

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

JANUARY 17, 2023

The special meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 5:15 p.m. on the 17th day of January, 2023, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law. Present were Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Tim Gartin, Amber Corrieri, Rachel Junck, and Anita Rollins. *Ex officio* Member Bryce Garman was absent.

CONSENT AGENDA: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Corrieri, to approve the consent agenda.

1. Resolution approving Economic Development Assistance contract with Berdex USA including a \$5,710 grant from the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund balance

Roll Call Vote: 6-0. Resolution declared carried/adopted, signed by the Mayor, and hereby made a portion of these Minutes.

WORKSHOP ON 2023-2028 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN: City Manager Steve Schainker opened the meeting by stating that Department heads would be outlining the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for fiscal years 2023/24 through 2027/28. He noted City Council and public could expect to see projects related to land, building, infrastructure, and major equipment/vehicles. City Manager Schainker also acknowledged the challenges being faced due to increasing costs due to shortage of skilled labor, supply chain issues, and rising interest rates. Two projects pointed out to illustrate how these challenges are having an impact were the East Lincoln Way Water Tower project, and the Nutrient Reduction Project at the Water Pollution Control Facility. City Manager Schainker stated a common theme that could be observed in this CIP was delaying projects in order to adjust to higher prices, and in some cases eliminating the project. He noted bonds for the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center would be issued over a term of several years, with the largest issuance taking place in fiscal year 2024/25. These would be partially offset by a cutback of \$10.9 million dollars from the Public Works transportation project budget for that year to relieve the burden on taxpayers.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Fire

Fire Chief Rich Higgins presented on behalf of the Fire Department. The first project he addressed was the need for a Fire Apparatus Replacement, which had a 12% project cost increase. He noted the requested funding for this project will allow the Fire Department to refurbish the current Engine 2 once it is replaced, so it can be maintained as a reserve vehicle for the next 10 years. A new project presented by Chief Higgins was the Station Alerting System Replacement. He noted the current system is 14 years old and has begun to lose functionality as other technology in the City is updated. Chief Higgins noted updating the system will also allow for redundancy for added security as well. He stated computer updates were being delayed in order to free up funds for the new Station Alerting System.

City Manager Schainker noted even when there is a budgeted vehicle for the coming year, the delivery date may be delayed, and costs will continue to fluctuate during that time.

UTILITIES PROGRAM:

Electric Services

Director of Electric Services Donald Kom introduced the Electric Services Department request for CIP over the next five fiscal years. Director Kom echoed City Manager Schainker by highlighting several projects that, due to materials and other factors, have been delayed. He noted one of the areas where Electric Services is requesting more funding is in the area of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure as the Electric Department looks at adding additional charging stations for electric vehicles. He cited the Climate Action Plan as informing this priority. Director Kom also noted the department is seeking state and federal funds for those projects to reduce the amount of out of pocket costs for the City. Another area that had increased funding requests were for street light and line relocation, which is coordinated with the timeline of projects conducted by Public Works.

Director Kom cited preparing for a diversified workforce as the reasoning behind the Electrical Distribution Universal Locker project. With recent national events, he also noted Substation Security as an area of priority, leading to a greater funding request for that area as the Electric Department seeks to do everything possible in the short-term to make the substations a less likely target.

The Power Plant, which Director Kom stated constitutes 50% of the five-year CIP budget requests for the Department, has requested funding to make Combustion Turbine Improvements as Unit #7 and Unit #8 need a major overhaul every 5-7 years. These upgrades allow for maintenance and upkeep of the electric grid. Director Kom explained MISO has also expressed interest in the City of Ames being more capacity-rich during the winter, which would necessitate updates to the Combustion Turbine 2 Inlet Heating system. While not immediately necessary, Director Kom said the Electric Services Department included the project to be prepared if MISO were to change that requirement.

Director Kom noted a large portion of the requests were centered around updates and securing replacement parts for future repairs for boiler life at the Power Plant. He also expressed that the Waste to Energy (WTE) study that was recently presented to the City Council would play a role in determining what future requests would look like. He stated the Electric Services Department evaluated what needs were critical for updates and what could be flexible to respond to the eventual decision with WTE.

