

**PROCEEDINGS  
OF  
THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
OF THE  
CITY OF LOWELL  
MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2018, 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 City Clerk Susan Ullery called roll.

Present: Councilmembers Greg Canfield, Marty Chambers, Jeff Phillips, Jim Salzwedel, and Mayor DeVore.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Mike Burns, Assistant City Manager Rich LaBombard, City Clerk Susan Ullery, and Police Chief Steve Bukala.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED BY CANFIELD and seconded by SALZWEDEL to approve the agenda as written.

YES: Councilmember Canfield, Councilmember Chambers, Councilmember Phillips, Councilmember Salzwedel, and Mayor DeVore.

NO: None. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

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

There were no comments.

4. **STAFFING ISSUES FOR POLICE AND DPW.**

City Manager Michael Burns spoke in reference to staffing issues at the Police Department and the Department of Public Works, stating the Chief of Police and the Assistant City Manager will be making a presentation on these issues in their department.

Chief Bukala gave a staffing presentation for the 2018-2019 budget year. Bukala then asked the question as to if they wanted to stay with the five full time officers, including him or if they wanted to go back with six full time officers, which is where they were when he came to the department twenty years ago.

Bukala then gave a brief budget history, giving the years when they had less and more officers and the budget amounts. Bukala stated that in 2013, the department took over code enforcement, which added more to their budget.

Bukala stated that the part-time officers are the backbone of the department and in 2009, they had a peak, where they were just under six thousand hours and they started making it a little more manageable when they were full staff. Back in 2010, they were back to six full time officers and part-time hours were cut back to around four thousand and have been hovering right around there.

Bukala stated that if they stayed status quo for this year, they would be at five full time officers and the part-time officers would work a little over five thousand hours this year. Officer Brown will reach his top

step increase this year. If the department went to six full time officers, the part-time hours would be down to around three thousand hours, or maybe less.

Bukala went on to explain the pros for having six full time officers instead of five. This would allow the detective to focus on investigations of cases and not have to worry about being on patrol on certain days. Bukala explained that you're basically taking funds from the part-time budget and putting it in the full time budget. He went on to explain that there was a debate five years ago as to the need for a full time detective, so they decided to try it, thinking it would be for a year, but fast-forward five years ago and they're still in the same boat and it has not gotten any better. Investigations have changed and are much more time consuming than ever have been.

The expectation of the general public has been that they like having their own police department and they like the level of service they provide. He is trying to maintain that level of service to the public and it would be easier with a sixth position filled.

Burns advised this is one of the most important needs for the City and if he had to fill any staffing in the City, he would say that this is the one. Burns explained that this was looked at last year, but he didn't feel comfortable with filling the position. He would like to see the position sustainable for five years.

Mayor DeVore stated that this is more than a need and they've explored it a few years ago, but the people sitting on council at the time wanted to illuminate the police department all together, which didn't gain any traction. The police department is one of the most important City services provided.

It was the consensus of the Council that if the sixth full time officer could be sustainable, it should be considered to be put in the budget accordingly.

Assistant City Manager Rich LaBombard then gave a presentation as to what you would expect at the Department of Public Works. LaBombard stated that most people would say they fill pot holes, plow streets, mow grass, but the reality is that the DPW staff affects all citizens on a daily basis.

LaBombard stated the full time employees are himself, superintendent, two supervisors and four regular staff. LaBombard stated they have one regular part-time employee, three to five seasonal employees and then some contract employees such as the meter reader, janitorial, and contracted services from Suez, for mowing, or mechanical or engineering.

LaBombard then explained the hours worked for fiscal year 2017 were 13,248 on the full time side and 3,039 hours for the part-time and seasonal hours. This is actual hours worked and not counting vacation or paid time off. It is estimated for Suez about 4,000 hours, mowing 1,000 plus hours, 600 plus hours for janitorial and 250 hours a year for the meter reader.

Time spent on activities for these hours in the DPW for the 2017 fiscal year was 28 ½% on water treatment, which 9.79% of that time was on equipment. They also spent a lot of time in parks, local streets and even right on down to doing some work for the fire department.

LaBombard explained they would like to see the seasonal employees spend more time in parks, where now they are spending time in the cemetery and DDA. He went on to explain that the full time employees spend time in parks and replacing them in parks with seasonal employees would help alleviate the full time hours spent in parks.

LaBombard stated he has been a little more safety and security focused to doing routine inspections, be more prepared and be more involved in training and drills. He also advised they were looking at probably three full time employees retiring within the next three to five years.

He has identified five under-served service areas in the DPW, which are street maintenance, sidewalks, storm water management, facilities and parking. He advised they are putting patches on patches and it just doesn't hold up very well. It takes a lot of man hours to keep the streets in the condition they are in right now, which is not great and they would like to stop that decline in the pavement and streets.

LaBombard stated they will be talking about sidewalks a little bit later. So far, there are 17 ½ miles of sidewalks in the City, which is hard to believe, but as of today, in his policy and procedure for maintaining sidewalks, they do not have a good solid inspection criteria.

LaBombard moved to storm water and stated there is more storm sewer than there is sanitary sewer in the City. He stated that they do not have a good preventative maintenance plan for this utility and they don't have a solid dedicated plan for this either.

LaBombard advised their maintenance plan is very inconsistent and they have sheds and other buildings that need to be taken care of.

LaBombard stated there are nine municipal parking lots that need to be maintained. There are three lots at the parks, four lots at public facilities and there is not a great preventative maintenance plan for routine paving for the parking lots.

LaBombard then advised with the new Showboat, they should have a budget for maintaining the Showboat. Also, he advised the Fairgrounds will be coming back to the City and there should be a plan for that as well.

In conclusion, LaBombard stated their bucket is pretty full, much like the police department and they can't take on much more. He advised that any seasonal help during the summer could help alleviate some of the work load.

Mayor DeVore stated that mechanic jumps out at him as work lightening up and should not be needed as a full-time employee, especially as many new vehicles that have been purchased by the police and fire departments and there is no mechanical needs for the newer vehicles.

Councilmember Salzwedel asked if the 10% for the time for equipment was for maintenance and LaBombard stated that it was.

City Manager Burns advised that if this something the Council wanted him to look at, he would suggest possibly having an outside consultant come in and take a look at that to see whether or not a full time mechanic is needed.

Councilmember Chambers advised that the position should be part-time if the equipment is new.

Mayor DeVore stated he didn't want to see anything suffer because of this, but a lot of it was fabricated and dragging out the old vehicles. DeVore stated that there was a need for the new equipment.

It was the consensus of the Council to have the City Manager inquire an outside consultant come in and advise if a full time mechanic is needed.

5. **COUNCIL AND BOARDMEMBER COMMENTS.**

6. **ADJOURNMENT.**

IT WAS MOVED BY SALZWEDEL and seconded by PHILLIPS to adjourn at 6:41p.m.

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

DATE:

APPROVED:

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Mike DeVore, Mayor

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Susan Ullery, City Clerk