

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 5:14 p.m. on the 7th day of February 2023, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law. Present were Council Members Gloria Betcher, Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Rachel Junck, and Anita Rollins.

City Manager Steve Schainker noted that on Friday, February 3rd, 2023, the City Council was able to engage in a high-level overview of financing for the total budget prior to reviewing the individual programs and activities at the meetings this week. Mr. Schainker asked the City Council to pay particular attention to the financing aspect as each Department head would be focusing their presentations on the service levels that are being provided from the funding sources.

FY 2023/24 BUDGET PROPOSALS:

Culture and Recreation Program: Library Director Sheila Schofer and Adult Services Manager Megan Klein Hewett discussed the budget for the Library and the impact this funding has on the Ames community. Ms. Schofer shared that libraries are a key component in providing critical information, resources, and spaces for learning and connecting, not only to the world of ideas, but to fellow community members. She noted that the Library uses a strategic plan created with input from community stakeholders and residents to focus ongoing work in the areas of equity, inclusion, civic engagement, access, wellness, and staff development, which has guided Library staff to do thoughtful, challenging, and impactful work.

Director Schofer presented the functions of Library Administration and Library Customer Account Services, while Manager Klein Hewett showcased Library Resource Services, Library Youth Services, and Library Adult Services. Each presentation highlighted the staffing and operations of the respective services and emphasized the community partnerships that generate success. Ms. Schofer also directed focus to the work of volunteers and their integral roles in keeping the Library running.

Council Member Gartin inquired about the cost increase for Adult Services. Ms. Schofer replied that the increase is due to an additional authorized full-time employee (FTE). Council Member Betcher asked about the shared staff position with Iowa State University (ISU) and what Library staff is doing to maximize the potential of that partnership. Manager Klein Hewett noted the shared position helps connect the Library to student clubs and organizations, and facilitates use of Library space for community events. Council Member Rollins wondered if the Library gathers any demographic information regarding the patronage of the facility. Director Schofer replied in the negative, citing privacy issues as the rationale. Council Member Gartin, along with Council Member Betcher and Rollins, thanked the Library staff for their dedication to providing needed services to the community and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Utilities Program: Water and Pollution Control Director John Dunn introduced the leadership team for the department and reviewed the business and technical support functions of each division. He highlighted that the expenses for personnel support services were down for the current year, with the expectation that vacant positions would be filled after onboarding a new Assistant Director. Director Dunn provided a snapshot of events and outreach done by the department before diving into a high-level overview of the Water Treatment Plant Operations.

Director Dunn focused on the weather trends for the area, as weather drives the demand for drinking water and an abnormally dry summer led to an all-time record demand for any 30-day period for drinking water in August 2022. City staff has seen this demand continue over the last six months and investigations revealed no issues with billing or metering. Costs for services being driven by customer demand, coupled with commodity prices, served as the rationale for the increase in operating costs. Director Dunn provided detailed examples of chemical inputs and associated costs for the commodities line item of the draft budget. Mayor Haila inquired about research being done by an ISU Student Operator to reduce the consumption of chemical inputs. Director Dunn stated Nicole Martindale is a graduate student at ISU looking at the split treatment operating scheme that could bring down the quantity of lime required. She is investigating two avenues to ensure that the operating does not create any type of virus loading increase and bypassing some of the water around the lime softening does not create corrosion issues downstream in the plant.

City staff was anticipating revisions to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) interim health limits Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in December 2022; however, revisions have not yet been released. Director Dunn explained staff at FOX Strand conducted a high-level investigation to examine the associated costs should it be required to treat down to the interim health advisory levels. He emphasized the importance of the study in preparing staff for when the EPA sets an actual drinking water limit.

Director Dunn continued the presentation by showcasing the projects out for bid and the awards received by the department before transitioning into the Water Pollution Control Facility, highlighting the ISU student operators that tie the two facilities together. He proudly announced the success of the program, noting the future of the water profession is in good hands. One of the positive outcomes of the cohort is, when considered with full-time operators, the operating team is 50% female.

