

**CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMITTEE MINUTES**

DATE: December 8, 2020

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Committee of the Whole

MEMBERS PRESENT: Council President Kemp, Councilors West, Bielski, Pruitt, Pogachar and Mitchell

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

NOTE TAKER: Cynthia Fleming, Deputy Clerk

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Dominic Farrenkopf, Mayor

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes from November 24, 2020

Councilor Pogachar noticed that a letter read during public comment was missing from the minutes. The Deputy Clerk will amend the minutes by adding the letter by Mr. Harris. Councilor West moved to approve the minutes. Councilor Pogachar seconded. The minutes were approved as amended.

• **Amending the Library's Lease to Include the Fire Hall**

Mark Wetherington, Bitterroot Public Library Director told the members that he did a walk-through of the Fire Hall with an architect and the Fire Chief. He would like some certainty that before asking the library board to spend money on a feasibility study that his proposal would be considered.

Public Comment-Brittany McKenzie 313 S 5th street – Ms. McKenzie said that she is a library trustee. She is excited by the potential opportunity to expand the facility and meet the needs of our growing community. The library was once in the Fire Hall and it feels full circle to move back into this facility.

Councilor Pogachar moved to send the proposal to Council. Seconded by Councilor Pruitt. Motion was approved unanimously.

Recommendation:

Move to Council.

- **Fire Hall Update**

Fire Chief Mohn began by saying that the Mayor would like to build this in the next two year. The last time we brought this before the Council we had a consensus of the Council to move this forward. This building will need to take us through the next 50 years. The Mayor and the Fire Chief have met with local newspapers and have also been on the radio. The Fire Chief said that he has only heard positive comments. With the current pandemic situation it is hard to take it to the next level. He suggested a Facebook live presentation so people can see what the Fire Department is facing. He said that he hopes to keep the project under 3 million dollars. The City Finance Administrator, Mr. Shepherd has indicated that we have 1.2 million in the CIP fund.

Councilor West asked if a General Obligation, (GO) Bond had been explored as way to fund the building. She said that the funding for the armory building went well and she wondered if we should look at how much city taxpayer's would pay per a property. Mayor Farrenkopf said that he spoke with Erin McCrea who does GO Bonds for municipalities. There is a process to do this and he doesn't know how it might be received by the community. If we have community support it will be easier to make a decision about the way forward. So far, the response has been good but we haven't heard from a lot of people and it is uncertain times. Mayor Farrenkopf stated that a GO bond is his least favorite option and said that Mr. Shepherd had suggested an Intercap Loan, at the current interest rate of 2%.

Councilor Pogachar asked how much Federal money the City has received from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security, (CARES) Act. Mayor Farrenkopf responded that it is around \$700,000 and it is earmarked for the Fire Hall and is included in the 1.2 million dollar amount that is in the CIP fund. Councilor Pogachar would also like to know how much the City still owes on the Justice Center. Councilor Bielski asked about the annex building status and whether or not is has been appraised.

Recommendation

Keep in committee.

- **Aerial Ladder Truck**

Fire Chief Brad Mohn said that the City currently owns a 1991 Aerial Ladder truck that was purchased used around 2005. It is up for UL testing this summer and he told the Councilors that the equipment has major issues. There is currently \$446,000 in the equipment fund. A new aerial ladder truck is \$800,000 to one million dollars. Chief Mohn said that he is looking for a good used one which will cost around 300,000. He has one he is considering and he and a mechanic will fly out to look at it. You can only find used apparatus such as this, east of the Mississippi he explained.

If the current aerial doesn't pass UL and Chief Mohn doesn't believe it will pass UL, then insurance costs go up. He has spoken with the City's Financial Administrator, Craig Shepherd to go over the funds available. The Chief said that he wants to stay within the money that we have and we want to have quality equipment. He is asking the Councilors to support these efforts.

Councilor Pogachar asked if the equipment will fit into the current Fire Hall. Chief Mohn said he is looking at a slightly different apparatus than the one that we currently have. He is looking at something in the 63 foot range and he confirmed it will fit into the current Fire Hall.

Councilor Mitchell asked how much the equipment gets used and if they need one to qualify as a Fire Department. Chief Mohn responded that it is something that the insurances uses to rate Fire Halls. Currently the city is rated as a 5. We do need the equipment for second story rescues. It is not used much, which is why he is not asking the City to purchase a new one at a million dollars. Other ways to raise our insurance rating is the water system and the number of fire fighters responding. It is a complicated formula that they use. Councilor West asked if he would be able to sell the old one. Chief Mohn responded that if we did it would only could get around \$20,000.

