

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 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, City Treasurer Suzanne Olin, Police Chief Steve Bukala, Light and Power General Manager Greg Pierce and City Attorney Richard Wendt.

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

IT WAS MOVED BY HALL and seconded by MAYER to approve the regular minutes of the April 6, 2015 meeting as written.

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

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

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

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (04/20/2015)

General Fund	\$15,326.98
Major Street Fund	\$478.75
Local Street Fund	\$478.75
Downtown Development	\$1,989.84
Designated Contributions	\$49.86
Airport Fund	\$1,963.53

Wastewater Fund	\$53,794.21
Water Fund	\$9,448.89
Data Processing Fund	\$4,994.04
Equipment Fund	\$13,052.97
Look Fund	\$2,500.00

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

Perry Beachum of 924 Riverside Drive and Boardmember of Lowell Light and Power has adopted part of “Showboat Highway”. They will be participating in a “clean up” Wednesday, April 22, 2015. The group will meet at Lowell Township Hall at 5:15 p.m. All are invited.

6. **OLD BUSINESS.**

- A. Strategic Goals Report. No further updates were provided.
- A. Pending Council Projects Report. No further updates were provided.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Presentation from LoWellness. Jody Seese serves as the Program Director for LoWellness. She provided a presentation regarding the program and how it may benefit the residents of Lowell.
- B. Arbor Day Proclamation. Mayor Hodges read a proclamation into record establishing the last Friday in April as Arbor Day. This year Arbor Day will be April 24.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by MAYER to concur with the Mayoral proclamation establishing the last Friday in April of each year as Arbor Day in the City of Lowell.

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

Councilmember Ellison stated there will be a tree planting on April 24, 2015 at noon at Lowell Family Chiropractic, 1425 W. Main Street.

- C. Donna Drive Resurfacing Project. City Manager Howe explained Donna Drive is eligible for CDBG funding. The City would receive approximately \$28,000 for the project. This will be the end of the City’s eligibility for CDBG funding due to pulling out of the urban county program with Kent County. This gives the City a deadline of June 30, 2015 to not only complete the project but also the paperwork. This is a reimbursement grant.

Howe noted the condition of the road was much worse than originally thought. Therefore, the project will cost more than anticipated. However, he is confident that the General Fund can transfer funds to the Local Street Fund in order to cover this project for its completion by June 30, 2015.

Three bids were received and it is recommended the City Council accept the low bid from Olin Excavating for \$79,875.

Councilmember Ellison questioned if the contract referenced any kind of contingency if the deadline cannot be met. Williams and Works Engineer Dave Austin explained as standard with other contracts, there is not a date for the deadline. However, they do have 21 calendar days from the time they issue

notice to proceed. They anticipate that they will be able to issue this notice soon and that the construction can be completed within that time. As mentioned the federal paperwork has to be completed and turned in prior to the end of the fiscal year. If the contractor cannot complete the job in 21 days then the City could request liquidated damages.

Austin noted the project was just approved by the CDBG staff. The nature of the project is a little different than what has been done in the past. The street does not have curb and gutter for its entire length. The staff took a lot of time reviewing the project with HUD to make sure that it did qualify. The City did not receive authorization to proceed with getting bids until the last minute. The county is aware of this and the preconstruction meeting has already been established. They are aware of the urgency.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to award the bid for the Donna Drive Resurfacing Project to Olin Excavation for \$79,875.

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

- D. Resolution for taser grant. The Lowell Police Department has completed a grant application to the Michigan ParPlan, insurance pool, for the replacement of (3) X26 TASERS with (3) new X2 Tasers. Our current X26 TASERS are coming to the end of their lifecycle and are becoming unreliable.

The total cost of the project is \$6,444.54 and the grant request is for \$5,000. The remainder will be covered within the police department budget.

IT WAS MOVED BY HALL and seconded by ALTOFT to authorize the grant application for the replacement of tasers for the Lowell Police Department.

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

- E. Budget Recommendation. City Manager Howe gave a brief power point recommendation regarding the 2015/2016 fiscal year budget. The Council adopted a strategic plan that serves as the framework through which these recommendations have been developed. The budget reflects the Council's leadership and the direction that is given to Howe toward the vision of making the City of Lowell the "Vibrant Core of a Thriving Community". Within the strategic plan there are focus areas that revolve around community collaboration, government efficiency and effectiveness, quality neighborhoods, economic vitality and sustainability, and diverse recreational and cultural opportunities.