Water Production/Treatment

John Dunn, Director of Water and Pollution Control, highlighted facility improvements at the Water Treatment Plant, which he noted were a collection of small standalone projects that were not a part of bigger CIP projects. He noted there were projects in this group that had been delayed, but none of the delayed projects would create a jeopardy for the system. Physical and cyber security improvements motivated by the 2020 Vulnerability Study were included at a decreased cost from what was previously projected, as modifications to the plan allowed for eliminating an access-control system change out. Director Dunn also noted that supply chain issues had affected the Water Plant's ability to replace Advanced Metering Infrastructure, so those funds had been carried forward to future fiscal years to rebuild the meter inventory when they are available.

One project that generated discussion amongst the City Council was the Prairie View Industrial

Center elevated tank. This project was delayed due to costs, as pricing for the tanks remain volatile due to rising steel plate costs and increased delivery wait times for parts. City Manager Shainker noted that there is a balance between targeted industry policy and making big investments ahead of development, and that City staff were evaluating and keeping an eye on the needs of the area.

Other projects discussed were: SAM Pump Station Improvements, new Five Million Gallon Reservoir, Ada Hayden Water Quality Study, Lime Lagoon Improvements, and Well Controls Rehabilitation.

Water Pollution Control

Director Dunn then moved on to Water Pollution Control projects: Nutrient Reduction Modifications, Cogeneration System Maintenance, Watershed-Based Nutrient Reduction, WPC Plant Facility Improvements, Lift Station Improvements, WPCE Electrical System Maintenance, and Clarifier Maintenance.

The Nutrient Reduction Modifications-Phase 1 was discussed thoroughly as it was a significant price increase. Director Dunn noted the plan had been adapted to be robust but removes the need to be dependent on one vendor. Mayor Haila expressed concern over the ballooning costs. Director Dunn noted the City cannot complete the project on their own, there must be support at the state level as well. He also noted that the facility at the Water Pollution Control (WPC) plant is ten years past its design capacity, and this new project gives the WPC more capacity to meet the growing needs of the community. Director Dunn stated that although the second phase of this project is about 12 years in the future, it can be accelerated to meet capacity needs if necessary. He noted part of the balance of this project is staying a step ahead, but not getting too far ahead to be responsive. City Manager Schainker again stated that balance is key when evaluating CIP budgets.

Director Dunn noted the Cogeneration System Maintenance was delayed in the CIP in order to be in position to better respond to the WTE study results.

In conjunction with the City's funding for the Watershed-Based Nutrient Reduction project, grant dollars are also being utilized to fund this project. These improvements can also be "banked" as credit towards future, potentially stricter requirements that may come about. Director Dunn also noted relationships being built between Ducks Unlimited, Iowa DNR, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, the US Department of Agriculture, and Story County Conservation as being an important part of these efforts. Director Dunn shared staff is at capacity with this project, which is a current restraint on what they can do.

Public Works

Public Works Director John Joiner opened his presentation with a video recap of the last year's projects. He noted Public Works continues to push their construction season as long as weather allows. Director Joiner then walked through the proposed projects for each division as follows:

- Water Distribution: Ames Plan 2040 Utility Infrastructure and Water System Improvements.
- Sanitary Sewer System: Ames Plan 2040 Sewer Utility Infrastructure, Sanitary Sewer System Improvements, and Clear Water Diversion initiatives identified in Public Works

CIP requests.

- Stormwater Management: South Skunk River Improvements, Stormwater Erosion Control Program, Low Point Drainage Improvements, Stormwater Improvement Program, Stormwater Quality Improvements, and Stormwater Detention/Retention Maintenance.
- Resource Recovery: Resource Recovery System Improvements.

Director Joiner answered Council Member Betcher's inquiry if there has been any feedback from affected neighborhoods in the Low Point Drainage Improvements by stating that there has been a positive response to the results of this program.

Director Joiner noted Public Works programmed for keeping the Resource Recovery Plant (RRP) running as usual, keeping maintenance at capacity current status, and waiting for further direction from City Council as a result of the WTE study. He also noted any change in the City's WTE approach will take years to implement, so maintenance of the current system is crucial.

