

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2016, 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 City Clerk Susan Ullery.

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

Absent: Councilmember Jeff Phillips.

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 ABSENCE.**

IT WAS MOVED BY HODGES and seconded by DEVORE to approve the absence of Councilmember PHILLIPS.

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

3. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATION.**

A. Mayor

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by DEVORE to nominate Jeff Altoft as Mayor.

Nominations were closed.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE seconded by TEELANDER to elect Jeff Altoft as Mayor.

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

At this time the meeting was turned over to Mayor Altoft.

B. Mayor Pro Tem

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by HODGES to nominate Mike DeVore as Mayor Pro Tem.

Nominations were closed.

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by ALTFOT to elect Mike DeVore as Mayor Pro Tem.

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

C. Review and Adoption of the Council Rules of Procedure.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded TEELANDER by to adopt the Council Rules of Procedure with the changes.

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

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

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

Mayor Altoft asked to modify the New Business section of the agenda by adding two additional items, which will precede all of the other items within the section; 8(a) will now be about retaining special legal counsel to handle a matter in which the council has an interest pursuant to the Lowell City Charter 7.7, and 8(b) will be a discussion about continuing personnel issues.

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by DEVORE to approve the agenda as revised by Mayor Altoft.

YES: 3. NO: 1 (Hodges). ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S).

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by DEVORE to approve the regular minutes of the December 21, 2015 meeting as written.

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

IT WAS MOVED BY HODGES and seconded by TEELANDER to approve the Council Training with Peter Letzmann minutes of the December 21, 2015 meeting as written.

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

6. APPROVAL OF THE ACCOUNTS PAYABLE.

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

Councilmember Teelander questioned long distance phone charges and asked if the current amount of \$583 was an average amount.

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Phillips. MOTION CARRIED.

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (1/4/2016)

General Fund	\$12,194.75
Major Street Fund	\$296.41
Local Street Fund	\$296.41

Airport Fund	\$542.50
Wastewater Fund	\$36,562.40
Water Fund	\$4,881.44
Data Processing Fund	\$2,998.45
Current Tax Collected	\$177,714.52

7. **CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.** Peggy Covert of 982 N. Washington thanked the council for having good discussion at the last council meeting. She also expressed health concerns regarding the smart meters and discussed issues she had when going to Lowell Light and Power to discuss them.
8. **OLD BUSINESS.** Mayor Altoft opened with discussion stating that City Manager Mark Howe had said a few months prior that the budget had a surplus of \$100,000. That being said, the Department of Public Works (DPW) received additional funds to purchase needed equipment. Mayor Altoft then stated that a week or so ago, he contacted Howe to inquire about the piece of equipment they had down there and why they would spend \$3,000 for a new door on it when the equipment itself is only worth around \$3,000. Mayor Altoft wanted to make a motion to take the remainder of the money and purchase a new Bobcat Skid Steer for the DPW. DPW Director Ron Woods stated that the Mi Deal pricing for this piece of machinery is \$42,075.36. He also stated that their current snow blower burnt itself up, so he requested pricing for a replacement that would fit on the front of the Bobcat from Mi Deal which was \$4,073.60. City Manager Howe stated he met with staff to find out the status of the backorder on the door. He also responded about the budget surplus and allocations of such. He has asked Woods to discuss and prioritize their needs to reevaluate. Woods stated he asked the DPW employees regarding their priorities and the plow truck was, in their opinion, what needs to be replaced first, followed by the wheel loader, which is a 1983 Clark Wheel Loader and they can no longer get parts for that. The bucket has been reinforced this last fall, but if it breaks down, it will become scrap metal.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by TEELANDER to table this discussion and move it to Old Business for the next council meeting to allow members to become more educated on the topic and reprioritize.

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

- a. Strategic Goals Report. Nothing new to report.
 - b. Pending Council Projects Report. Nothing new to report.
 - c. Boards and Commissions. Nothing new to report.
9. **NEW BUSINESS.**
- a. Retain Attorney.

IT WAS MOVED BY ALTOFT and seconded by TEELANDER to retain special legal counsel to handle a matter in which the City has an interest pursuant to the Lowell City Charter, Section 7.7. The Council upon its own initiative may retain special legal counsel to handle any matter in which the City has interest. In order to ensure we are properly handling our discussion of continuing personnel issues, Attorney Katherine Henry has been asked here tonight. Specifically, Altoft moved to hire her as special legal counsel to advise the Council in their discussion to continue personnel issue at her usually hour rate of \$200/hour.

Councilmember Hodges asked Mayor Altoft for discussion on the matter as no prior information had been given as to what personnel matters were at issue. Altoft responded by stating that it was concerning City Manager Howe's performance. Hodges suggested tabling the issue until they can receive information on what is going on, as well as giving City Manager Howe the right to have discussion in a closed session. Teelander agreed with Mayor Altoft and wanted to proceed. Councilmember DeVore agreed with Hodges and said he needed further information in order to vote and that the meeting has gotten too personal and continues to go off topic.

YES: Councilmembers Teelander and Mayor Altoft. NO: Councilmembers DeVore and Hodges.

ABSENT: Councilmember Phillips. MOTION FAILED.

b. Discussion of Continuing Personnel Issues.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by TEELANDER to table this discussion for the next council meeting.

