

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

JANUARY 18, 2022

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 5:15 p.m. on the 18th day of January, 2022, 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 Anita Rollins were present. *Ex officio* Member Trevor Poundstone was absent.

City Manager Steve Schainker said department heads will discuss projects and highlights in the Capital Improvements Plan for 2022-2027. He said \$11,238,962 of American Rescue Plan Act funding will be used to begin implementation of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

UTILITIES PROGRAM

Electric Services

Electric Services Director Donald Kom told Council all dollars are revenue dollars, and the Electric budget over the next five years is over \$23 million.

Under Administration two projects account for 12% of the budget. Mr. Kom said Advanced Metering Infrastructure allows the department to install meters that can remotely shut off and can send a signal to alert the department of an outage. Electric Vehicle Infrastructure will continue to allow the department to add multiple electric vehicle charging stations to the community every year.

Council Member Gartin asked about right sizing electric vehicle infrastructure. Director Kom said people will typically charge at home, so they are looking at what wires are needed in the ground to help the community best add infrastructure. He also said they are looking to add chargers at locations where people will spend an hour or two. Member Gartin asked about Iowa State University (ISU) guests needing chargers. Mr. Kom said ISU started installing chargers as well, but Electric Services will work with them to collaborate. Mr. Schainker said this will be expanded over the years and building code requirements may change to require a certain voltage in garages. He said many things can be done to promote the use of electric vehicles.

Council Member Betcher said a comment was received regarding Tesla chargers being available. Mr. Kom said Tesla chargers charge only Teslas, and the chargers being installed can charge Teslas as well as any other electric vehicle.

Mr. Kom described the major projects under Transmission/Distribution, with a FY 2022/23 recommended budget of \$1,960,000 and equating to 44% of the 5-year budget. Highlighted were: Ontario Substation 69 KV Breaker Addition, 161 kV Line Relocation, 69 kV Transmission Reconstruction; Street Light and Line Relocation, Dayton Avenue Substation Upgrade, Electric Distribution Universal Locker Room, Mortensen Road Transformer Protection, Vet Med Substation Switchgear Upgrade, and Haber Road Substation Expansion.

The Power Plant is recommending a budget for FY 2022/23 of \$4,010,000, and equating to 44% of the 5-year budget. Specific projects include Combustion Turbine Improvements, Unit 7 (base-load), Unit 8 (base-load), and Combustion Turbine Generation Improvements. Mayor Haila asked about generators. Mr. Kom said the gas unit starts using air, so they are going through the process to see what it takes to have enough air available. Mayor Haila asked about the engineering costs. Mr. Kom said figuring out the controls and walking through the logic on the equipment takes time and must be done very carefully. Additionally, three projects were included under Fuel/ Waste Systems and two projects under Other (Plant Control Wi-Fi Network and Units #5 and #6 Boiler Removal) were noted.

Mr. Kom summarized the key points of the Electric Services budget, as follows:

1. FY 2022/23 budget directs capital resources towards Power Plant improvements to maintain the reliability of the City's electric grid
2. Beneficial Electrification to prepare for the future
3. Material Leadtime Delays due to COVID
4. Learn from Derecho; Plant Back Start capabilities
5. Improve Power Plant boiler tube life to maintain burning of Refuse Derived Fuel through the decade

Member Betcher asked if any money from the Infrastructure Bill is anticipated for electric resilience. Mr. Kom said most funds will go to water and streets, not municipal electric. Finance Director Duane Pitcher said it hasn't passed yet. Mr. Schainker said money would be passed through the state and it will be competitive. Ms. Betcher said the Department of Transportation may have some funding for electric resiliency, and if so she would like the City to attempt to get dollars.

Water Production/ Treatment

Assistant Director of Water and Pollution Control Neil Weiss, advised that the 2022-2027 CIP is comprised of projects totaling over \$23 million: North River Valley Well Field, Demolition of Old Water Treatment Plant, Technical Services Complex Addition, Water Plant Facility Improvements, Remote Sites Fiber Installation, Physical and Cyber Security Improvements, SAM Pump Station Improvements, Advanced Metering Infrastructure, Ada Hayden Water Quality Study, Lime Lagoon Improvements, East Industrial Elevated Tank, Well Controls Rehabilitation, and Ioway Creek Pump Station Demolition.

Mayor Haila asked about protection from breaches. Mr. Weiss said fencing surrounds the entire Water Plant, security cameras monitor constantly, and the control system is on its own network and will be further isolated. Water and Pollution Control Director John Dunn said after the breach in Florida a list of best practices was released to prevent that from happening other places, and Ames has each recommendation already in place. Mr. Dunn said it will be recommended a SCADA Technical Staff member be added to the department. Mayor Haila asked if a SCADA technician could go between Electric and Water departments. Mr. Dunn said this may move forward because enough work is now available to employ someone fulltime.

Water Pollution Control

Projects highlighted were Nutrient Reduction Modifications, Cogeneration System Maintenance, WPC Plant Facility Improvements, Watershed-based Nutrient Reduction, WPC Electrical System Maintenance, Headworks Modifications, Lift Station Improvements, and Clarifier Maintenance.

