

MINUTES of the ST. CHARLES CITY COUNCIL
For Tuesday, August 28, 2012 held at 7:00 p.m. at
830 Whitewater Avenue
St. Charles, Minnesota

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilmen:

John Schaber

Dave Braun

Orv Dahl

Wayne Getz

Mayor Bill Spitzer

STAFF PRESENT:

Bill Eckles (Police Chief), Kyle Karger (Public Works Superintendent), Jeff Hardtke (Ambulance Director), Officer Renee Hewitt, Officer Jeff Schrock, Kristine Huinker (City Accountant), and Nick Koverman (City Administrator).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Horob (SEMA Equipment), Kenny Loftus (SEMA Equipment), Nancy Heim, Wayne Young, Nathan Lien, Dan White, and Craig Hilmer (St. Charles Press).

1. ESTABLISH QUOROM/CALL TO ORDER

Quorum was established with Mayor Spitzer calling the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL of the AGENDA: Item 6 Administrative Review was deleted from the agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda: **John Schaber**

No discussion.

Motion carried.

4. Notices and Communications. Admin. Koverman updated the Council that the Sheriff's Office would be sending a proposal to the Winona County Board for the use of repeaters for St. Charles Officers and within City Hall and the City Shop in order to rectify the deficiencies with the 800 MHZ system. Also, he informed the Council that a congregation from the Lanesboro Episcopal Church has volunteered to paint the church the upcoming Saturday, Sept. 1 and the following Saturday, September 8. Arrangements are being made to help supply the group with materials.

5. REVIEW OF FINANCIALS.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

7. SEMA Request of Radio Tower. Admin. Koverman relayed a request to the City of St. Charles for use of the radio tower to install pieces of equipment for a service that they wanted to provide to their customers. He had sent a copy of the 2011 HBC water tower lease agreement to the company and referenced that item to the Council as well. Chris Horob was present to outline the use and equipment for the Council. He highlighted the use of the equipment and stated that based on the business model they could not afford the HBC contract, but offered that in other communities they were paying between \$1,500-\$1,800 annually. In looking at the coverage area that would extend roughly 12 miles the St. Charles water tower would serve the company in the best way. It was explained that up-front costs for the service is \$3,200 with an annual \$200 fee. Currently, he explained, there were only 2-3 customers interested in the service. Clm. Getz asked whether or not this would be setting a precedent to not charge for the service. Clm. Schaber stated he was in favor of a 1 year trial with a right to review the contract as the customer interest grew. The Council discussed other potential conditions such as metering the electricity, having an electrician install the service, paying overtime fees associated with 24 hr access to the city public works department, and making sure that there frequencies do not interfere with current services already installed. The Council discussed the

cost of allowing the service to go on the tower and it was agreed that something should be charged; however, because St. Charles is a farming community there was support for the service. In addition, it did not compete with HBC as a telecommunications provider and therefore set itself apart from a comparison given the potential number of clients and the type of service John Deere provides. The Council agreed on a \$1,500 fee with electricity costs to be subtracted from the fee. A motion was made to draft a contract if all the pieces can be worked out to the effect of the discussion points.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

8. Fire Department Radio Request. Fire Chief Lyle Peterson submitted a letter after receiving a request from the Lanesboro Fire Department for the use of 3 mobile unit radios. Admin. Koverman expressed that the units were obsolete with the implementation of the 800 MHZ radio system . Lanesboro is also a member of the Tri-County Fire Association of which St. Charles is a member of and in addition, the St. Charles department was the recipient of a piece of equipment due to this relationship. A motion was made to approve the donation of 3 mobile radio units to the Lanesboro Fire Department.

Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

9. 2013 General Fund Budget. Admin. Koverman and City Accountant Kristine Huinker presented the preliminary governmental budget. The preliminary levy showed few changes with respect to the governmental budget except for the Capital Improvement Plan schedule that showed an estimated \$368,000 which in turn increases the levy to 16.66 percent. The minor changes were reviewed with Council and it was discussed that Mike Bubany could help to review the CIP as he does every year. Council requested he return to the following meeting. Admin. Koverman reminded Council that the preliminary levy would need to be approved at the Sept. 11 meeting, but that historically we have revised the budget prior to final adoption. No questions were asked.

10. 2012 St. Charles Police Squad. Chief Eckles presented his information as requested by Council with respect to a Dodge unit. Given the costs, Chief recommended that the previous recommendation of a Chevy SUV be approved. Council discussed the value versus the need of three versus four units. Chief indicated that the electric department would prepay \$10,000 of the \$28,000 vehicle and the St. Charles Volunteer Ambulance Association had voted to spend up to \$5,000 to support the SUV as Director Jeff Hardtke stated there are times that an SUV could come in useful to getting EMS personnel to a scene. It was agreed that an SUV given Minnesota weather would be beneficial to the department, but the discussion centered around 3 vs. 4 vehicles. It was discussed if the department looked at 3 vehicles and making one an SUV what would the trade in be for the Impala. Some discussion was held with respect to value and what the impact would be. A motion was made to research what the trade in value would be and report back to the Council

Motion to table: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

11. Water Survey Results. Admin. Koverman opened the discussion by reporting the results of the informal survey. He indicated that 13 percent of the customers responded and that 87 voted in favor of an extra charge and the city owning the infrastructure and 100 voted against the same. Clm. Braun expressed his concern of the lead goosenecks with Clm. Getz supporting. Clm. Dahl was opposed to the City simply absorbing the liability into an already lean budget. Mayor Spitzer expressed that he did not want to burden the customer any further and was hesitant of additional charges and discussed why the program should include everyone versus a voluntary program. Council discussed dollar amounts associated with repairs of shutoff valves as well as potential breaks. The Council agreed that looking at adding \$15,000 as a budget item would be the first step and that they would review this again in October when Mike Bubany was present to discuss the impacts.

12. Electric Conservation Improvement Program. Admin. Koverman highlighted the upcoming educational seminar that the St. Charles Public Utilities and Franklin Energy would be giving on Wednesday, September 5 for residential and commercial customers. Advertisements had been placed and excitement was building for the program.

13. Well #3 Rehabilitation. Supt. Karger provided an update on the Well #3 rehabilitation for the Council. After pumping and lifting crews were able to return to the original level of the well. Work was performed on the motor and various components attached. He also explained that various issues arose with the motor and fishing out old pieces that had been found in the well itself. The work performed exceeded the original estimate of \$35,000, but as the city's best and most used well, staff moved forward with continuing to make long-term repairs.

14. Sump Pump Program Conclusion. Supt. Karger reviewed a letter from WHKS with regard to the 2008 sump pump program. Over the past several summers staff have been gathering information and viewing connections to the sanitary sewer system that were believed to add to the inflow and infiltration of the sanitary district. After reviewing the amount of flow and comparing that to the estimated costs to repair or close the connection, the benefit did not outweigh the cost as the flow was determined to be de minimus. With that finding, it was the engineer's recommendation to grandfather those connections at this time and to conclude the project. After brief discussion, Clm. Schaber motioned to accept the recommendation as presented, but added to seek input from the League of Minnesota Cities with respect to putting it into resolution form.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

None

Motion to adjourn at 8:47 p.m.: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion declared carried.

William J. Spitzer, Mayor

Attest: _____
Nick Koverman, City Administrator