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM: Director Joiner walked through the proposed projects for each division as follows:

Street Improvements: Arterial Street Pavement Improvement, Asphalt Street Pavement Improvements, Concrete Pavement Improvements, Collector Street Pavement Improvements, Seal Coat Pavement Improvements, South 16th Street Roadway Widening, Campustown Public Improvements, Alley Pavement Improvements Program, Right-of-Way Restoration, Downtown Street Pavement Improvements, and CyRide Route Pavement Improvements. Director Joiner noted the Arterial Street Pavement Improvement would be Airport Road.

Shared Use Paths: Shared Use Path System Expansion, Multi-Modal Roadway Improvements, and Shared Use Path Maintenance. Director Joiner noted E. Lincoln Way (Carnegie Ave to Dayton Ave) was slotted to be the focus of the Shared Use Path System Expansion.

Traffic Improvements: Intelligent Transportation System Program, Traffic System Capacity Improvements, Traffic Signal Program, Accessibility Enhancements Program, Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update, and Regional Transportation Count Program. Director Joiner thanked the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) for being a great partner in these projects.

Street Rehabilitation: Pavement Restoration, US 69 Improvements, Bridge Rehabilitation, Salt Storage Facility Improvements, Streetscape Enhancements, and Neighborhood Replacement Program.

Traffic Safety Engineer, Damien Pretzinger, stated for the City Council that Public Works took all the information from Lincoln Corridor Study and put it into the CIP. This has allowed for Public Works to be sure there is no "rework" being done between projects. Director Joiner noted City Staff makes sure to coordinate as much as possible with the IDOT.

Justin Clausen, Public Works Operations Manager, expressed to the City Council that the IDOT has taken the needs and schedules of students, Iowa State Gamedays, and other community events

into account when planning their work timelines.

Airport: Airport Improvements, including fencing and pavements improvements are anticipated. These priorities are developed from the annual site visit from the Federal Aviation Administration. In answer to Council Member Gartin's question about the ability of the City to reprioritize CIP projects Director Joiner noted that the Bike/Ped Plan Workshop, and the direction that comes about after that will most likely change current plans and Public Works is prepared to adapt.

Transit System: Vehicle Replacement, CyRide Facility Improvements, CyRide Technology Improvements, CyRide Shop/Office Equipment, and Bus Stop Improvements. Director Barb Neal noted the emphasis of Transit's CIP requests are vehicle replacement and rehabilitation, as well as building improvements and expansion. She noted these two areas account for about 95% of the departments CIP request. Director Neal noted they are planning to replace 24 large busses and will be adding six battery electric buses to the CyRide fleet, eventually building up to 11 electric busses.

Council Member Gartin inquired about the life of the electric batteries. Director Neal responded the batteries are still about a six-year lifespan, but noted technology is continuing to change and grow and they will be following that closely, as well as looking for grant funding. She noted the Transit Board is also being conservative in its approach to funding.

Director Neal also noted they had received grant funding to replace seven 40' busses, but they may not be received when anticipated due to supply chain issues. She also noted grant funding was secured to replace areas of the CyRide facility that were over 40 years old, improving safety and air quality.

CyRide Facility Improvements include shop rehabilitation program, fire suppression upgrades, fueling system upgrades, and constructing or expanding a facility. Director Neal also noted Technology Improvements are on their radar. She noted continued investment in infotainment monitors is included in the CIP request, as well as money for concrete improvements fiscal year 2025.

CUTLURE AND RECREATION PROGRAM: Parks and Recreation Director Keith Abraham noted this CIP will contain a reduced number of projects compared to past CIP requests, due to higher costs, as well as focusing on maintenance and meeting new needs. He then walked through and summarized the following projects:

Parks and Recreation: Indoor Aquatic Center, Park System/Facility Improvements, Playground Equipment Improvements, ADA Transition Plan Improvements, Homewood Golf Course, Ames/ISU Ice Arena, Ada Hayden Heritage Park, Moore Memorial Park, Hayden's Preserve Park Development, and Furman Aquatic Center.

Director Abraham noted the McDorman property is not included in CIP, which Parks and Recreation is looking to purchase in May. He also noted he was not going to go in depth on the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center as it has been discussed in depth, but stated the price shown in the CIP draft was from April of 2022, and was a base bid for just the facility, without the walking track and multipurpose space. With rising costs, this bid is potentially anticipated to increase.

Director Abraham noted hope to have updated cost estimates and designs by the end of March.

City Manager Schainker noted there were other potential revenue sources that could be explored for the Fitch Family Aquatic Center that were not included in the revenues currently shown, as they were dependent on City Council direction. He also noted that in the CIP City Staff tried to match the issuance of bonds to match with the cash flow needed. Public Works was asked to cut back in order to lessen the burden on taxpayers. City Manager Schainker also noted that the draft CIP for Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center was worst case scenario, as he is hopeful there will be funds from the Investment District to help offset the debt.

Director Abraham pointed out 16 playground replacements in the five-year plan, as Parks and Recreation strives to include inclusive pieces. Funding for these requests were increased due to higher costs. He noted as the playground equipment is updated the City is working to make playgrounds compliant with ADA requirements. Director Abraham noted an audit was completed last year and staff is focusing on accessible routes, proper signage, and proper heights for drinking fountains. He also stated the City of Ames has roughly 40 playgrounds and has about 12 years to bring these sites into compliance, and all new construction must be compliant with ADA guidelines.

City Manager Schainker stated he wanted to give credit to Director Abraham for taking initiative to make these improvements. He stated it also shows the City is being proactive because staff believe in it, not because staff are being forced to and it speaks to the City Council's goal of being an inclusive community.

The Ames/ISU Ice Arena will need to have the sand base releveled and planned for every year. At Ada Hayden Director Abraham explained the plan of doing some improvements, taking care of beaver issues, and putting in a kid friendly fishing area, as well as increasing the width of some paths. He also noted the Bike/Pedestrian Plan will have the potential to impact future CIP requests as Parks and Recreation accommodates City Council's direction from that meeting.

Cemetery:

Cemetery Improvements include new fencing at Ontario Cemetery as well as purchasing three more columbaria at Ames Municipal Cemetery. Director Abraham noted the capacity of the columbaria is 48, and there is a continued demand for niches.

OTHER:

Library

City Manager Schainker noted it has been 10 years since the Library was expanded, and it is time for carpet replacement.

Downtown Façade Program

City Manager Schainker explained program funding was upped to \$75,000.00.

Campustown Façade Program

City Manager Schainker expressed there was no change to the funding amount.

Neighborhood Improvement Program

City Manager Schainker noted interest in this program has slowed down, and there is \$50,000.00 in the fund for physical improvements.

City Hall Improvements

City Manager Schainker explained the request for funding has been increased due to rising costs in materials and the age of some of the major systems. He noted that parts of the HVAC need to be redone and he has also requested funding for carpet which is labor intensive.

Finance Director Corey Goodenow reminded the City Council the State of Iowa limits the City's ability to issue bonds. He noted the City of Ames has a policy to reserve 25% of available debt capacity for emergencies. He cited the 65% available un-reserved debt capacity as a positive number that helps the City when going out for bonds as that represents good fiscal management historically. Director Goodenow noted the City has no control over the bond market, but what can be controlled is the City's debt and debt service schedule. He noted the City has been focusing on this area.

City Manager Schainker noted that looking forward to items not included in this CIP are: Relocation of Fire Station #2, new Animal Control Facility, new Fourth Fire Station, Development of new West-side Community Park, and additional Gym Space. He noted these would need to be evaluated in the future. City Manager Schainker also noted Public Input would be taken at the next City Council Meeting.

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL: There were no dispositions to City Council.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: Council Member Gartin stated the CIP is the most important thing that the City Council does in the course of the year, he felt the weight of the responsibility, and he was excited to get started. He also expressed thanks to City Manager Schainker and staff for paving the way for these discussions.

Mayor Haila noted that there was a wonderful MLK celebration the night before, where Council Member Rollins was the keynote speaker.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Rollins, to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m. Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.