Food waste diversion was discussed. Mayor Haila asked if it could replace composting. Mr. Weiss concurred. Mayor Haila said the Board of Supervisors is interested in partnering with the City on composting. Mr. Weiss said food waste diversion is a focus of many cities currently.

Public Works

Public Works Director John Joiner showed a video highlighting the last year's projects. He then presented the projects included in the 2022-2027 CIP for the Public Works Department as follows:

Water Distribution: Ames Plan 2040 Water Utility Infrastructure and Water System Improvements.

Sanitary Sewer System: Ames Plan 2040 Sewer Utility Infrastructure, Sanitary Sewer System Improvements, and Clear Water Diversion.

Stormwater: Projects totaling \$12,050,000 were described.

Resource Recovery System Improvements will be made totaling \$1,397,000.

TRANSPORTATION

Street Improvements

Director Joiner highlighted the CyRide route Pavement Improvements including Lincoln Way (Beedle Drive/Hickory Drive to Franklin Avenue).

Shared Use Paths

Director Joiner said the average expenditure per year is \$1,443,140. He said Council has asked that at least \$1.2 million per year be spent. Mr. Joiner highlighted the shared use path extension on Grand Avenue (Lincoln Way to 6th St.). Member Gartin asked if that will continue north. Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer said long term it will connect to the path at Murray Street.

Member Betcher asked about alley paving downtown with permeable material. Municipal Engineer Tracy Peterson said permeable concrete has been used at Gilcrest and it has not held up. She said green alleys have been a success in other communities. Ms. Betcher said permeable materials should be explored again.

Traffic Improvements

Mr. Joiner highlighted projects totaling over \$16 million.

Street Rehabilitation

Projects include Bridge Rehabilitation Program, Pavement Restoration, Neighborhood Curb Replacement Program, Main Street Sidewalk Paver Replacement, Right-of-Way Appearance Enhancements, and US 69 Improvements.

Mayor Haila asked about salting on new pavers. Mr. Clausen said they are using less than in the past so it appears efforts are working.

Airport

Director Joiner advised improvements will include drainage improvements, wildlife fence improvements, runway crack seal, and fuel system relocation.

Mr. Schainker said because of the magnitude of projects, G.O. Bonds are included to finance airport projects.

Council Member Beatty-Hansen asked about the Resurfacing of Grand Avenue from Murray to Lincoln Way and the shared use path construction on Grand Avenue from Lincoln Way to 6th Street and wondered if they could be done together. Director Joiner said that can be considered.

Member Gartin asked when the Resource Recovery evaluation report will be finished. Director Joiner said they are working on the financial model for the options, so it is estimated Spring or Summer. Mr. Gartin said a lot of funding is going into the Resource Recovery Plant for long term maintenance when the report is not yet finished. Mr. Schainker said major improvements can be delayed until the report is available.

Transit System

CyRide Director Barb Neal told Council about \$19.4 million will be expended in the next five years. She said implementation of this portion of the CIP is dependent on local, state, and federal funding. She said investing in vehicle replacement and rehabilitation and building improvements and expansion are very important.

She highlighted 21 large bus purchases. She said the orange route could be managed exclusively by articulated buses after this purchase. She said a federal grant application was submitted for three more battery and two more articulated buses. She said the cost of vehicles for the next 5 years is \$14.5 million with 80% or more of the new buses being funded by federal dollars.

Mr. Gartin asked about maintenance of electric buses. It was noted that there are fewer fluid changes and fewer parts to maintain compared to a diesel engine.

Ms. Betcher asked what the average age of the fleet is right now. Ms. Neal said the FY 2021/22 average age is 12.5 years and next year it will be 13.6 years. In FY 2022/23 CyRide received 80% funding to replace two dial-a-ride vehicles. One support vehicle will be replaced.

Projects under CyRide Facility Improvements were explained and include: Replace HVAC system phase III, Shop Expansion, Replace Fueling System, and Construct an Addition onto Existing or New Facility.

Mr. Gartin asked about opportunities to add solar panels to the roof. Ms. Neal said as they move into battery bus technology, they would like to use the battery when it no longer fuels the bus. Mr. Gartin asked if direction from Council is needed. Ms. Beatty-Hansen said she can bring it up at the Transit Board Meeting.

Mayor Haila asked how long a bus battery lasts. Assistant Director James Rendall said a battery is supposed to last six to eight years. Ms. Neal said it could cost \$450-500,000 to replace batteries. Ms. Neal said she's hopeful the technology is much more advanced when a battery is needed. Mayor Haila said if federal dollars cannot purchase new batteries, this could be a big deal. Ms. Neal said many transit agencies are facing this, and the Board is now setting funds aside for replacement. She said they are part of the FTA Challenge, and knows it is important at that level.

Other projects highlighted were CyRide Technology Improvements (bus technology and signage, maintenance software, and demand response management software), CyRide Shop and Office Equipment, and Bus Stop Improvements. She noted that bus stop improvements have been placed on hold for FY 2022/23.

