

**MINUTES of the Special Meeting with the ST. CHARLES CITY COUNCIL and the ST. CHARLES
SCHOOL BOARD ISD 858
For Tuesday, December 3, 2013 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:

Ken Frank (Police Chief) and Nick Koverman (City Administrator).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Nathan Campbell (St. Charles Press), Ted and Wanda Olson, John Steffel, Cathy Groebner, Chris Rogers (Winona Post) Mark Roubinek (Supt. of Schools), and School Board members: David Kramer, Bernadine Stevens, Bernie Siebenaler, Mike Schaber, Brian Davidson, and Keith Persons.

1. ESTABLISH QUOROM/CALL TO ORDER

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

Roll Call of School Board. All present except Roger Leistikow.

2. APPROVAL of the AGENDA:

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

Second: **Orv Dahl**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

3. Welcome/Introductions. City of St. Charles. Admin. Koverman provided information with respect to historical census, taxes, funding resources, building permits, and trails. He briefly reviewed information from their October 12th retreat.

4. St. Charles ISD 858. Supt. Mark Roubinek provided information of enrollment, funding sources, facilities, programming, and recent audit numbers.

5. Collaborative Opportunities. Mayor Spitzer began the conversation by highlighting 3 goals: develop a collaborative strategic plan, facilitate discussion on topics, and discern what projects the two organizations may be able to accomplish together.

Safe Routes to School--Mayor Spitzer led the discussion about creating safer pedestrian pathways as our city grows as he looks at Hwy 14, Whitewater Avenue, and other major thoroughfares throughout town. The entrance of the high school was discussed and he relayed conversation recently held with MNDOT as part of a possible request to lower the speed limits. Given MNDOT specifications and national guides, this attempt was not successful. Clm. Dahl offered the idea of a tunnel under Highway 14 and agreement was found to investigate that potential avenue. Other opportunities of improving 9th Street to the downtown area as well as 11th Street were shown as concept images. Discussion of finding a route from the elementary to the high school was also a potential focus. Concerns were expressed about maintenance or public resistance to creating pedestrian facilities. A consensus seemed to be met to explore the Safe Routes to School application for 2015 with work being completed in 2014. Administrator Koverman and Supt. Roubinek were tasked with exploring this potential partnership.

Community facilities (ballfields, gymnasiums). Mayor Spitzer began by stating that staff have had past conversations with SEMMCHRA, owner of the Southfork Development, with respect to other proposed uses for the development as it had lagged for several years. One concept, understanding the need for ballfields, was the

incorporation of this idea into a part of that space. School board members agreed it was probably the closest land possible and discussions of pathways connecting it to the school were held. Gymnasium space was also discussed as Athletic Scott McCready had provided a comparison of St. Charles' facilities with surrounding districts as well as a schedule of the times that all facilities were used. It demonstrated the need for additional gym space that is used between the district and Park and Recreation programs. Discussion was held on the past addition at the elementary but the loss of a gym in addition to a past proposal to construct a gym onto the high school. Admin. Koverman relayed that the Wellness Committee had completed their feasibility study and the numbers of a \$5-7 million dollar facility would not be supported by the community at this time. He then added that he and Rick Schaber had been working with the owners of the former Christian school property located on St. Charles Avenue to investigate rehabilitating the structure and potential costs. Working with Supt. Roubinek, SGN Architects had volunteered to provide an estimate of \$750,000 to remodel the space to meet current code and guidelines. Owners of the property worked with a contractor to provide additional estimates which totaled \$800,000. Discussion was held with respect to the size of the gym and the potential asset of the classroom space. Supt. Roubinek added that he had contacted SGN Architects and that a 100 X 100 (two full size floors) would cost roughly \$175 a finished square foot or \$1.75 million. Discussion was held on what was the better value and what could be the uses. One obstacle discussed for a new gym would be possible location of the facility.

Consensus was formed to renew a conversation with SEMMCHRA regarding a possible use for the fields in the Southfork Development.

Building A Connected Community (WIFI) and Future DMC/Marketing and Promotion—Admin. Koverman provided information on DMC to the group. Contact has been made with representatives of DMC and the Rochester Area Economic Development Initiative and the Rochester Chamber of Commerce as to how we could best facility in helping them as a community and how to have a meaningful discussion. Admin. Koverman highlighted past discussions held with several local businesses as to their needs and how we might be able to help. Connectivity for families and building the employee of the future was a focus of his discussion. How a community can help provide tools for parents to educate their children and for children to be able to utilize technology to its full potential was discussed. Creating opportunities and experiences in the local community through technology and education help to set St. Charles apart and compete. He added that the Destination Medical Center is an opportunity for the community to evaluate who we are, what assets we have, as well as weaknesses, and to build on all of them as it is uncertain what potential families or individuals may want from a community. The group discussed defining the image of the community, hosting more events that help to bring people, creating a buzz in the community and something positive.

Supt. Roubinek and Mayor Spitzer expressed the idea of targeting a position solely responsible for marketing be it through the Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, City, School or a collaboration of all groups. Ideas of internships and volunteers were discussed as well as the VISTA representative that has recently joined and worked with the Farmer's Market group through the end of the season. It was discussed that if an individual with the appropriate skills and talents could be found for a reasonable amount that it was the consensus that funds should be located and utilizing various different groups to help fund that approach may be to everyone's advantage. Discussion continued as far as what was the best way to promote the community and what is the most effective format. Clm. Getz discussed the idea of highlighting that St. Charles is a 20/20 community..20 miles from Rochester and 20 miles from Winona.

GroupCast/School Reach Initiative—Admin. Koverman highlighted this tool that could be utilized by both groups to reach its audience for emergency notices and updates with a phone call. The cost of the use of the item was \$2.50 per line with a \$150 setup/training fee. The possible uses of the tool were discussed.

Motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion declared carried.

William J. Spitzer, Mayor

Attest: _____
Nick Koverman, City Administrator

