

## **North Branch City Council**

### Work Session

Date of Meeting: April 2, 2015  
Present: Councilmembers: Theresa Furman, Kathy Blomquist, Robert Canada, and Kirsten Hagen-Kennedy.  
Absent: Joyce Borchardt  
Also Present: EDA Members Doug Fischer, Bob Streater and Lorraine Moeller, City Administrator Konrad, Finance Director Hill, Public Works Director Williams and Water and Light General Manager Mark Petsche

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#### ***I. Call To Order***

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

#### ***II. Transportation Study***

Finance Director Hill outlined the phase one transportation study with Council and the EDA including the various steps recommended. The project was initiated by the EDA to study access issues for the industrial park. Further study would be required to obtain necessary approvals from MnDOT and Federal Highway. WSB has outlined steps necessary to be completed for phase two of the study. Canada asked if there is any state funding available. Hill indicated that there is nothing this early in the planning stages but maybe if a bypass or overpass comes into play. Streater outlined how he thinks the process could start with community meetings to obtain feedback. Council, the EDA and staff discussed the transportation study. The consensus was to start a committee comprised of one member from Council, EDA and Planning Commission and five community members to keep the project moving forward and to do some of the community outreach steps.

#### ***III. How Utility Rates are Set***

Hill provided an overview of how sewer rates are set. The rates are driven by the debt for the sewer plant and the operation of the system. Hill indicated that a rate study can be a good thing but there is a cost of about \$30,000 and the study will likely indicate a need for a increase in fees. He indicated that he could do some modeling to come up with different options. Council asked staff to work with Water & Light for some information on possible rates. Furman asked if there should be a consideration of living units for multiple dwelling properties. Council and staff agreed to have staff take a look at rates and provide some feedback. Mark Petsche provided information on water rate history for the Council. Petsche indicated that rates have gone up substantially and will increase again in June or July because there is a lot of work to do for the future that has to be planned for. Hagen-Kennedy indicated that a snowbird gone for the winter that has a leak could have a substantial bill when they return. Canada asked how surrounding communities are compared to North Branch. Petsche indicated he has never tried to do that but he does use the monthly figures as a figure to be divided by the number of customers to get the average.

#### ***IV. Truck Legislation***

Konrad indicated there is a house and senate file being considered for the larger truck legislation that was discussed at the last Council meeting. Konrad asked whether the resolution opposing the legislation should be placed on the April 14 meeting Agenda. Blomquist commented that this legislation is a front for the railroads. The railroads are opposed to it because smaller trucks mean more freight travels by rail. Canada questioned the wording of the leaflet. The consensus was that the resolution should not be placed back on the agenda.

**City Council Work Session**

**April 2, 2015**

**Page 2**

Motion by Canada, seconded by Furman, to adjourn.

Adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridgitte Konrad, City Administrator  
jrl/TOSS