Ms. Betcher asked if the new technology that counts riders can help with driver shortage. Ms. Neal said most likely no, as the labor force is challenging now.

CULTURE AND RECREATION PROGRAM

Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Director Keith Abraham advised that the 2022-27 CIP budget for the Parks and Recreation Department totals \$38,891,173. He highlighted the projects that will be included: Downtown Plaza, Indoor Aquatic Center, Park System/Facility Improvements, Ada Hayden Heritage Park, Playground Equipment Improvements, Furman Aquatic Center, ADA Transition Plan Improvements, Homewood Golf Course, Ames/ISU Ice Arena, Moore Memorial Park, and Hayden's Preserve Park Development.

Mayor Haila asked about the Indoor Aquatic Center donation (Geitel Winakor Donation Fund). Mr. Abraham said some of those funds were spent this year (\$705,500).

It was noted that replacement of the south and north lake trails at Ada Hayden Heritage Park will be concrete and 12 feet wide. Member Gartin said the popularity of the park contributes to the need to manage the traffic, and said a bike trail and a walking/running trail would be ideal. Mr. Abraham said in some areas there wouldn't be room for two trails. He said they will continue to watch what others are doing. Mr. Gartin said adding two feet to the width will help tremendously.

Mayor Haila asked about the Lazy River leak at Furman Aquatic Center. Mr. Abraham said the leak will be fixed along with a few other things that were found.

The improvement to Moore Memorial Park was highlighted, as a pedestrian bridge will be added to cross the Ioway Creek at Moore Memorial Park. Mr. Gartin asked about Reactor Woods. Mr. Abraham said at this time there are not City or ISU resources to maintain trails within that area. Mr. Gartin asked how many acres Reactor Woods is. Mr. Abraham said he believes about 100 acres. Mayor Haila said the City doesn't own the land. Mr. Schainker said the emphasis is to direct people to Ontario/ Scholl Road, not send people through the woods. Mr. Gartin said many more people will be "discovering" this area soon, so a minimum safety discussion may be needed. Mr. Abraham said he will encourage ISU to think through this as well.

Cemetery

Cemetery improvements scheduled include installing retaining walls on the east side of Ames Municipal Cemetery and replace fencing at Ontario Cemetery.

OTHER

Fire

Mr. Schainker told Council the fire apparatus replacement will include two front line engines replaced and one refurbished for back up. He said these vehicles are not depreciated, rather G.O. Bonds are used to purchase when needed.

Library

Mr. Schainker said the Library will have carpet replaced.

City Hall Improvements

Mr. Schainker said about \$50,000 has been allocated per year, but now \$75,000 is allocated per year due to the increase in materials and repair costs, and the age of some of the major systems.

Mayor Haila asked about City Hall security. Fleet and Facilities Director Corey Mellies said in a couple weeks the new system should be running. Mayor Haila asked about some of the doors not latching. Mr. Mellies said exterior doors do not have the wire loop anymore and many doors are now wireless. He said the auditorium HVAC will be reconsidered in March. Mr. Schainker said \$200,000 of COVID Relief Funds will be used for the project.

Mr. Schainker said painting and recarpeting City Hall rooms and offices will be soon begin. Mr. Mellies said some wallpaper has been removed already. Mr. Schainker said the youth gymnastics room will be converted to cubicles and a conference room.

Mr. Schainker said G.O. Bonds are predominantly geared toward the number one goal of residents, which is traffic. He said FY 2023/2024 will be about double because of the Indoor Aquatic Center. He said funding will be reserved to transfer into the debt service fund to absorb those big increases. Mr. Schainker said state revolving fund loans are the other type of debt. He said when CAP is finalized and Council wants to make major improvements, financing options will be determined.

Mr. Schainker said the focus is on an Indoor Aquatic Center, Relocation of Fire Station 2 (hopefully along S. State Street), adding a fourth fire station; outdated Animal Control; and a new indoor recreation facility. He told Council the impact on utility rates and property taxes will be revealed in a couple weeks. Public input will be received next week. The final decision on the CIP plan will be February 8, 2022 when the operating budget is approved.

Finance Director Duane Pitcher described the Projection of Debt Capacity. He said it demonstrates compliance with State Code and the Council-adopted policy for debt limit. Mr. Pitcher said the State of Iowa statutory debt limit is 5% of total assessed actual value, and City Policy reserves an additional 25% of available debt capacity be held back to prevent future Councils from being locked in. Mr. Schainker said these policies contribute to the City's high rating, and he appreciates the conservative nature of the Council because it saves tax payers money.

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL:

Ms. Rollins asked about South Maple progress with four-inch water mains. Mr. Schainker said he will follow-up on the progress.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: Member Rollins welcomed back ISU students.

Member Gartin thanked Public Works for the hard work clearing the roads during the snow event.

Member Betcher said the MLK Jr. event was inspiring, and she was thankful to everyone that contributed.

Mayor Haila said a Council Goal-Setting Session is set for Saturday, January 22, 2022, at 8:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

John A. Haila, Mayor

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary