

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, MAY 18, 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, and Mayor Jim Hodges.

Absent: Councilmember Mayer.

Also Present: City Manager Mark Howe, Deputy City Clerk Susan Ullery, Interim DPW Director Ron Woods, City Treasurer Suzanne Olin and City Attorney Richard Wendt.

2. **EXCUSE OF ABSENCE.**

IT WAS MOVED BY HALL and seconded by ALTOFT to excuse the absence of Councilmember Mayer.

YES: 4. NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.**

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

YES: 4. NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

4. **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 May 4, 2015 meeting as corrected.

YES: 4. NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

5. **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 and Mayor Hodges.

NO: None. ABSENT: Councilmember Mayer. MOTION CARRIED.

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (05/18/2015)

General Fund	\$18,377.77
Major Street Fund	\$5,064.27
Local Street Fund	\$4,125.23
Downtown Development Fund	7,217.78

Designated Contributions	\$427.19
Airport Fund	\$1,021.07
Wastewater Fund	\$12,273.08
Water Fund	\$9,300.84
Data Processing Fund	\$908.39
Equipment Fund	\$423.80

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

No comments were received.

7. **OLD BUSINESS.**

- A. Strategic Goals Report. City Manager Howe referred to inflow and infiltration. He said the City engineer is working on a theory that there could be a layer of clay on the west side that is acting somewhat like a dam. This could be the reason for a high water level in this area.
- B. Pending Council Projects Report. Howe stated RFP's for the removal of the tower have been sent out.
- C. Public Hearing and Adoption of 2015 – 16 Budget Resolution. It was noted copies of the budget have been available at city hall, library and on the website for the public to review.

No public comments were received.

Councilmember Altoft questioned what was budgeted for maintenance expenses at the library. Do changes need to be made because of the heating/cooling system? Howe stated the total expenses for the current year are approximately \$70,000 and we anticipate receiving approximately \$8,000 from KDL. Within that there is approximately \$10,000 for repair/maintenances expenses. However, expenses will be well beyond this due to the HVAC project. Howe noted the project was built into next year's budget which begins July 1, 2015.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to accept Resolution 07-15 adopting the City of Lowell's annual budget for the 2015 – 16 fiscal year.

YES: 3. (Councilmembers Ellison, Hall and Mayor Hodges)

NO: 1. (Councilmember Altoft)

ABSENT: 1. (Councilmember Mayer) MOTION CARRIED.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Kent County Dispatch Agreement. Kent County has requested that the City renew the agreement to provide dispatch services for the police department. The county has been working with other agencies to extend the agreement to entities in which the county is providing dispatch services for fire departments. Currently not all fire departments, including the Lowell Area Fire Department, pay for dispatch services.

The proposed agreement with the City of Lowell will actually reduce the cost of police dispatch services as fire agencies are being asked to pay their share of dispatch costs. This will likely be offset by a future

increase in our contribution to the Lowell Area Fire Authority assuming the authority agrees to a similar agreement for dispatch services.

The City currently budgets approximately \$40,000 annually for dispatch services. Under the agreement our share of police dispatch would be \$32,823. The fire authority will be asked to phase in payment for dispatch services over a three-year period at annual rates of \$4,881, \$9,763 and \$14,644. As an operating expense to the authority, these amounts would be included in the annual budget with the City of Lowell's portion being determined by the formula established when the fire authority was created.

IT WAS MOVED BY ALTOFT and seconded by ELLISON that the Lowell City Council approve the agreement with Kent County for police dispatch services for a three-year period (January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2017) and authorize the signatures of the Mayor and City Clerk.

YES: 4. NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

- B. Property Available under Tax Foreclosure. The Kent County Treasurer has determined that it will foreclose a property at 126 S. West Street in the City of Lowell. The City has the first opportunity to purchase the property if we deem that it is needed for a public purpose. The total due on the property is \$2,373.33.

While the City has purchased properties in this fashion in the past for public purposes, there does not appear to be any public use for this particular property and therefore it is recommended that the City forego the option to purchase it.

By general consensus, the Council agreed.

- C. Library HVAC System.

The City has been having issues with the heating and cooling system at the Englehardt Public Library for several years. The system was first installed when the building was constructed more than 15 years ago.

