



Minutes
Committee of the Whole
December 19, 2012

The Committee of the Whole met on **Wednesday, December 19, 2012** at **8:00 am** at **City Hall, Council Chambers, 30 West Central Street, Chippewa Falls, WI.**

Council Members present: Mike Hanke, Brian Flynn, CW King, Chuck Hull, Jane Lardahl, Bill Hicks, and George Adrian.

Others Present: Mayor Hoffman, Finance Manager/Treasurer Lynne Bauer, City Planner/Transit Manager Jayson Smith, Public Works Director/City Engineer/Utility Manager Rick Rubenzer, Parks & Recreation Director Dick Hebert, Library Director Virginia Woods Roberts, Police Chief Wendy Stelter, Fire Chief Tom Larson, Fire Inspector John Bowe, Battalion Chief Mike Hepfler, Utilities Office Manager Connie Freagon, and City Clerk Bridget Givens.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am by Council President, CW King. King indicated that Item #4 on the agenda would be addressed first.

Item #4: Discuss safety concerns/measures in municipal buildings. Possible referral to Committee.

King stated that he spoke with employees generally in City Hall questioning if they were concerned for their safety. Most that he spoke with replied that they feel safe.

The purpose of this agenda item was to open dialogue and discuss potential options of working with the county and/or school district on safety solutions. Possible suggestions for improvement included installing bullet proof glass, panic buttons, and metal detectors. Many agreed that a pragmatic approach should be taken. Chief Stelter offered to create a form that may help address potential safety concerns/suggestions and quick fixes that could be employed without major expenditures. Hicks advised that the entrances to City Hall need to have the notice that firearms are prohibited in the building. It was also suggested that additional training be offered to the employees so they know how to react in emergency situations.

This item will be referred to Committee #3 with input solicited from Chief Stelter.

George Adrian arrived at this time.

Item #1: Review and prioritize project/item requests and discuss funding options for those items. Possible recommendations to the Council.

Lynne Bauer provided the following handouts:

1. 2012/2013 Capital Item Requests
 - Page 1 – items requested but not included in department budgets
 - Page 2 – street projects that are already bonded for
2. Downtown Entrance Plan Projects

Bauer indicated that there is \$2.2 million in requested capital items. Discussion ensued regarding what is considered bondable and what is not with Bauer indicating that items with a shorter lifecycle are not bondable, i.e., reclassification study, computers, etc. whereas items such as vehicles would be.

Jayson Smith reviewed the Downtown Entrance Plan Projects and provided further details. Smith advised that he received a counteroffer from the owner of the Tanfastic Building of \$65,000. Concern was expressed with the unknown cost of demolition and possible environmental considerations. Potential offer numbers were discussed.

There was additional discussion regarding the debt service as relates to future borrowing.

This led to discussion regarding a map as distributed by Smith who received a call from Warren Hotchkiss regarding possible interest by the city in purchasing parcels of land near the bike trail. Smith stated that he has approximately \$55,000 in municipal flood plain monies to spend. The Hotchkiss property would qualify for use of these monies. Smith shared that long-term the property may be used as a conservancy area or as a trailhead. The deadline for using the flood plain monies is the spring of 2013. King indicated that this is a low priority item and should be taken to Committee #1.

Attention was again directed to the Capital Items Requests spreadsheet. The Reclassification Study was brought up in negotiations. Bauer based the request amount upon a study done recently by the City of River Falls which included the cost of the study in addition to monies to cover the results of the study.

The Mayor stated that items requested from the Police Department would not be bondable, short-term financing would have to be utilized. King advised that we have to determine what the priorities are and how they would be paid for (short-term financing vs. bond).

Dick Hebert addressed Council regarding the bathhouse at the pool. The roof has been leaking for quite some time. Repair is estimated at \$260,000 and a new building at \$400,000. Hebert was directed to take this item to the Park Board as a fundraising opportunity with the possibility of the City paying a portion of the project. Bauer advised that we want to ensure that the pool remains open before committing funds to that project.

Hebert indicated that road repair is required in the park and was not previously included on the list of Capital Item Requests. The road was inspected and estimated repairs are \$270,000. Flynn stated he is in favor of updating infrastructure through bonding versus doing patch jobs. Hebert also advised that the lower-end bathroom facilities need upgrading. Mayor Hoffman agreed that these type of infrastructure projects are a priority for the City and would support bonding for the roads and lower-end bathroom facilities. Overall the list does not have a lot of items which are bondable other than the roads, possible lower end bathroom at Irvine Park, and the bathhouse.

Chief Larson addressed the Snorkel truck which is 32 years old. There was concern expressed with how difficult it is becoming to obtain parts to repair the truck. The proposed truck would reach 110'. The catwalks at the sand plant are 95'. At some point there may be a need for a rescue. The Mayor questioned if there are other options that are less expensive or if we could buy used equipment. King questioned the response time from Eau Claire which the Chief stated is about 30-35 minutes. Flynn expressed concern with the 30 minute timeframe for response and stated he does not feel that we can afford to be without a truck and have to rely on others. He further stated that our ISO ratings are a huge advantage that we cannot afford to lose.

Hull questioned if there would be any residual value for the truck. There was a suggestion that perhaps a smaller, neighboring municipality would be interested in it.

Bauer suggested that she set a meeting with Brian Reilly of Ehlers to discuss priorities and options and then Brian could meet with Council to explain the impact.

After discussion, five **potential** priority items were identified as follows:

1. EMS Ambulance
2. Ladder Truck
3. Library Carpeting
4. Roads in Irvine Park
5. Bathroom – lower end of Irvine Park

As far as short-term notes, we should wait to see what we receive from land sale monies. Two lists will be developed, one of everything that is bondable and one of short-term notes. The lists can then be gone through and prioritized.

Item #2: Discuss City organizational possibilities. Possible recommendations to Council.

King stated he feels we have shifted to an ambulance service with a part-time fire department and when looking at the organizational structure of the fire department, feels there is no reason to add a Battalion Chief. Chief Larson stated that he performed a study with the recent Battalion Chief retirement. Discussion ensued regarding the Fire Dept. Engineering Study in which it was determined that this item is only for the engineering design for Station 2. Chief Larson indicated he needs the tools to do his job now and the 2013 labor costs are covered in the budget and the position should be filled.

King thought we may want to explore the potential of a reserve force. Adrian agreed that this may be something we should look into. Those present from the Fire Department expressed their reservations with this scenario.

Following further discussion, it was decided that filling the Battalion Chief and Firefighter/Paramedic vacancies would be addressed at the Committee #2 meeting on January 3.

Item #3: Discuss reclassification study. Possible recommendations to the Council.

This item will be placed on a future Committee #2 agenda.

Item #5: Adjournment

Motion by Flynn/Hicks to adjourn at 9:45 am. All present voting aye, motion carried.

**Minutes submitted by:
CW King, Council President**