YES: Councilmembers DeVore, Hodges, Teelander and Mayor Altoft. NO: 0.

ABSENT: Councilmember Phillips. MOTION CARRIED.

c. Authorization of Signatures for City Bank Accounts and Designation of Depository Banks. The Council needs to authorize the signatures on the checks and the people who can access the safety deposit box.

The following designations are recommended:

Authorized signatures:

Mayor	City Manager Mark Howe
Mayor Pro Tem	City Treasurer Suzanne Olin
	Police Chief Steve Bukala
	Deputy City Treasurer Lori Gerard

Safety Deposit Box:

Susan Ullery
Trisha Dunham
Luanne Wisniewski

Depository Banks:

Comerica Bank-Grand Rapids	(Grand Rapids)
Huntington Banks	(Lowell)
PNC Bank	(Grand Rapids)
Fifth Third Bank	(Lowell, Ada, Grand Rapids)
Macatawa Bank	(Grand Rapids)
Bank of America	(Grand Rapids)
Mercantile Bank of Michigan	(Lowell, Grand Rapids)

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by HODGES to approve the authorization of signatures for City Bank Accounts and designation of depository banks as proposed.

YES: Councilmembers DeVore, Hodges, Teelander and Mayor Altoft. NO: 0.

ABSENT: Councilmember Phillips. MOTION CARRIED.

- d. Adoption of Budget Calendar. Council is required to annually adopt a budget calendar that outlines a process and dates by which a budget for the ensuing fiscal year will be prepared and adopted. A proposed calendar was presented for Council review and adoption.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by TEELANDER to approve the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Budget Calendar.

YES: Councilmembers DeVore, Hodges, Teelander and Mayor Altoft. NO: 0.

ABSENT: Councilmember Phillips. MOTION CARRIED.

- e. Grand Rapids Community College – Collection of Summer Property Taxes for 2016. As in previous years, the Grand Rapids Community College has requested that the City collect the 2016 summer property taxes for the district. The City collects the Grand Rapids Community College property taxes at no fee in exchange for retaining earned interest while the monies are deposited in city accounts.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by TEELANDER to approve the request from the Grand Rapids Community College to collect the 2016 summer property taxes for the district at no fee in exchange for retaining earned interest while the monies are deposited in city accounts.

YES: Councilmembers DeVore, Hodges, Teelander and Mayor Altoft. NO: 0.

ABSENT: Councilmember Phillips. MOTION CARRIED.

- f. Kent Intermediate School District – Collection of Summer Property Taxes for 2016. As in previous years, the Kent Intermediate School District has requested that the City collect the 2016 summer property taxes for the district. The City collects the Kent Intermediate School District property taxes at no fee in exchange for retaining earned interest while the monies are deposited in city accounts.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by TEELANDER to approve the request from the Kent Intermediate School District to collect the 2016 summer property taxes for the district at no fee in exchange for retaining earned interest while the monies are deposited in city accounts.

YES: Councilmembers DeVore, Hodges, Teelander and Mayor Altoft. NO: 0.

ABSENT: Councilmember Phillips. MOTION CARRIED.

- g. Discussion: Council Training and Information Schedule. City Manager Howe provided a draft schedule to the Council for future council training and information. The training and information will take the place of prior workshops held on the fourth Monday of each month. This is a working document that should perhaps be reviewed and updated at each meeting in order to ensure that the council receives

enough information and training prior to decisions that will need to be made and also so that staff has enough time to prepare and gather information to present to the council.

10. **COUNCIL COMMENTS.**

Councilmember Hodges congratulated Mayor Altoft on his new appointment and offered to answer any questions or assist in any way if so needed. He also commented on the newsletter which features Deputy City Clerk Trisha Dunham. She is doing very well.

Councilmember Teelander stated he watched the Light and Power meeting and asked if the Strategic Plan was recorded. He would like all meetings recorded.

Mayor Altoft stated he had the tree cleaned up in his front yard. He also commented on how the ice and snow in some intersections are so compacted that you can't get to it with a shovel and asked about the City assisting residents with that. It is also important to stay on top of warning residents about upcoming snow.

11. **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT.**

1. The City recently added a new file server to the computer network and in the course of the installation the hard drives on the existing server began to fail. Both hard drives have been replaced and we are also purchasing some backup components to minimize down time if there are any failures in the future.
2. Latest estimates on the cost of replacing a plow truck, which is the next priority on the equipment replacement plan, are higher than anticipated (a total of \$168,935). Replacement of the loader is scheduled this year (the current plan estimates this at \$134,000). Howe plans to meet with staff in the near future to review the plan so that priorities can be recommended and discussed in more detail with you.
3. The walk-behind snow thrower (a 1974 model) caught on fire recently and will need to be replaced.
4. Howe is in the process of putting together new agreements with the various sports teams to use park fields for the next two years. These agreements will be coming to the Council for review and approval at a future meeting.

12. **APPOINTMENTS.**

IT WAS MOVED BY TEELANDER and seconded by DEVORE to table the appointment section of the agenda until the next meeting when Councilmember Phillips will be present.

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

13. **ADJOURNMENT.**

IT WAS MOVED BY DEVORE and seconded by TEELANDER to adjourn at 9:38 p.m.

DATE:

Jeff Altoft, Mayor

APPROVED:

Susan Ullery, City Clerk