additional expenses and facts for the Council.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Resolution 04-15 Approving and Authorizing Execution of fixed Base operation Agreement with Williams Air Power, Inc. Airport Manager Casey Brown has worked with Dan Williams and the Airport Board to develop a new Fixed Based Operator agreement. Mr. Williams will continue to provide maintenance and snow removal services to the airport in exchange for the use of certain buildings. The agreement has been recommended by the Airport Board and reviewed by the city attorney.

IT WAS MOVED BY ALTOFT and seconded by MAYER to adopt Resolution 04-15.

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

NO: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

- b. Public Hearing – Community development Block Grants – (CDBG). A public hearing was held on the proposed reallocation of the 2014-15 CDBG grant from a pathway project to Donna Street Improvements.

This is the final year the City will receive a CDBG grant through Kent County due to previous council action removing us from the urban county program. That action will enable us to be eligible for CDBG grants through the State of Michigan and its rental rehabilitation program.

The City submitted a grant application to Kent County last year for a pathway project to extend the Ridgeview path from Sibley Street to Main Street. After further discussion with Kent County, the City is proposing to reallocate those funds to an overlay street project on Donna Street, which has been rated as the worst street in the city.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by ALTOFT to adopt Resolution 05-15.

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

NO: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

- c. Wastewater Flow Monitoring. Brian Vilmont of Prein & Newhof is proposing to gather wastewater flow data in the city's collection system in order to design the proposed new lift station. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$28,650. Of this, 90 percent is eligible for reimbursement through the SAW grant which we anticipate receiving in 2016.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL that the Lowell City Council authorizes the City Manager to proceed with the proposed Flow Monitoring and Lift Station Basis of Design project.

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

NO: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

- d. Wastewater Operations Analysis from Prein & Newhoff. The Council asked City Manager Howe to conduct an analysis of whether or not it would be more cost effective to operate our wastewater treatment plant with city staff or continue contract operations. Howe asked Brian Vilmont with Prein & Newhoff to perform this analysis.

Howe also invited Mark Mundt of United Water, the City's current contractor, to present the benefits he feels United Water provides to the City of Lowell.

Vilmont stated his company looked at several communities that have similar plans or used a similar process. The current state of the industry is such that there is a declining number of certified operators in the State of Michigan. He explained the different contracts and the cost included in a true net annual operating cost.

Vilmont listed the pros and cons when comparing “contract staff” vs. “self-staff”.

Mayor Hodges noted the fines with the DEQ can be \$10,000 a day. Vilmont stated the contracted company would be responsible for the fines.

Councilmember Altoft stated the Water Treatment Plant does very well with City employees running it. He suggested the City look further into this. Councilmember Mayer agreed.

Councilmember Ellison believed the City had a good contract with United Water and would be in favor of renewing the contract.

Councilmember Hall did not recall any complaints with United Water and would be in favor of negotiating a new contract with United Water.

Altoft agreed we probably should contract staff. However, it is a large expense and should go out for bid.

Wastewater Treatment Plan Superintendent Mark Mundt made note of all the benefits of contracting with United Water.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to authorize the City Manager to negotiate a new agreement with United Water for operation of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

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

NO: Councilmember Altoft ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

- e. Sidewalk Criteria. City Manager Howe presented the deficiency criteria for the 2015 sidewalk replacement program. This criteria will be used during the spring inspections. The City will require property owners to replace sidewalks rated as “Red” and will issue notices to those with sidewalks rated as “Yellow.”

Councilmember Altoft suggested adding a depth requirement for holes. Howe stated the old criteria referenced  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch. By general consensus, the Council agreed to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch.

IT WAS MOVED BY HALL and seconded by ALTOFT that the Lowell City Council adopt the 2015 Deficiency Criteria as modified for Sidewalks and Driveways.

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

NO: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

8. **COUNCIL COMMENTS.**

Councilmember Mayer made note to the MERC decision.

Councilmember Altoft stated Mark Mundt is doing a great job running the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The only reason he voted no is because the City has a process to go out for bid.

Councilmember Hall stated he will be attending a seminar in Lansing regarding Zoning Board of Appeals on March 5, 2015.

Councilmember Ellison stated she appreciates the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mayor Hodges congratulated the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He also made note regarding “Laugh Fest”.

9. **MANAGER’S REPORT**

1. The City is moving forward with the idea of unscrewing the bulbs on every other light in the downtown district. This will allow residents, merchants and visitors to provide input on the concept of removing every other light fixture. This was an element of the downtown placemaking plan.
2. Work on the proposed budget for the next fiscal year continues. The plan is to have a preliminary discussion at the March workshop.
3. The DPW Director candidate was given incentives to stay in his current community and has now declined the position. He was very apologetic and was looking forward to coming to Lowell but his current community made him an offer he couldn’t refuse.

10. **APPOINTMENTS.**

Board of Review  
Alternate Vacancy -

Construction Board of Appeals  
Vacancy –

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to adjourn at 8:19

DATE:

APPROVED:

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James W. Hodges, Mayor

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Susan S. Ullery, Deputy City Clerk