

MINUTES OF THE BEATRICE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

A work session of the Beatrice City Council was held on the 25th day of November, 2013 in the Price Room of the Beatrice Public Library, 100 North 16th Street, Beatrice, Nebraska.

Attending: Mayor Schuster, Councilmembers: Carey, Catlin, Fairbanks, Moore, Parde, and Tiemann. Also present: City Administrator Tobias Tempelmeyer, City Attorney Greg Butcher, City Engineer Rex Behrends, and BPW Street Superintendent Ron Baete.
Absent: Cook, Langdale.

Mayor Schuster announced that a copy of the Open Meetings Act is available in the meeting room and is accessible to members of the public.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approve agenda as submitted.
- b. Receive and place on file all notices pertaining to this meeting
- c. Receive and place on file all materials having any bearing on this meeting.

Moved by Catlin, seconded by Moore, that the items listed under the consent agenda be approved, accepted, and/or ratified as presented.

Roll Call: Yea: Catlin, Carey, Fairbanks, Moore, Parde, and Tiemann.
Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Traffic Committee Update

City Attorney Greg Butcher, City Engineer Rex Behrends, and BPW Street Superintendent Ron Baete, as members of the traffic committee recently reviewed a number of items. The Committee had the following recommendations:

1. Removal of Parking on Hayes from Court to High: The Traffic Committee does not recommend removing parking on Hayes Street from Court to High. This goal was at the request of former code enforcement officer Steve Printy. Councilmember Fairbanks thought that Alan Fetty may have requested this item as well.
2. Removal on Parking Spaces along West 5th Street just North of the Police Department: There is a site obstruction looking south while exiting the PD parking lot in the alley next to the middle school. The Traffic Committee recommended removing this parking after the completion of the City parking lot just south of the Carnegie Building.
3. Installation of Crosswalks at 19th and Grant: Police Chief Bruce Lang will monitor the student pedestrian traffic near 19th and Grant Streets to see what the usage is and to determine if a crosswalk is warranted. If needed, the Traffic Committee will work with the school to notify

children of the proper crossing area. Councilmember Fairbanks felt that very few students walk to school these days.

4. Traffic Light at 19th and Lincoln: The Committee would like to review the need for the light at the intersection of 19th and Lincoln should BPS consolidate to a different elementary school site.

5. Parking East of First Presbyterian: Jimmy Shelbourn called and requested a change to the parking restriction east of the church located on the southwest corner of 5th and High Streets. Currently the parking is a 15 minute loading zone, Monday thru Friday. Rex and I reviewed the site and I contacted Mr. Shelbourn. The Committee and Mr. Shelbourn recommend turning the West side of 5th Street from High to the alley south of the church to regular parking. Councilmember Parde wanted to make sure the Church knew that the City was not going to keep changing this parking. This item will come before the Council on December 2, 2013.

6. Trucks Along 5th Street Ella to Court: The Committee would like to designate 5th Street from Ella to Court restricted to vehicles under 10 tons. Larger trucks have been taking out signage along the street and the narrowness of the street is not conducive to having semi-trailer truck on it. Councilmembers discussed what a proper weight limit might be, who is currently using the road, and how enforcement will take place. Councilmember Parde wondered if we have or could have weight restrictions on other streets in the City.

7. Stop Sign at Helen and Center: We need a Stop Sign on the southwest corner of Helen and Center for eastbound Helen traffic. This will come before the Council on December 2, 2013.

8. Parking on West 19th Street Lincoln to Grant: Currently parking is prohibited for 315' along the West side of 19th Street heading south from Lincoln Street. A request came in to review this and to allow parking during non-school hours. Roads Superintendent Ron Baete has signs in which would work from either 7am-5pm or 8am-5pm. The Committee will contact the school to review what would work for them.

The Church parking and Helen Street stop sign items will be brought to the December 2, 2013 meeting for final consideration.

Street Department Funding

City Administrator Tobias Tempelmeyer led a discussion on Street funding. Currently, the City has approximately \$4.3 million dollars in street projects that have been delayed due to a lack of funding.

While reviewing this issue City Administration has identified seven (7) possible courses of action that the City could take:

1. Do nothing. The City could do nothing and continue to try to work within our current fiscal constraints to find a solution to the revenue shortfall. This would involve the continued delay of projects. No Councilmembers showed support for this option.

2. Wait for State funding again. Under the old system the City would receive STP funds from the State; however, that program ceased a couple of years ago. Beginning in 2016 the City is anticipating receiving State funding again but at a reduced amount from previous years. While this State funding will help the City in future budget years, it will not be sufficient to assist the City in addressing the budget shortfalls that have occurred over the last several years. Most Councilmembers felt we needed to do more than wait. Councilmember Fairbanks noted that this money could be gone all together by the time 2016 actually roles around should the state decide to do so.

3. Wheel Tax. The City is authorized by State statute to impose upon any individual whose primary residence or person who owns a place of business within the city limits and owns and operates a motor vehicle within the city limits to pay an annual motor vehicle fee. According to the County Treasurer's Office 14,888 vehicles were licensed in the Beatrice tax district in 2012. Lincoln and Omaha are the most common cities to implement a wheel tax. Councilmember Tiemann felt that many might try to license their vehicles outside the City to avoid the tax. No Councilmembers showed support for this option.

4. Issue Bonds. The City could issue bonds to pay for the street improvements. While the bonds would provide an immediate inflow of cash for the Street Department to make repairs and improvements, it does not address the long-term needs of the Street Department. With a bond issuance would come annual debt payments. A bond issuance of \$4 million dollars would result in an annual principle and interest payment of approximately \$300,000.00. Without additional revenue, the Street Department's future budgets would be hard pressed to find the needed cash to make the annual debt payments. The Councilmembers were interested in this idea. City Administration would also need to identify a revenue stream to pay for the funding. City Engineer Rex Behrends stressed concern for issue a high number of bonds for multiple projects in a small build window.

5. Increase Property Taxes. The City could raise its current property tax levy and use the additional funds for street improvements. Based upon the City's current valuation of approximately \$575,000,000.00, a one cent (\$0.01) increase in the property tax levy would equal about \$57,500.00 in additional revenue per year. In order to generate enough revenue to fund a \$125,000.00 street project, the property tax levy would need to be increased by approximately 2.2 cents, which would increase the taxes \$22.00/year on a \$100,000.00 home. This option was considered by the Councilmembers but did not as the sole support mechanism for street funding.

6. ½ Cent Sales Tax. The State statute authorizes the City of Beatrice to impose an additional ½ cent sales tax upon a vote of the citizens of Beatrice. Currently the City generates approximately \$2 million dollars on the 1 ½ cent city sales tax, so an additional ½ cent of city sales tax is projected to generate revenues of approximately \$666,000.00/year. If the City Council desires to propose an additional ½ cent city sales tax, it would need to be presented to a vote of the people at either the May 2014 or November 2014 election. If the additional sales tax appeared on the May 2014 ballot and was successful, the tax would not be imposed until January 1, 2015. The Councilmembers were interested in a ¼ cent increase which is possible under the law.

7. Mix and Match Options. Final alternative for the City Council is a combination of a number of the alternatives set forth above, such as the City could issue bonds for street

