

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 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 City Clerk Susan Ullery.

Present: Councilmembers Jeff Altoft, Mike Devore, Jeff Phillips, Alan Teelander and Mayor Jim Hodges.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Mark Howe, City Clerk Susan Ullery, City Treasurer Suzanne Olin, Police Chief Steve Bukala, DPW Director Ron Woods and L&P Greg Pierce.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.**

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by PHILLIPS to approve the agenda as presented.

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

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

IT WAS MOVED BY ALTOFT and seconded by TEELANDER to approve the regular minutes of the November 2, 2015 meeting as written.

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

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

Councilmember Altoft questioned the amount paid to Maryalene LaPonsie. City Manager Mark Howe stated she is doing some writing for the City.

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

YES: Councilmembers Altoft, Devore, Phillips, Teelander and Mayor Hodges. NO: None.

ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (11/16/2015)

General Fund	\$36,237.95
Major Street Fund	\$110,135.80
Local Street Fund	\$99,865.24
Downtown Development Fund	\$2,172.07
Designated Contribution Fund	\$124.20
General Debt Service Fund	\$63,822.51
Airport Fund	\$2,869.74

Wastewater Fund	\$23,014.10
Water Fund	\$109,879.31
Data Processing Fund	\$5,608.72
Equipment Fund	\$39,755.01
Current Tax Collected	\$3,944.07

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

Perry Beachum of 924 Riverside Drive welcomed the new council and invited them all to attend the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on November 17, at 6 p.m. as well as the Lowell Area Recreation Authority (LARA) meeting on December 2nd. A council member will need to be appointed to these boards.

Jim Salzwedel of 505 N. Jefferson congratulated the new council members. He spoke about leadership and discussed how over the next 40 days they will have some difficult decisions to make regarding who is going to be leading the council. He passed out information packets to each board member regarding what it takes to be a leader.

Peggy Covert of 982 N. Washington thanked Matt Mayer and Sharon Ellison for their service and also congratulated the three new council members. She noted it is important to work together as a community.

6. **OLD BUSINESS.**

- a. Strategic Goals Report. City Manager Howe gave a brief explanation to the new councilmembers of what the Strategic Goals Report is. Howe reported on the following items from the report:
- Tier One, #1, Street Asset Management Plan: a five-year street plan has been adopted.
 - Tier One, #4, Wastewater Inflow & Infiltration: Prein & Newhoff have completed a draft report and the City staff is currently reviewing it. They hope to have a completed report done soon and then plan to have Prein & Newhoff come to a future council meeting to discuss the analysis and everything leading up to that.
 - Tier One, #5, Downtown Trail Connector: Council members were asked to attend the December 2 LARA meeting so that their plan and recommended route can be presented.
 - Tier One, #8, Economic Development Staff: There was discussion with the Downtown Development Authority about the concept of hiring a full-time economic development staff person. There seemed to be a consensus to the concept, so our next step will be to bring a proposed job description and other details to them for further consideration.
 - Tier Two, #1, Promote Accomplishments: We've been more active with our Facebook page and we're preparing an update to the City logo that can be used with the Newsletter and other marketing materials. A "Next Door" account has been created, which is a progressive application that may give us the ability to adapt to greater online connectivity and announcements with City residents. Howe then presented the updated logo.

- b. Pending Council Projects Report. Nothing new to report.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. 2014-2015 Fiscal Year Audit Presentation. Peter Haefner of Vredevelde Haefner presented the City's and Light and Power's audit. He discussed that there was a new accounting standard implemented throughout the country for the June 30 year end. This new standard requires additional reporting on

pension plans. He then presented the Independent Auditors' Report for the City of Lowell and his opinion on the report. The financial statements referred to in the report present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the discretely presented component unit, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City of Lowell, Michigan, as of June 30, 2015, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

He then presented the Independent Auditors' Report for the Lowell Light & Power and his opinion on the report. In his opinion, the financial statements referred to in the Report present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Lowell Light & Power (an enterprise fund of the City of Lowell, Michigan), as of June 30, 2105, and the changes in financial position and cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

City Manager Howe introduced and thanked Chris Brown from Strategic Accounting and Tax Solutions and explained that he helped the City remove the material weakness that existed in prior audits by helping out with the fixed assets schedule and other issues.

- b. City Attorney Agreement. Howe explained the agreement was allowed to expire in 2012 and its only purpose was to set the rates for these services. The rates have gone unchanged and would only be modified with Council approval. Rates are currently \$145/hour for assigned work and \$90/hour for ordinance enforcement matters.
- c. Purchasing Policy. Howe went through the process to amend the ordinance and develop the current policy. We amended the ordinance and then brought to the Council a policy which was approved on November 19, 2012, and that policy actually is quite an improvement over the ordinance. That policy is still in place. The Light and Power policy currently states that there is a \$10,000 limit.
- d. Wastewater Treatment Plant Ditch Cleaning. The City has been cleaning and repairing the eastern oxidation ditch at the wastewater treatment plant. Unfortunately, when the ditch was drained, larger than normal amounts of sand and gravel was found in the bottom of the ditch. It is believed much of the sand and gravel came into the plant during the April 2013 flood. The City began a process of trying to remove the sand and gravel by flushing the material back to the head of the plant where the majority of the material is removed in the grit chamber, but this is a very slow and tedious process and they have overwhelmed the capacity of the grit chamber several times. Rather than trying to continue with this process, the City decided to seek bids to have a contractor physically remove the material from the ditch. Three bids were received and it is recommended that the City enter into a contract with the low qualified bidder, United Water Environmental Services, at a cost not to exceed \$25,404.00. Source of funds is from the sewer enterprise fund.

