

Work Session
August 2, 2016

Present: Bjerkness, Kolodge, Langley, Maki, Rock, Wilkinson, Mayor Hallback

Absent: None

Staff: Fritsinger, Barclay, Klassen, Butcher, Peterson

Other: Jamie Lund, Pine Journal; Bradley Peterson, Flaherty & Hood

Coalition of Greater Minnesota Presentation

- Mr. Peterson was present to review activities the Coalition is undertaking across the State.
- Review of legislative session Items. The Coalition priorities are a continuation of what was done last year during Session adding the bonding bill and ongoing conversation regarding transportation needs. There is a \$900 million surplus leftover from the 2015 session due to no tax bill.
- Highest priority for the coalition will be to increase LGA back to 2002 levels. A \$20 million increase in LGA was vetoed due to a drafting error related to charitable gambling. This caused a second year in a row without a tax bill. The bill could be revived and fixed in a special session, but that is also tied to several other demands that remain unmet.
- Another high priority for the Coalition is property tax relief for businesses. They also worked on broadband and workforce housing.
- Mr. Fritsinger encouraged Council Members to participate in any CGMC conferences.

Budget Discussion

- Mr. Fritsinger continued discussion and follow up on the budget from the July 19th Work Session. A review of 3 different project scenarios using different dollar amounts.
- The Council agreed that Dunlap Island needs to tie into the River Front for 2017. Bonding capabilities making it possible to add Dunlap Island back were discussed. By not including the pedestrian bridge makes this project feasible. Mr. Fritsinger discussed other funding options that are available.
- Pine Valley Park in 2018 has been identified as a priority as well as Cloquet Avenue. The bond will be fully expended with those 2 projects.
- Mr. Fritsinger expects the state will pick up a higher percentage of the I-35/Frontage Road project will result in additional dollars being available for other projects.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. The Council reconvened at 7:20 p.m. at the conclusion of its Regular Meeting.

Budget Discussion Continued

- Other changes to the project schedule included the Wentworth Park project being deleted out of the 5 year sales tax projects and the 14th Street utility project built into 2019. Mr. Fritsinger said to keep in mind the debt service repayment in 2018-2019 in addition to the projects.

- A discussion with the school district regarding the Athletic Park baseball field relocating to Braun Park and who is responsible for the cost and maintenance is needed. The Athletic Park project is moved out to 2020.
- Council members feel it is necessary to be conservative when spending tax dollars for projects. Also a concern that priorities may change with the possibility of new Council members being voted in.
- Ms. Wilkinson stated the community has expectations that the money will be spent on projects passed on the referendum. Projects need to be a reflection of what was voted on.
- Mr. Fritsinger stated he's comfortable with the schedule and changes that he presented at the July 19th meeting. It's Council's responsibility to base priorities on representation of the community and the expectations.
- Conversation on how these projects will affect the City's maintenance levels and how to maintain facilities. Landscaping will need to be a discussion and whether an additional seasonal employee will be needed or another full time employee.
- Mr. Fritsinger next discussed the issuance of bonds and project schedule.
- Construction on a second water tower needs to be discussed as maintenance issues come up on the existing tower.
- There are 3 critical road reconstruction projects in the near future, Arch Street, 17th and 20th streets. Brian will continue to work with department heads on their departmental budgets.
- Conversation on staffing needs. The library would like to make a part time position a full time position. Also discussed was the hiring of a liaison school officer for the school district and how that would be funded. More conversation with the school district needs to be had.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Fritsinger
City Administrator