

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, JUNE 5, 2017, 5:30 P.M.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL.**

The Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Mike DeVore and Deputy City Clerk Theresa Mundt called roll.

Present: Councilmembers Greg Canfield, Jim Hodges, Jeff Phillips, Alan Teelander and Mayor DeVore.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Mike Burns, City Deputy Clerk Theresa Mundt, City Attorney Richard Wendt, Sergeant Christopher Hurst, and DPW Director Rich LaBombard.

Also Present: John Verplank and Brian Vilmont of Prien and Newhof, Dave Austin of Williams and Works.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED BY HODGES and seconded by PHILLIPS to approve the agenda as written.

YES: Councilmember Canfield, Mayor DeVore, Councilmember Hodges, Councilmember Phillips, and Councilmember Teelander. NO: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

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

There were no comments.

4. **DISCUSSION REGARDING INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES.**

City Manager Mike Burns provided an update to the Council regarding the City status with the Stormwater, Asset Management and Wastewater Project. Representatives from Prien and Newhof were present to update the Council on the project and how it will factor into street and infrastructure improvements. Dave Austin with Williams and Works was also present to provide a history on what the City has addressed in the past regarding the streets.

John Verplank of Prien and Newhof provided a presentation of SAW Grant (Sanitary and Waste Water Asset Management). Verplank explained they had field crews out last summer to come up with an inventory of the system and locate all the city sanitary and stormwater manholes. Verplank explained the next process is to perform a Condition Assessment-Failure Risk, which is a rating system of which pipes need to be replaced. This creates a priority list of what takes higher precedence over others when it comes to the capital improvement plan.

Brian Vilmont of Prien and Newhof spoke in reference to the timeline of the SAW Grant. He believed by next summer/fall there could be a full comprehensive plan including sanitary, storm, water and streets.

Dave Austin of Williams and Works gave a history of the roads and water/sewer lines and when they were last replaced.

Burns stated currently the city does not have a funding structure in place to deal with the stormwater drains. Many cities have it tied into the sewer rates they pay.

Burns went on to state one thing that the City is doing is trying to do more crack and chip sealing to take care of the roads that are in good shape. The roads that are gone are already gone and we need to deal with reconstruction of these roads as we move forward. The question becomes how are we going to pay for this. There is no way this can happen without new funding. He has reviewed different options. The Council could actually raise the millage up to the Headly limit which raises it to 17.2 mills without a vote of the people, however this is not going to solve the problem. The Council could go to a vote of the people for a Headly override, which gets it up to 20 mills, but this is only going to give the City another \$450,000 a year. This may be enough for a bond payment. On top of this, the water and sewer rates may need to be reevaluated. Another option to consider could be a city income tax. There are 23 cities in the State that have income taxes and there are four similar to the size of Lowell. The City of Portland generates approximately \$580,000 solely for their infrastructure improvements, Springfield generates \$1,020,000 for public safety and infrastructure, Hudson generates \$475,000 for capital improvements and Grayling generates \$485,100 for capital improvements. Burns went onto explain the assessment of 1 mill and how much it generates in other communities that are similar in size with the City of Lowell. If the Council is serious about this, we should begin a study to look further into the options.

Austin noted after the last paser rating, 75% or the roads were listed fair to poor. He believed his company could help customize prioritizing these roads. He encouraged the Council to figure out what as a community can we afford.

Councilmember Canfield wanted to see something on the ballot this November to see how the voters feel. He felt income tax was the fairest way to go. Burns did not believe it could be placed on this November ballot. Vilmont stated we could start this summer with posters being placed around the community. Public input is important.

By general consensus, the Council requested Burns to explore options of city income tax and mill increases as well as information for the voters as to a timeline factor and then bring it back to the Council.

5. **ADJOURNMENT.**

IT WAS MOVED BY CANFIELD and seconded by TEELANDER to adjourn at 6:48 p.m.

YES: 5. NO: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

DATE:

APPROVED:

Mike DeVore, Mayor

Susan Ullery, City Clerk