Grant applications have been submitted to the Look Memorial Fund and the Lowell Area Community Fund to assist with replacement of the system as well as some efficiency upgrades. In the meantime, during the recent warmer weather as the air conditioning was needed, the system failed and now needs to be replaced.

It will be another month before we hear about whether or not our grant requests have been approved. In the meantime, replacing the system will require time for ordering, delivery and scheduling the installation. We would like to move forward with the project now.

We had planned on upgrading and replacing the system in the 2015 -16 budget. If we moved forward the project has the potential of putting us over budget for the current year, however, we have a sufficient fund balance to cover the expense. This is a prime example of why we carry reserves in fund balance.

Howe asked for the authority to accept a bid less than \$25,000 for the project.

Councilmember Ellison asked if 15 years was a typical life span for such a system. Howe did not believe this was typical but was not sure. There have been many issues all along with the current system.

Councilmember Altoft asked if the new system would be better quality. He also wanted to take a couple extra weeks to make sure it is done right. Mayor Hodges agreed.

Howe clarified the Council wanted the City to hire an outside firm to investigate what the best system would be rather than relying on the contractors to improve the system. By general consensus, the Council agreed.

9. **MONTHLY REPORTS.**

No comments were received.

10. **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilmember Altoft stated the Airport Board discussed improvements that will take place over the summer. He noted all of the hangars are full. Much of the improvements are being done by the board. Altoft also noted Airport Manager Jim Sowle officially resigned from the board which leaves a vacancy.

Councilmember Hall stated the LARA meeting was canceled. However, Planning Commission did meet and it can be viewed from the City's website.

Councilmember Ellison stated none of her boards or commissions met. Ellison requested "public buildings" be discussed at an upcoming worksession.

Mayor Hodges stated the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met. There was a discussion regarding the "Lowell Bucks" and ways of keeping funds in Lowell. Lowell Light and Power also met. The bio-digester continues to move closer to full operation. May 1, 2015 became the Commercial Operation start-up date. They are in the official 30 day start-up period. LEAD is looking to have a ribbon cutting ceremony in the near future. There was also discussion on their personnel handbook and annual health care renewal. The FROM Food Fight is being coordinated with Light and Power. A recycling event will be held on May 30 from 9 – noon. He mentioned on May 20, 2015 the Chamber of Commerce will be celebrating the businesses and "Person of the Year" at its annual gathering. Look Memorial Fund will meet on May 20, 2015 to discuss the distribution of \$7,400 available.

11. **CITY MANAGER REPORT.**

1. The Donna Drive project is moving along well and with continued good weather should be completed on schedule.
2. The sidewalk inspection has been completed and letters are being drafted. Howe is putting together an outline for a discussion on sidewalks at the next workshop.
3. As mentioned in previous reports, the Hudson Street Bridge over the Grand River near the fairgrounds is expected to be closed by the Kent County Road Commission this week for resurfacing. Traffic will be rerouted to Jackson Street. The project is expected to take until July 2 to complete.

4. The cost of the city attorney attending council meetings is approximately \$300 to \$400 depending on the length of the meeting.
5. The May workshop will be held on Tuesday, May 26, at 6 p.m. If the Council has any specific topics to discuss, please let us know so that staff can prepare and have information available for you. The LCTV Committee will also be invited.
6. Howe suggested the Council view the last Planning Commission meeting regarding gravel mining.
7. Howe welcomed Interim DPW Director Ron Woods to the meeting.

12. **APPOINTMENTS.**

Mayor Hodges suggested Matt Kepley be appointed as an alternate to the Board of Review. By general consensus, the Council agreed.

13. **CLOSED SESSION.**

A. Pending Litigation and Union Negotiations

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to move to closed session at 7:40 p.m. as allowed under the Open Meetings Act MCL 15.268(e) to discuss pending litigation and MCL 15.268(c) to discuss union negotiations.

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

NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. (Councilmember Mayer) MOTION CARRIED.

Council returned to open session at 8:11 p.m.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to adjourn at 8:12 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

James W. Hodges, Mayor

Susan S. Ullery, Deputy City Clerk