Council Member Beatty-Hansen asked if staff saw similar increases in treating water reflected from the demand for drinking water. Director Dunn noted the flows at the two plants tend to move inversely from one another, though staff did see the demand for drinking water create some operational challenges in adhering with perfect compliance to the discharge permit from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Mayor Haila asked if the permit would extend to a new facility. Director Dunn replied in the negative, noting the permit has a five-year life; however, the DNR would likely provide an amended permit for the new facility.

Director Dunn walked through the functions and projects of the Water and Pollution Control Laboratory Services division and the Water and Pollution Control Metering Services division

before highlighting the Rate and Fee Adjustments that would be proposed at a future meeting for effect on July 1st, 2023.

Council Member Betcher noticed the facility operations were at a cost per million gallons and wondered about the cost of treatment at the front end as compared to the back end. Director Dunn explained the cost values are the operating expense not including the capital expense, thus the commodity inputs account for that difference. Council Member Rollins asked how staff is preparing to protect the water supply in the case of a natural disaster. Director Dunn walked through the steps staff is taking, highlighting the installation of standby power at the wells to ensure the drinking water supply is sufficient to meet the minimum day demand.

Public Works Director John Joiner then shifted focus to the other side of the water system by reviewing the Water Distribution System, Sanitary Sewer Collection System, Stormwater Permit Program, and Stormwater System Maintenance. He recognized staff in each of these areas, noting the awards received over the past year for outstanding service to the public sector, and public education and outreach done by each division to ensure successful services.

Resource Recovery also received a notable statewide award for Outstanding Waste Diversion for Rummage RAMPage, which has been a triumphant event that continues to grow. He highlighted several diversion activities that Resource Recovery conducts as well as the City partnerships that make it possible. Council Member Gartin asked if the designation change for the Boone County Landfill altered how the City utilizes that property and the available options that exist for waste disposal. Director Joiner noted the use did not change; rather the reporting and testing requirements for the site did.

Transportation Program: Director Joiner presented the activities and services of the Transportation Program including Public Works Administration, Public Works Engineering, Public Works GIS, Traffic Engineering, Traffic Operations, Street Lights, Street System, Parking Operations, and Airport Operations. He highlighted the Ames on the Go app, noting staff has expanded use to other departments including Electric, Fire, Parks and Recreation, and Water and Pollution and Control. The app has eased the process for citizens to report snow-covered sidewalks, water main breaks, and other concerns in the community. He also showcased the CO-OP Program, a partnership with ISU, which has been a successful opportunity and has helped connect consultants with emerging engineers. Lastly, Director Joiner discussed the Smart Meter Conversion. Each Smart Meter installed will serve two parking spots at a time and the conversion will begin in the Downtown area with project completion in seven to eight years.

Council Member Rollins inquired about the street sweeper and the schedule it runs on. Director Joiner noted the sweeper runs on a weekly schedule that focuses on commercial areas of town, with residential areas being swept less frequently.

General Government/Internal Services: Fleet Services Director Corey Mellies discussed Fleet Services and Facilities. He reviewed the Fleet Operations of administration and maintenance, highlighting the fuel trends and estimated costs, which City Manager Schainker clarified did not include fuel for CyRide busses. Council Member Betcher inquired about the difference in biodiesels as shown on the graph. Director Mellies clarified the diesel identified on the graph was

stored in remote tanks mostly for construction and maintenance equipment. He furthered the presentation by noting the impact of electric and hybrid vehicles on the fuel trends and maintenance expenses. The future of Fleet will be decided in part by the Climate Action Plan implementation and available vehicles at Fleet pricing, with the goal to ensure the Fleet is able to continue supporting the needs of all City departments.

Mayor Haila noted the billable hours of the Maintenance Technicians, wondering if there is a need for five technicians. Director Mellies assured the Mayor that the technicians do not see a lot of downtime, highlighting that billable hours do not include assistance with facility related projects. City Manager Schainker replied to the inquiry from Mayor Haila regarding comparing maintenance needs with other cities, noting that Supervisory Level staff can conduct individual performance of the technicians and do an internal comparison on efficiency. Director Mellies concurred noting that Supervisory Level staff tracks not just the billable hours, but all hours worked. The Mayor evaluated the funding sources for the Fleet Reserve Fund. Director Mellies noted the funding is supported by other City departments to purchase future equipment and vehicles. City Manager Schainker cautioned the City Council against drawing down on the Fleet Reserve Fund as it is one time money and cannot sustain a permanent cut. He also discussed the benefits of the fund for the City as it gives staff the ability to borrow against it by acting as access to capital through a low interest fund.

Council Member Betcher inquired about the supply chain issues and if new vehicles will emerge onto the market. Director Mellies shared his hope but noted it is unlikely in this model year as consumer demand has built up.

Director Mellies walked through the facilities projects, highlighting the keycard access implementation at City Hall and the Fire Stations, as well as construction management for the Steven L. Schainker Plaza. He also made note of other ongoing and future projects showcasing the innovative application of a Lactation Pod at City Hall for internal and external City customers.

Public Safety Program: Chief of Police Geoff Huff introduced the division leaders who were present at the meeting, noting that the department has seen personnel changes over the last year with the promotion of a sergeant, a new administrative sergeant, a new community resource officer, two new communications staff, and three new officers. He discussed current hiring challenges and recruitment plans.

In reviewing Relationship Building and Problem Solving, Chief Huff highlighted National Night Out as well as events with the Boys and Girls Club of Story County including Carving with a Cop and Shop with a Cop. He also touched on the Mental Health Expo, NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Citizen Police Academy, and Cyclone Welcome Weekend, emphasizing that the department makes it a priority to stay connected to the community.

Chief Huff discussed Transparency and Accountability, noting the Monthly Activity Reports and Ames Resident Police Advisory Committee. He stated the department makes a point to hear from the community, with the Compliments and Complaints form being one way to facilitate that priority. Body Worn Cameras and Hybrid Fleet Vehicles were the following topics of conversation, as equipment updates are needed. Council Member Gartin inquired about data

storage and staff time dedicated to video oversight. Chief Huff explained that the Lead Evidence Technician works with the video, a position that shifted from part-time to full-time in the last year. Additionally, the Records Division also has a hand in the video footage to fulfill records requests for the department. Chief Huff assured the City Council that staff discussed storage in length with the supplier to ensure the correct amount is available. Council Member Gartin asked if there had been revisions to the Body Worn Camera policy. Chief Huff replied in the negative, noting officers must turn the camera on for any law enforcement action.

Mental Health Calls were reviewed by Chief Huff. The department continues to see mental health calls on the rise, and partnerships including Alternatives (Drug Diversion), Alternative Response to Community Health (ARCH), Mental Health Criminal Justice Task Force, Mobile Crisis, and other local providers ensure callers get the care necessary in instances when a police officer is not the best resource. Chief Huff then provided a walk-through of the Oscar 360, a camera officers can utilize to photograph crime scenes efficiently and thoroughly.

Chief Huff presented on Crime Prevention, showcasing the statistics for Accidents and Citations, Personal Crimes, Neighborhood/Quality of Life, Property Crimes, and Scams and Frauds. Council Member Gartin asked if the City Council should be putting more emphasis on sexual assaults as a policy group through education and outreach. Council Member Beatty-Hansen noted increased reporting as a main reason for the upward trend. Chief Huff agreed, sharing that education and outreach has created more comfortability in making a report, though not many cases make it to a trial. Council Member Gartin stated it is the first priority of the City Council to protect the citizens and asked Chief Huff to provide a notification if there is ever a time where the members of the City Council can make an impact.

Communications by the numbers were reviewed. Chief Huff proudly announced the time to answer a call improved over the last year with 99.42% of calls answered within twenty seconds. He then focused on awards and recognitions for the department as well as special projects including the Hall of History.

Council Member Gartin inquired about the impact of drug related deaths on the community, and the correlation with cartel and gang activity in the area. Chief Huff stated that no statistics are available because the department is not always directly involved; however, partnerships with several Federal agencies allows the department to keep up with activity through regular intel bulletins and the Drug Task Force. Council Member Betcher asked about use of Narcan in the department. Chief Huff noted Narcan has been deployed several times and saved many lives. All officers are required to carry two doses on patrol, because it will frequently take more than one dose to pull a patient out of an overdose.

