

North Branch City Council

Work Session

Date of Meeting: April 7, 2016
Present: Councilmembers: Theresa Furman, Kathy Blomquist, Joyce Borchardt, Robert C Canada, and Kirsten Hagen-Kennedy.
Also Present: City Administrator Konrad, Finance Director Hill, Community Development Director Vita and Fire Chief Grote

I. Call to Order

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

II. Revise/Suspend Comprehensive Plan

Community Development Director Vita explained that the Planning Commission voted to recommend suspension of the Comprehensive Plan. Furman asked about how many lots there would be if everyone wanted to be on one acre. Konrad said it would be difficult to estimate. Council discussed how to proceed with review of the Comprehensive Plan. Konrad suggested getting proposals to see what it will cost to revise the Comprehensive Plan. Hagen-Kennedy said she would like everyone to really think about this because even going out for RFP's takes time. Hagen-Kennedy asked Councilmembers to think about this and come back with thoughts and if there is consensus then move forward. Furman indicated that the other option is to leave it as it is but there is the possibility of a lawsuit. Furman said that if members are not willing to compromise on a lot of different things then it's a waste of time and should be left alone. Blomquist indicated she would be interested in what other Councilmembers would like to see changed. Staff will get rough cost estimates for a rewrite. This will be placed on another work session for discussion.

III. Fire Department Pay

Konrad indicated that some of the applicants that the city got for firefighters are current city employees, which brought to mind that now that the pay is increased to \$10, there will need to be agreements on overtime. No matter what job you are doing if they work over 40 hours there is overtime to pay. Konrad indicated that there are a few ways to do it including agreements on overtime or a blended rate. Konrad noted she put together some overtime agreements for the City Attorney to review and that raised more questions. Konrad noted that now that firefighters are paid more than minimum wage it cannot be considered nominal pay so agreements are necessary. Konrad noted that FLSA indicates that nominal pay is very minimal and the way they are being paid now they are considered employees. Konrad noted that the City Attorney has said that the firefighters are not allowed to volunteer for city functions and must be paid. Konrad reviewed her memo, which outlined some suggestions for paying firefighters other than hourly. Konrad noted that those firefighters' hours get figured in to determine large or small employer per the Affordable Care Act. Fire Chief Grote said that they do have mutual aid for fires that happen during the day but it will help the department serve the community better if there are more daytime members. Canada said that these are the right steps to serve the Community and the letter of the law requires that they be paid but financially how to handle it is the concern. Staff suggested a stipend for the firefighters versus a salary so they make the same amount and there is no overtime issue. Chief Grote said that the concern with the stipend is that everyone gets the same amount but they are not all working the same hours or doing the same work so what is the motivation to work harder, work more, volunteer more. Konrad asked if the stipend could be tiered based on hours worked. Hagen-Kennedy asked the Fire Chief for his recommendation. Chief Grote said that the tiered stipend is a viable option. Konrad will look into the specifics of a tiered stipend for the firefighters and

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report back to Council. Furman asked if this would be true volunteer firefighters then. Konrad indicated that is what staff would strive for.

IV. Goals

Konrad outlined the goals as submitted by Councilmembers. Konrad noted there were four priorities for the one to two year goals because of a tie vote and asked if the Council would like to revote. Council asked that the goals be added to the Council meeting on April 26 for approval.

Adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bridgitte Konrad, City Administrator
jrl/TOSS