Councilor Bielski asked if in the foreseeable future, Chief Mohn, saw any other department needs that would need to be funded, if you use the money for this. Chief Mohn answered that nothing foreseeable just routine replacement of equipment and added that the cost of fire apparatus is ridiculous.

Mayor Farrenkopf thanked the Council for their interest and good questions. He feels that the safety of the volunteer firefighters is of utmost importance.

Recommendations:

- **Proposed Agreement to Extend Water and Wastewater Services to Besseney/TEDD Property Adjacent to Old Corvallis Road**

City Attorney, Karen Mahar, asked the Councilors to look at the tracked changes in the agreement document that was provided in their meeting packets. She told them that last June The City Council approved a draft agreement to provide water and wastewater. We are now dealing with the developers of this property who have come to the City and are ready to move forward on an agreement. The developers are asking to hook up to water and wastewater to facilitate the success of their proposal. The agreement will essentially allow the City to contract with the owners at a differential fee. Any infrastructure will be paid by the property owner. The property involved doesn't have any water rights, so in order to determine what the payment will be, Ms. Mahar, consulted Ross Miller, who has worked to get back some of the City's water rights. In consulting with Mr. Miller, she was advised that there is sufficient water. She said that the developers would pay a differential fee. Their particular uses are will use approximately 50 acre feet. She said that this has been talked over with the Mayor and we would like to you to consider this agreement for the City to provide these services.

Councilor Bielski asked Attorney Mahar to explain a differential fee. She responded that it is a higher rate paid by users who are not annexed into the City. At a later date the owners will agree to be annexed and pay City taxes. As they are not annexed they will pay a higher fee of 115% in addition to impact fees. She explained that this is commonly done as municipalities grow. When someone connects they will pay impact fees, permit fees and a differential fee for services. They have analyzed the fees with a number of national consultants and feel that this is a reasonable rate until the Tax Economic Development District, (TEDD) expires and the property is annexed. Councilor Pogachar asked Attorney Mahar, if she feels good about the agreement. She responded that with the proximity to existing services, she feels it fits an orderly growth of the city and added that this is a piece that really makes sense.

Matt Mellott, gave public comment, said he is working with the purchasers of this property. At this time we don't see any issue with the closing of the sale. The company is a biomedical manufacturer and compliments other companies that already in the community. The company will extend the bio-science fields already in the community and create 100 plus good paying jobs. The construction project will provide jobs as well and as the facility is finished permanent jobs. He said that from the energy side it will consume about the same as 10 single family homes. There will be potentially three buildings. The property is 43 acres and is located due south of the RCEDA building and on the other side of the canal.

Attorney Mahar requested that if the committee feels it has enough information that they move the agreement to City Council.

Councilor West moved to send the agreement to City Council for approval. Councilor Mitchell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Julie Foster, Executive Director RCEDA, commented thanking City staff for working really hard on this. She knows it has been tedious, but a company comes along and makes it all worthwhile. Property owners, Montana Roots, also commented saying that the product they will be producing is generally made overseas, so we are bringing jobs back to Montana. They also said that they need a modest amount of water and wastewater services and thanked the members for their consideration.

Recommendations:

Move to Council.

• **Discussion of Payment Received for the Filming of Yellowstone at City Hall**

Councilor West said that we got word from Mayor Farrenkopf that he is said putting the \$8000 Yellowstone rental fee towards the Fireworks Fund. She would like more discussion with the Council. She wonders if it there may be a greater need in the City especially considering that there is a pandemic.

The Committee discussed the pros and cons of helping to fund the Fireworks show or using the money for some other purpose, including how much of the Mayor's time and effort goes into raising the \$14,000 for the fireworks show. Councilor Pruitt mentioned that she thinks it may be harder to fund raise going into the summer. Councilor Bielski said that she doesn't necessarily have an issue with the money going towards fireworks, but she feels that the County needs to pay a portion of the costs. Councilor Mitchell commented that he feels the Fire Hall could use it. The Mayor said he thinks of it like a bank. This money helps unfreeze his budget for other things. He will be \$8000 in the black.

The Mayor thanked the Councilors for their feedback.

Recommendations:

No recommendations.

Non-Agenda Items

Mayor Farrenkopf reminded the Councilor to go out and view the nominated decorated Christmas homes.

Adjourn

Councilor West moved to adjourn. Councilor Pogachar seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm.