

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

JANUARY 21, 2020

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 5:15 p.m. on the 21ST day of January, 2020, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue. Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Rachel Junck, and David Martin were present. *Ex officio* Member Devyn Leeson was absent.

2020-2025 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN: City Manager Steve Schainker told the Council the purpose of the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) is to identify major bricks and mortar projects and infrastructure projects. He said members of the public can give input at the January 28, 2020, Council meeting and up until the budget wrap-up session. Mr. Schainker noted an additional page was distributed to Council to be included in the draft CIP document on a possible downtown plaza. He also noted the possible major bond issue projects not included in the document are: an indoor aquatic center, the relocation of Fire Station 2, expansion of the animal shelter, and the possibility of a fourth fire station. Finance Director Duane Pitcher explained the CIP document.

Fire:

Fire Chief Rich Higgins told Council that Engine 1 will be replaced during the 2022/23 fiscal year and Truck 3 will be replaced during 2020/21. He said currently Truck 3 is the only truck with an aerial device and it will be refurbished to become backup apparatus. Chief Higgins said the manufacturer of Engine 1 went out of business in 2014, so that engine will not be eligible for reserve status.

Electric Services:

Electric Services Director Donald Kom said the Transmission division will have two projects: 69kV transmission reconstruction of deteriorated portions of 69kV transmission pole lines, and the addition of breakers and replacement of relays and controls at the Ontario substation. Mr. Kom said the Ontario project will allow for reductions in outage times.

The Distribution division improvements were discussed including the rebuilding of the Distribution parking lot including storm water improvements, continuing to transition street lights to Light Emitting Dioxide (LED) fixtures, and updates to substations. Council Member Gartin asked if Dayton Avenue substation is the last one to need switchgear updates. Mr. Kom said the Vet Med substation also has older switchgear that will be replaced in 2024/25.

Director Kom discussed improvements to be made to the Power Plant. Council Member Gartin asked if the repair work to the Power Plant in the last year is normal. Director Kom explained that those repairs are not normal, but that was the first time the boilers on Unit 7 have been extensively worked on since it was installed in the late 1960's or early 1970's. Mr. Gartin asked if it makes sense to do something different because of the older equipment. Mr. Kom said new power plants cost \$50 - \$100 million so replacing certain pieces to meet new standards is much more cost effective. Director Kom said the last time a new plant was looked into was 1982 and the cost at that time was \$3 million per megawatt (MW), and Ames has a 60 MW plant. Director Kom said staff believes this is the most cost-effective way to operate the units as they were intended. Mr. Kom said the units provide a way

to dispose of the County's waste capacity to meet regional obligations and create a reliability to serve customers without support from the outside world. Mr. Kom said the units also provide stability because without them the City would be subject to market rates that are very volatile. Ms. Beatty-Hansen asked about the last time the market was volatile. Mr. Kom said last December energy went up 10-100 times the normal market rates during some hours. He said combustion turbines are another level of protection against volatile markets.

Council Member Gartin asked how much of the electricity portfolio is wind. Mr. Kom said about 15%. Mr. Gartin asked if going completely to renewable fuels is possible. Mr. Kom said it is possible, but the discussion gets very detailed around buying and storing since wind doesn't blow all the time. Director Kom explained that the general energy market runs about \$25 per MW hour, power can be generated for about \$35 per MW hour, and wind costs about \$60 per MW hour not including storage. Mr. Kom said if it was decided not to run the Power Plant the County's Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) could not be processed.

Council Member Betcher asked about the costs of adhering to guidelines. Mr. Kom said the tube replacement project was driven by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Mayor Haila said 2-2.5 million pounds of garbage is processed per week from several communities. He noted Boone doesn't want the waste, so processing it here is the only option without hauling it to Des Moines.

Mayor Haila asked about the possibility of cyber attacks. Mr. Kom said there is little exposure to the outside. Council Member Gartin asked about the \$500,000 budgeted for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements. Mr. Kom told the Council that the Power Plant restrooms and front entrance need major changes to become compliant.

Mr. Kom said the Waste-to-Energy Study will look extensively at options and will cost more than originally anticipated. Council Member Betcher asked how many projects could be shifted because of the Waste-to-Energy Study. Mr. Kom said the only project that may be changed is the RDF bin renovation.

Water and Pollution Control:

Water and Pollution Control Director John Dunn said the Water Supply Expansion project has been delayed about two years and will be financed by the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. Ms. Betcher asked about water demands and asked if Ames Plan 2040 is being taken into account for adequate capacity until 2025. Director Dunn said the information on adequate supply until 2025 comes from the study that Fox Engineering did in 2013 when designing capacity for the new water treatment plant. He said it's hard to quantify ground water capacity, but there is adequate capacity in the short term. Mr. Dunn said the added wells will add capacity and provide replacement capacity since some wells are reaching 70 years of age.

Director Dunn discussed the Distribution System Monitoring Network that will provide real-time monitoring of the distribution system and enable early notification of major water main breaks. Ms. Betcher asked how long it takes to identify a water main break. Mr. Dunn said it could be a few days

for smaller ones, but the larger mains can be identified within five minutes. Operations Manager Justin Clausen said 30 water main breaks per year is average.

The Ada Hayden Water Quality Study was discussed. Council Member Gartin said he was hoping for annual testing. Director Dunn said water quality fluctuations year-to-year conclusions are hard to find. He said every five years there is a two-year monitoring period where water is tested monthly in different locations.

Mr. Dunn discussed the Water and Pollution Control Plant Facility improvements including equipment repairs, maintenance, replacement and upgrades.

Council Member Gartin asked about the nutrient reduction strategy. Mr. Dunn said the State has agreed to a three-phase, 20-year nutrient reduction strategy and the \$41 million will be spread out over 20 years. Council Member Gartin said the municipal contribution to nitrogen in the Gulf is 3-8% and Iowa will spend about \$1 billion in improvements to have a negligible effect on the Gulf. Mr. Schainker noted watershed benefits.

Mayor Haila appreciated the work of staff at the Water Pollution Control Plant. Director Dunn said the application has been accepted by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies for the Platinum 30 Award. He said this Award is given for three consecutive decades of 100% compliance with the discharge permit, making the City of Ames #2 in the country. Mr. Dunn said the facility is staffed 24 hours per day. Mayor Haila congratulated staff on the Award. Mr. Dunn said 72,000 numeric limits have been complied with in a row without a violation.

Public Works:

Public Works Director John Joiner discussed utility improvements to be made in water distribution, sanitary sewer, storm water, and the Resource Recovery Plant.

Mr. Schainker told the Council that notification was received that the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant has been awarded and will save the City millions of dollars and help reduce flooding on South Duff Avenue. Municipal Engineer Tracy Warner said channel improvements will be done to 2,000 feet on each side of the South Duff Avenue bridge. She said she is hopeful construction can begin next winter when water levels are low.

Mr. Joiner discussed traffic and shared use path improvements. Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer explained the Traffic Network Communication Master Plan. He said the Plan will be the guiding document that identifies upgrades to support modern technologies used to manage transportation. He said many of the projects will utilize the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) which uses real-time traffic to continuously monitor and capture real-time data. He said there's no waste, assumptions, or error in the data collection. Council Member Gartin said he's excited visitors can move throughout the community better. Mr. Pregitzer said a priority plan for particular events like football games or normal work days can be programmed into the system and then it will run on its own. He said it will change traffic in Ames. Mr. Gartin suggested trains be part of the system. Mr.

Pregitzer said currently only the local intersection gets notified about a train coming, but after this system is working, all intersections will know a train is coming.

Mr. Schainker said he is recommending the widening of South 16th Street from west of Ames Christian School to University Boulevard. He explained that with the Grand Avenue extension there will be more traffic on South 16th Street. Mr. Schainker said Iowa State University (ISU) is not in a position to make that improvement for a number of years, so he's recommending the City pay to widen the road. Ms. Beatty-Hansen asked about decisions made regarding that road in the future if City funds will be invested in roadway improvements. Mr. Schainker said the City has not asked to take ownership of the road. Ms. Beatty-Hansen wondered if the City should consider taking ownership of the road. Mr. Schainker said there is time to address these concerns as well as others such as maintenance of the road.