Chief Huff presented the special projects and partnerships for the Animal Control Division before reviewing the statistics for intakes, outcomes, and live release rates. Mayor Haila inquired as to what the positive outcomes could be attributed. Animal Control Supervisor Ron Edwards attributed the success for outcomes to the reputation of the shelter. He emphasized that people want to be a part of successful programs, highlighting the amazing volunteers and generous donations that keep the Animal Shelter running. Mayor Haila asked about the geographic area shelter staff draws from for potential adopters. Mr. Edwards noted that most adopters are local;

however, adopters have come from as far as Washington, DC, because staff puts in the effort to promote the available animals and pair them with an adopter that will best meet their needs. Council Member Betcher wondered what the best way for citizens to know what the donation needs are at the Animal Shelter. Mr. Edwards explained that an online portal is available for monetary donations and in-kind donation lists for supplies. Council Member Betcher noted the City Council received numerous communications lobbying for a new facility for the Animal Shelter, highlighting that there are community members committed to seeing staff in a facility that can accommodate the increasing intakes. Mr. Edwards shared his agreement, noting the current facility was not built to take in the number of animals staff has been seeing recently. He emphasized the importance of a facility that will provide expanded opportunities, especially volunteer opportunities, when looking at the future upgrades.

Transportation Program: Chief of Police Geoff Huff discussed Parking Law Enforcement, focusing on Parking Initiatives, Uncollected Fines, and the broad range of duties parking enforcement conducts, including prisoner transportation, speed trailer installation, and assistance for stranded passengers. He pointed out the outstanding balance for uncollected fines over the last ten years, noting the top three violations and indicating ongoing collaboration to identify ways to decrease the outstanding balance. Mayor Haila indicated his amazement at the outstanding balance for uncollected fines and wondered if tickets collected covered the cost of staff time. City Manager Schainker replied in the negative, emphasizing ongoing efforts to remediate the issue.

Council Member Beatty-Hansen asked if there were efforts that could be made to counteract the issue of Scams and Frauds. Chief Huff noted occasionally staff is able to trace back the crime; however, most scams the department sees are international. In the case of international crime, it is close to impossible for department staff to follow-up on the matter, though incidents that involve large dollar amounts can involve Federal intervention when time and resources allow. He stated the best course of action to decrease the frequency of these types of crimes is preventative education.

Council Member Betcher inquired about enhanced fines for game day parking, wondering if the fine structure is discouraging illegal parking. Chief Huff replied in the affirmative, stating staff saw a significant reduction in illegal parking originally, highlighting a current plateau. He shared that the affected area is easier to navigate during ISU football games, with towing only happening in cases where a vehicle is obstructing a driveway or fire hydrant. Council Member Betcher shared her concern that the gameday parking fines are not as beneficial as originally intended.

Mayor Haila shared his shock at the number of mental health calls. Chief Huff noted it is fortunate that the City has good partners and he expects a plateau in the number of calls received as citizens get connected with the proper resources.

The City Council and Mayor expressed their appreciation for staff and all of the efforts that show commitment to the community.

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL: Mayor Haila noted there were three items to consider. The first was an email from Allison Greenwald regarding shared use path

accessibility in north Ames. City Manager Schainker noted that staff would forward the email as input for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

An email from Cameron Knuth, a Wyland Foundation Representative, inviting the City to participate in the 2023 National Mayors Challenge for Water Conservation April 1-30, 2023, was the second item.

Moved by Beatty-Hansen, seconded by Betcher, to allow the Mayor to address the invitation.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

The third item was an email from David Carter requesting sidewalks at Bandshell Park. Mayor Haila noted the item would also be forwarded as input for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: Council Member Gartin recognized the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, noting his condolences and best wishes to the Turkish students in the community.

Council Member Betcher shared in Council Member Gartin's remark, extending sympathies to Syrian students in the community as well. She also noted budget season is a great opportunity for the City Council to see how effectively staff handles their jobs.

Mayor Haila stated his agreement with Council Member Betcher, sharing his pride in staff. City Manager Schainker noted the great team and gave credit to the City Council because the members allow staff the lead in developing the workplace culture known to the organization.

Mayor Haila closed the meeting by recognizing President Wintersteen's staff at Iowa State University and the ongoing commitment to partnership before thanking City staff again for their time and efforts involving the budget and legislative issues that affect the budget.

ADJORNMENT: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Rollins, to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Carly M. Watson, Deputy City Clerk

John A. Haila, Mayor

Renee Hall, City Clerk