

North Branch City Council

Work Session

Date of Meeting: May 15, 2014

Present: Councilmembers Theresa Furman, Kathy Blomquist, Joyce Borchardt, and Trent Jensen.

Absent: Mayor Ronald Lindquist

Also Present: City Administrator Konrad, Engineer Messner, Finance Director Richard Hill, Police Chief Meyer, Fire Chief Grote and Public Works Director Williams

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Chisago County Geological Atlas

Chisago County and the DNR provided information on geological information in Chisago County. This contains several detailed maps providing geological information. Blomquist asked about recharge information. Chisago County provided information on recharge. Council thanked Chisago County for the information.

III. Compost Site

Williams provided information on the compost site for Council. Williams asked Council to consider options on the compost site in the event that the free grinding becomes no longer available then things will have to change because it is cost prohibitive to allow free dumping for the City to pay to grind it up. He noted that there are many commercial businesses dumping at the site. Jensen suggested putting up a sign. Staff indicated that there are signs already. Council agreed to leave things as is until there is a concern with having to pay for grinding. Furman said that she is concerned that other cities are closing their compost sites and that encourages those residents to come to North Branch. Borchardt would be fine with charging contractors who are bringing things in from outside the City. Jensen asked to have a sign and have employees keep an eye out for bigger loads. Furman asked how much it cost to get rid of the 150 yards of bad dirt. Williams indicated staff spent \$500 and has another \$500 coming to finish getting rid of the debris. Staff will try a new sign and increased monitoring for now and report back.

IV. Transportation Planning Proposal

Messner provided a proposal for transportation planning for the industrial park. Council agreed to use EDA funds and directed Staff to put this on the EDA agenda before doing so. Furman asked if in addition to the 35 access will County 30 be looked at because she is having trouble getting out of her driveway out onto the county road now. Staff will be looking at ESSBY as a whole and traffic and transportation in the whole area.

V. Staffing Plan

Konrad outlined the staffing plan for Council. There is a huge investment in the staff and the staff has really stepped up to the plate to take on extra duties due to budget constraints. There are 27 full time, 9 part time, 2 seasonal and 24 volunteer firefighters on staff at the City. There are 16 new positions contemplated in the five-year plan. Nine positions would bring the City back to the staffing level of 2008. Furman asked if City Clerk was looked at or maybe a Deputy Clerk. Furman said there is not that much difference in a Deputy Clerk or City Clerk. Konrad explained that positions are evaluated based on job duties not title. Furman said that she would like to consider Deputy Clerk at \$40,000 to \$50,000 instead of a City Clerk at \$60,000 to \$70,000. Furman commented that the steps for the position show 4.5% and that is a lot. Konrad indicated it could be a cost of living

and step increase. This will be looked at annually and will change based upon negotiations. Hill would like to look at this at a higher level because this is an indicator of what the amount will be and the amount could go higher or lower. Konrad said that there is a need to take some load off the employees because it is starting to wear on the employees. Staff is getting the job done but things could be better. The department heads would have liked all of their positions in 2015 but they were realistic in expectations and requests. Jensen asked about the police officers and he was not aware the City was short-handed. Police Chief indicated that they are seeing more and more calls. There were 12 sworn officers in 2008, 2009, and 2010 and the City is at 10. He feels this is a valid need. Council agreed to move forward with the recommended staffing levels in the budget process so they can see the impact and balance the budget as the discussions move forward. Blomquist indicated she would like to move the Community Development position up as growth increases because that is important. Blomquist would like someone focused on EDA when the time comes. Furman asked about Waste Water Operator and the funding source. Furman asked why the general fund would be used to fund it partially. Konrad said that they plow snow in the winter so some salary is allocated to the general fund. Council directed staff to include the recommended 2015 position in the budget to see what the impact will be on the budget. Adjustments will be made to the plan during the budget process.

VI. Capital Improvement Plan

Hill presented the Council with the 2015-2024 CIP. The plan outlines capital projects and equipment planned for the next ten years. Again it was pointed out that this is a tool to be used during the budgeting process. They reviewed the items listed for 2015. He noted that the projects have varying funding sources. Jensen asked about the Bridge Design. Konrad noted that annually the City's bridges need to be inspected. The Bridge Road bridge is in need of replacement. The amount listed in the plan is for design and construction. Messner noted that State bridge funds will be available for construction costs. Furman noted that there are several items that list an equipment certificate as the funding source. She noted that the Council has worked hard to eliminate them in the past and wondered why that was listed. Hill noted that over the last several years to work within budget restraints maintenance and equipment purchases have been deferred. There will be a time in the near future when several large pieces of equipment (plow trucks, grader, fire trucks) will need to be replaced. He felt that it would have less of an impact on levies to pay for that equipment over a three to five year period, but noted that this is just a plan and can be changed at any time. Furman asked what the state aid weight limit is for roads and what the City standard is. Williams indicated that the state aid requirement is 10 ton and that is the City standard as well but there are no regulations holding the City to 10-ton standards but they do not hold up over time. It was the consensus of the Council to include the 2015 items in the budget and see what the impact is on the overall budget.

Adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridgitte Konrad, City Administrator
jrl/TOSS