During the last few years the City has used the strategic plan to weather a financial recession, working from recovery to stability. A number of major accomplishments have moved the City toward stability. About four years ago we eliminated the projected \$500,000 deficit across all funds. The City saved more than \$800,000 by refinancing debt. A big part of this was the City Hall debt as well as a water bond. During this time the City has also nearly doubled the fund balance in the General Fund. It is also significant to note the City of Lowell recently received an A+ on the Standard & Poors' rating system. The Equipment Fund was managed out of a negative position. More than one mile of sidewalks has been replaced. Also, during these last few years we have increased our General Fund contribution to streets with many projects being completed. This year's budget recommendations are taking the City from stability to progress.

Howe was hopeful and confident for the future that the City can start to move forward. City finances are extremely complicated and it includes Federal and State funding sources. Howe reminded the Council, “what unites us is greater than what divides us”.

Howe noted a copy of the budget is available at City, library and on the website.

He also reminded the Council that a work session will be held on April 27, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

8. **MONTHLY REPORTS**

No comments were received.

9. **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilmember Mayer stated the Fire Authority met on Monday April 13, 2015. They were asked unanimously to look at what it would cost the authority to be independent from the City of Lowell with its administrative duties. The authority has decided to consider the idea.

Councilmember Altoft commented on all the street lights being turned back on. City Manager Howe stated he received a few comments. It seems the general consensus is to leave the lights on. Altoft questioned the life span of the light bulbs. DWP Director responded five years. Altoft brought up the idea of a lower wattage.

Commissioner Hall mentioned there are several broken windows at the Riverside School property. The entire property is run down.

Councilmember Ellison stated she appreciated Howe’s leadership and strategic plan.

Mayor Hodges stated Light and Power Board met last week. He noted 2015 is the year where they have to submit a new two year renewable energy plan to the State of Michigan under Public Act 295. The MPPA is working on this with the City and the numbers show that Light and Power has exceeded the 10% mandate and will be close to 20% renewable energies by the time the bio-digester is fully operational. This would put us at one of the highest percentages in the State of Michigan.

The upcoming annual APPA Lineworkers Rodeo/Operations and Technical Conference will be May 15 – 17th.

The bio-digester continues to move closer to full operation. Bio gas is being produced and is running on a more regular basis. Light and Power is in the process of completing the final fill of the reflow portion of the digester and are making deliveries of waste from Swisslane daily.

Work continues on the installation of the Rolls Royce turbine and they keep moving forward as funds allow.

Next month Light and Power will begin looking at the Personnel Policy Handbook. There are some revisions necessary due to the IBEW contract ratification and probably some other areas that need updating. Staff will provide a draft to review by the next Board meeting.

The Employee Volunteer Policy will be reviewed. A number of organizations are being looked at that to allow employees to volunteer their time and contribute back to the community.

The Lowell Chamber of Commerce has had some very successful events including “Girls Night Out”. Coming up on May 20th will be the annual gathering of the Chamber of Commerce. The event will honor “Person of the Year” to Rick Seese, “Business Appreciation” to Keiser Kitchen, “Best Business to Watch” is River Edge Bed and Breakfast and Gathering Place, “Most Promising New Business” is Red Barn Market, “Non Profit Spot Light” is the Lowell Womens Club and “Brick Award” goes to J & H Mobile and Timpson Transportation. The event will take place at River Edge Bed and Breakfast and Gathering Place.

Look Memorial Fund will meet on May 20th for the distribution of funds that are available.

Hodges stated this is a terrific community to live in and thanked City Manager Howe for his leadership.

10. **CITY MANAGER REPORT.**

- A. A workshop is scheduled for Monday, April 27, at 6 p.m. to go over budget recommendations in detail.
- B. Ron Woods is the interim Director of Public Works. Ron comes to the City as the retired Public Works Director from the City of Kentwood. He will be fantastic for the transition. The City can take a very deliberate process to hire the next DPW Director.
- C. The new sign for the Farmers Market is at the corner of N. Monroe and Avery. This will be a great new location. The lot will be closed for parking on Thursdays beginning very earlier in the morning and ending by 6 p.m.
- D. Grants have been submitted for the portions of the Fred Meijer River Trails from Lowell to Greenville and then from Lowell to Saranac.
- E. The City is continuing to work through the process regarding the burned down house on Lincoln Lake.
- F. Howe wished Mayor Hodges a Happy Birthday.

11. **APPOINTMENTS.**

Mayor Hodges recommended Mark Mundt be appointed to the Construction Board of Appeals. By general consensus, the Council agreed.

Board of Review
Alternate Vacancy -

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by MAYER to adjourn at 8:11 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

James W. Hodges, Mayor

Susan S. Ullery, Deputy City Clerk