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by DEVORE to accept the bid from United Water Environmental Services for \$25,404.00 for removal of the sand and gravel in the eastern oxidation ditch.

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

- e. DPW Utility Trailer. Howe discussed the need for a new trailer for the DPW. They went to AIS Construction Equipment to identify a trailer that would meet their needs at a MiDeal price. MiDeal is the state bidding process that proves pricing that is available to local units of government. The state

then runs the bid process on various items which typically provide local units of government the best price while meeting requirements for competitive bidding. Through this process, it is recommended that the Council approve the purchase of a utility trailer at a price of \$9,437. Howe also reviewed the Equipment Replacement Plan with the Council.

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by DEVORE to approve the purchase of a utility trailer at the MiDeal price of \$9,437 from AIS Construction Equipment.

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

- f. DPW Truck, Interfund Loan. Howe stated the City has purchased a new public works pickup truck as outlined in the equipment replacement plan at a cost of \$37,067.40. It was anticipated that the purchase would be financed through an interfund loan from the wastewater fund. However, Howe stated he does not feel this is now necessary.

8. **MONTHLY REPORTS.**

No comments.

9. **COUNCIL COMMENTS.**

Councilmember DeVore had no additional comments.

Councilmember Teelander discussed comments he received from senior citizens. Some had mentioned that it is difficult to hear the councilmembers speak when watching the video, so Councilmember Teelander suggested speaking closer to the microphone. They would also like the meetings to be put back on Comcast channel 25. City Manager Howe responded it is no longer possible. Teelander suggested finding another way to make the meetings more accessible to seniors and said he would assist in doing so. He also stated that coffee with the seniors would work much better for them if it was done the hour before lunch during the week. They would also like to see future agendas to list and itemize all unfinished business until it is completed. Seniors would also appreciate it if there was an icon at the bottom of our webpage that could connect them to the latest council meeting video. Another senior comment was suggesting that councilmembers stay attentive to how people manage the trash in their yards. Councilmember Teelander then thanked the voters and the audience for coming.

Councilmember Phillips stated that was all nicely put and had no further comments.

Councilmember Altoft attended the Airport Board meeting and noted Dan Williams will be leaving. He also attended the Fire Authority Meeting where the rules and procedures were reviewed. They had a demo of a brush fire rescue vehicle. The Board considered this purchase. However, it is not in the budget and he wanted to bring it to the Council. He suggested it be placed in the budget and then apply for a grant. He also welcomed the new councilmembers.

Mayor Hodges thanked and welcomed the new councilmembers. He passed out an interest sheet that they will go over and organize during the January meeting that outlined the various boards and commissions within the community. There are over 62 people who serve the community. Coffee with Council will be held on December 5 at Senior Neighbors from 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. Coffee with Council will not be held on January 2 due to the holidays. Light and Power had a meeting a week ago and all is going well. The biodigester continues to improve in its process. New equipment has been installed to improve the operating system. They are planning to declare full commercial operations in December. Work continues

on the Rolls Royce turbine and they are on track to have it running in 2016. The Chamber of Commerce meeting was last week and talked about dues and fees of various members, including usage and rentals by members and groups. An Economic Director position was again proposed for the DDA, with the townships possibly involved. He added the showboat future is a concern. The Chamber is taking the lead at forecasting repair and/or the design of a newer boat. A forensic engineer is being sought to evaluate the structure and repair needs of the current boat. Christmas through Lowell will be held this coming weekend. Merchants meeting is the first Tuesday of each month, but they will be taking December off. The next meeting will be January 5 at 5:00 p.m. at the Chamber building. Annual dinner of the Chamber of Commerce is February 25 at the Grand Valute and City Council is encouraged to attend. The Lowell Expo will be Saturday, March 26. The next Chamber meeting will be December 8.

10. CITY MANAGER REPORT.

1. Welcome Councilmembers Mike DeVore, Alan Teelander and Jeff Phillips. On behalf of the staff, we look forward to working with you as you shape the vision for the future of the City of Lowell.
2. The City plans on having MuniCode update the Code of Ordinances to incorporate amendments and changes made since the previous update in 2012. Howe walked the Council through the MuniCode site and discussed its features and potential uses.
3. The Michigan Department of Transportation is gearing up for a mill and resurface project of M-21 from Valley Vista east to the county line in 2016. As part of that project, they have agreed to incorporate portions of the Downtown Placemaking Plan that was recently completed. One highlight of that plan was to create bump-outs at several crossings as well as narrow the lanes to provide more parking along M-21 from Monroe east to Division.
4. City Clerk Susan Ullery is announcing that Trisha Dunham will be joining the City as our new Deputy City Clerk. The City looks forward to having Trisha join the team.
5. During the swearing-in ceremony for the new councilmembers you received an updated version of the council handbook. Howe spent a few minutes going through the handbook.

11. APPOINTMENTS.

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by DEVORE to appoint Jeff Altoft as the Mayor Pro Tem.

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

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by TEELANDER to appoint Jeff Altoft as the designated Councilmember onto the Fire Authority Board.

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

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by PHILLIPS to adjourn at 8:28 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

James W. Hodges, Mayor

Susan Ullery, City Clerk