Main Street sidewalk paver replacement was discussed. Mayor Haila asked if pavers on other downtown streets will be improved. Mr. Clausen said they are working on all areas. Ms. Betcher said many communities are using their sidewalks to create public art opportunities.

City Council recessed at 8:30 p.m. and reconvened at 8:35 p.m.

CyRide:

CyRide Director Barb Neal discussed vehicle replacement and rehabilitation, building improvements and expansion, technology improvements, bus stop improvements, and shop and office equipment improvements. She said grant funding was received to assist in receiving many new buses. She noted CyRide is one of two agencies moving forward with Battery Electric Buses.

Ms. Neal said last year the focus was on moving part of operations to a second facility. She said CyRide needs time to adjust to declining ridership and "right sizing" the fleet. She noted a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) grant was received, and in two phases equipment will be replaced.

Mayor Haila asked about the decline in student enrollment. Ms. Neal said enrollment has been down three years, and so has ridership. She said she wants to be thoughtful toward counting ridership. She said additional dollars are available for outperforming other transit agencies. Ms. Neal said she wants to do as much as possible not to drive away riders. Ms. Betcher said lower student ridership creates an opportunity to attract other riders. Ms. Neal concurred.

Parks and Recreation:

Parks and Recreation Director Keith Abraham discussed park system and facility improvements including a splash pad and pickleball courts. He also discussed playground equipment improvements, Ames/ ISU Ice Arena improvements, Homewood Golf Course improvements, and ADA plan improvements.

Director Abraham said installing an accessible canoe/kayak launch is one of the priorities at Ada Hayden Heritage Park. He showed the Council pictures of a possible Downtown Plaza with a spray

pad that can be converted to an ice rink. Mr. Abraham said the spray pad water could go through the storm sewer, be captured and used for irrigation, or be recirculated which would require chlorine, staff time, and restrooms.

Mr. Schainker said the site and features are yet to be determined, but conceptual design work will be needed to get started. He said to accomplish this it would delay the North River Valley irrigation project.

Council Member Gartin asked about adding a restroom at Tom Evans Park. Mr. Abraham said it has been suggested in the past, but not approved by Parks and Recreation Commission. Mr. Gartin said cultural events in the downtown area need a restroom. Council Member Corrieri said in thinking about other cities with downtown attractions she is not familiar with any having restrooms, though many have “porta- pottys.” Ms. Betcher said if Council wants people to spend time downtown at a plaza then a restroom makes sense.

Mr. Abraham discussed cemetery improvements including a funeral pavillion, retaining walls, and landscaping.

City Manager’s Office:

City Manager Steve Schainker discussed the Neighborhood Improvement Program, Downtown Facade Improvement Program, and the Campustown Facade Improvement Program.

Fleet and Facilities:

Fleet and Facilities Director Corey Mellies discussed City Hall improvements. He told Council plans are being finalized on the security system.

Mayor Haila asked about the snow plows converted to biodiesel. Mr. Mellies said the trucks are upfitted and running with no issues. He said Council will receive an update on them in February to show comparison. Mr. Mellies said three hybrid police cars have arrived and three more are coming. He said the first one should be on the street in a few weeks. Ms. Beatty-Hansen asked about budgeting for fleet. Mr. Mellies said departments build fleet costs into their operating budgets. Mr. Schainker said the Fleet Department buys a new vehicle and slowly the Department pays the Fleet Department back.

Member Gartin asked about electric car charging stations. Mr. Schainker said Electric Director Don Kom is submitting a grant application for charging stations, but if the grant is not received the priority can still exist. Member Gartin said he would like to see a page added to the CIP for charging stations. Mr. Martin said a discussion can be added to an agenda. It was noted the discussion can take place outside of the CIP if the grant is not assumed.

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL: None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Ms. Betcher said the 2020 Census table was well attended at the Martin Luther King, Jr. event. She also said in February the International Town and Gown Association will hold a webinar on the impact of declining enrollment on college towns.

Council Member Gartin said the Martin Luther King Jr., event hosted about 650 people.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, to direct staff to add a discussion on electric car chargers to a City Council agenda.

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

Mayor Haila thanked Management Analyst Tasheik Kerr for her work and noted she will be taking a new position in Illinois.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

John A. Haila, Mayor

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary