

MINUTES of the ST. CHARLES CITY COUNCIL
For Tuesday, October 22, 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:

Lyle Peterson (Fire Chief), Jeff Hardtke (Ambulance Director), Kristine Huinker, Ken Frank (Police Chief) and Nick Koverman (City Administrator).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Cathy Groebner, Dan White, Keith Zanto, Scott Schossow, Mike Bubany (David Drown & Associates), Craig Hilmer (St. Charles Press), and Adam Muschler.

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:

Motion to approve the agenda: **Orv Dahl**

No discussion.

Motion carried.

4. Notices and Communications. None.

5. REVIEW OF FINANCIALS. No comments.

7. EMS Building Proposal Options. Admin. Koverman began the discussion by highlighting the directives set by the Council at their June 25th meeting to review all options for a possible fire/ambulance site and then associated costs with the options. Koverman reviewed the three options requested by Council and referenced the related materials provided in the council packet. Fire Chief Lyle Peterson and Ambulance Director Jeff Hardtke then addressed the Council on the needs that were identified in 2008-2009 and how those needs have remained. They highlighted the growth in both departments and changes in training requirements, equipment, and EMS guidelines. The current 1960 structure, while able to be repurposed, can no longer sustain the department for the foreseeable future. In repurposing the existing fire hall, the overall project would save the citizens roughly \$250,000. Safety of the department members through providing adequate facilities for decontamination of equipment and persons, parking needs, and other concerns were discussed. Both departments had reviewed the proposed plan that was modified by the small appointed committee of the mayor, administrator, fire chief and ambulance director. Space savings and more efficient uses of the structure were redesigned with the help of CRW Architects who had started the project in 2008-2009. The proposed joint space would allow for better communication and training between the departments. Admin. Koverman also relayed that discussions had been set in motion with Winona County to review any potential partnerships for an alternate Emergency Operations Center or 911 Dispatch Call Center as outlined in Winona County All-Hazard Mitigation plan. Initial indications were very favorable toward the idea and that future meetings had been planned to further the concept. Clm. Braun expressed that he agreed with the need, but felt it should be voted on by the tax payers. Clm. Getz asked if any discussion had been held with the townships, and Chief Peterson expressed that this would take place at the annual township budget meeting. Clm. Getz also expressed that he knew the state of the outdated current hall and that something needed to be done. Clm. Dahl echoed that sentiment of needing something but also supported Clm. Braun regarding a vote to the people. Mayor Spitzer expressed that a referendum vote certainly is an option, but that if it were to pass that there still could potentially be

unhappy residents. He expressed that Mr. Bubany had planned to provide the Council with a projection later in the meeting. Clm. Schaber stated that he does see a need for a facility, and noted that costs continue to go up as he referenced the 2008-2009 cost estimate versus the current estimate that had increased by approximately \$400,000. It was outlined that in 2008 the approximate costs of an additional 9,000 square feet and renovating the fire hall of over 4,000 square feet was just over \$1.4 million. In 2014, the project would be anticipated to cost approximately \$1.8 million with all engineering fees included. Clm. Braun stated his support of an exploratory process with Mayor Spitzer affirming that the Council's questions were all valid and that more work needed to be done. Clm. Schaber stated that he appreciated leveraging our partnerships and exploring those avenues. Chief Peterson asked the Council to simply affirm the position of the need for a facility and then to give guidance to seek funding sources. Clm. Schaber added that with the vacated space in city hall by the ambulances that consideration should then be given to the police department who also has space issues as five fulltime members are working in less than favorable conditions. He added that it was his hope that through incorporating police that it may open potential additional funding streams. Mayor Spitzer reiterated Chief Peterson's goal for a motion by the Council. The following motion was made: 1). The Council validates the concerns of the fire, ambulance, and police departments, seeing the need for a project 2). Tasks the Emergency Operations Committee (comprised of 2 fire members, 2 ambulance members, 2 councilmen, and 2 citizens) with seeking additional funding sources.

Clm. Schaber volunteered to serve on the committee. Mayor Spitzer expressed that he would serve on the committee if necessary, but would prefer another member to serve. Clm. Braun stated he would volunteer for the committee assignment.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion passed.

6. 2013 Enterprise Budgets-Mike Bubany. Mike Bubany of David Drown and Associates presented the Council with the forecasted Capital Improvement Plan. He projected out how water and sewer rates should remain with the incremental 3 percent (water) and 6 percent (sewer) increase. The 6 percent sewer increase accounts for the sanitary district's 7 percent increase as well as operational costs. With his projections, reserves begin to build in 2015-2016, which he expresses that at that time the city could choose to reduce the adjustment. This assumes a cash-base philosophy and complimented the Council on their strategy and expressed that the city's position financially looked very sound with only two outstanding bonds. He provided a quick comparison of cities that he services and expressed how the tax rate is second to none, being the most favorable in the area. He discussed current and future storm water projects slated and did express that a .44 increase would be necessary to meet the future projects as the revenues collected are less than what is spent maintaining the storm water projects. Again, he stressed that the infrastructure repairs and improvements have been paid through a cash basis and that no bonding for projects has occurred, but staying on top of these items has helped the city stay in front of that curve.

Mr. Bubany then discussed the previous item of the EMS building. Mr. Bubany highlighted three options that the Council could use if it chose to move forward with a project. He then discussed the impact if the project was funded 100 percent through property taxes and no other revenue streams were utilized. For a \$100,000 value it would affect a resident's property tax \$54 year/\$4.50 a month, \$150,000 equal's \$80/year, \$200,000 value equaled \$107/year, \$300,000 value equaled \$161/year. However, working with staff and looking at reserves that fire and ambulance have in addition to potential annual payments, Mr. Bubany reduced those numbers. In addition, if those sources were utilized and a \$250,000 of the project was paid down, Mr. Bubany demonstrated how tax payers may not see an increase. Mr. Bubany offered to host future meetings to help outline the costs if the project were to move forward. The Council thanked Mr. Bubany for his time expressing that breaking the costs down helped them to better understand how the project may be feasible.

8. Resolution #20-2013 Donation from Red Wing Shoes. Mayor Spitzer reviewed the resolution of the \$10,000 donation made from Red Wing Shoes owner and resident Paul Kieffer to the Parks and Recreation Department. A motion was made to approve the resolution. Council agreed that a thank you should be sent.

Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

9. Police Policy and Procedure Manual. Police Chief Ken Frank was present to discuss the proposed revisions of the police policy and procedure manual. Chief Frank briefly reviewed and outlined the 14 policies. A motion was made to approve the revised St. Charles Police Policy and Procedure Manual.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

9. Health Care Renewal Notice. Admin. Koverman highlighted information provided by the city's health insurance representative regarding the March 1, 2014 renewal date. Due to the Healthcare Reform Act, the city has an option of renewing the policy for a January 1-December 31, 2014 date. The move would save the city up to 30 percent. He expressed that an early renewal would only cost approximately 5 percent, but that this would also mean that the timeline for employees to receive services under the current plan year would be reduced by two months. If employees have scheduled visits or needs the clock would in essence start over in January. Koverman had contacted all labor groups to seek approval and received word back that one would be on board for the early renewal. He had talked with the local union steward of the remaining labor group who had spoken with his group and they were also on board so it would be a matter of amending the contracts.

All Council agreed it would be in the best interest of everyone if we have that option available to us. A motion was made to change the renewal date to January 1, 2014.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

None

Motion to adjourn at 8:08 p.m.: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion declared carried.

William J. Spitzer, Mayor

Attest: _____
Nick Koverman, City Administrator