

Jackson, Minnesota
December 1, 2020

The Jackson City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers of City Hall and also by Teleconference and Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 with the meeting called to order by Mayor Wayne Walter. On the roll call, the following persons were present, Mayor Wayne Walter, Aldermen Larry Anderson, Brandon Finck, Dave Cushman and Nathan Peterson. Also attending in-person were City Administrator Matt Skaret, City Attorney Brad Anderson, Jackson Ambulance Director Stephanie Beranek, Jackson Fire Chief Dave Bond, Jackson Fire Department First Assistant Chief Michael Haeffner, Engineer Greg Mitchell of Bolton and Menk, Community and Business Development Specialist Tom Nelson of Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA), Marcus Polz, Justin Lessman of the Jackson County Pilot and City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff. Attending via Zoom and Teleconference were Alderman Jeffrey Gay, Alderman Matt Madden, Jackson County Sheriff Shawn Haken, Nicole Hall, Luke Ewald, Tyler Bennett, Pastor John Schuetz of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Jackson and Dave Schmidt of KKOJ/KUXX radio. (A quorum of the City Council was present.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Walter announced the Pledge of Allegiance would be recited before the City Council meeting was called to order. All those attending recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Wayne Walter called the regular meeting of the Jackson City Council to order. He said the roll call showed all Councilmembers were present. Mayor Walter noted Alderman Matt Madden and Alderman Jeffrey Gay were joining the meeting via Zoom.

There were no Public Hearings, Bid Lettings or Open Forum.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Walter entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

FINCK/ANDERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Unscheduled Guests:

Mayor Walter asked if there were any unscheduled guests at the meeting. He again asked if there were any unscheduled guests at the meeting.

Seeing no unscheduled guests, Mayor Walter said the City Council would proceed with Council Discussion items.

Council Discussion Items

2020 STREET, UTILITIES AND PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PAY APPLICATION NO. 3

City Administrator Matt Skaret reported the first lift of asphalt on the North Highway project was done on Saturday, November 7th. He noted “hats off” to the paving crew, Street Superintendent Phil Markman and the staff from Bolton and Menk being on hand during the paving. Skaret said the first lift of asphalt was put down before the weather turned cold.

Skaret explained Pay Application No. 3 is primarily for the first lift of asphalt in the amount of \$361,926.36.

Engineer Greg Mitchell of Bolton and Menk said Pay Application No. 3 is for the work since the end of October, so basically for the month of November. He said the most significant item of the pay application is the bituminous paving.

Mitchell said some of the work that remains to be done in that area of North Highway, which will be done next year, includes putting sod down and installing some sidewalk for the first two phases. He said that will be done in the spring when the contractor can finish the rest of that work.

Budget wise, Cushman asked Mitchell if the work on North Highway is about on track and if it’s where it was expected to be with no hidden surprises.

Mitchell said actually there’s been a little money saved because the soil conditions were a little better than what was expected.

Mitchell said the contractor didn't use 12 inches of sand under a good portion of the street that was done so far. He noted there were savings in sand and also in excavation.

Finck asked if there's still a final coat of bituminous asphalt to be applied on the portion of North Highway that was done this year.

Mitchell said there's still a final coat to be applied.

CUSHMAN/ANDERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve 2020 Street, Utilities and Parking Lot Improvement Pay Application No. 3 to Duininck, Incorporated in the amount of \$361,926.36.

AMBULANCE BILLING SERVICE CONTRACT AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATE HIPAA AGREEMENT

Jackson Ambulance Director Stephanie Beranek explained Council action is needed to renew the Ambulance Department's contact with Expert T Billing Services which expires on December 31, 2020. She said all of the Ambulance Department's billing is done through Expert T Billing Services. Beranek said it's the time of year to pay for Expert T Billing's services for next year.

Skaret asked Beranek if the Ambulance Department was satisfied with Expert T's service.

Beranek said the Ambulance Department is satisfied with Expert T's services. She said Expert T does a great job for the Ambulance Department.

PETERSON/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Ambulance Department's contract with Expert T Billing Services for the next five years and the associated Business Associate HIPAA Agreement.

CEDA CONTRACT RENEWAL FOR 2021

Skaret noted the CEDA contract renewal for 2021 was brought up at the November 17th City Council meeting and it was tabled at the recommendation of the Finance Committee. He explained it was tabled due to some questions regarding the fee and particularly the possibility, at the time, of Economic Coordinator Tom Nelson deploying with the Minnesota National Guard and the potential for a change in staff.

Skaret said the City had some questions for CEDA to answer regarding those possibilities.

Skaret explained CEDA is proposing a three percent increase in the proposed contract for 2021 which will bring the cost up to about \$106,000 a year for the annual contract. He said the fee is based on the access to CEDA personnel and services. Skaret said it's not based on any particular individual or employee at CEDA.

Skaret said the City gets more than just an employee with CEDA. He said the City gets access to CEDA's broad network of knowledge and expertise. Skaret said if an emergency did occur where there was a change in staff, CEDA is responsible for providing that continuity of service. He noted that's on CEDA, not the City which is a big advantage of contracting with a company like CEDA along with many other reasons. Skaret said having that clarification seemed to satisfy the concerns of the Finance Committee.

Skaret explained the proposed CEDA contract for 2021 is for the same amount of staffing. He noted the City of Lakefield is looking to contract with CEDA for two days a week. Skaret said it would be for a full-time employee but for only two days a week. He said there's some training that's anticipated for whoever serves Lakefield. Skaret said Tom Nelson would be a mentor to the new person in Lakefield. He noted when the person isn't working in Lakefield, that person would be available to help in Jackson.

Nelson explained the mentoring or training aspect of the new person for Lakefield would be for projects in Jackson. Nelson said it wouldn't be taking time away, in theory, from Jackson for CEDA or for him to do because the new person for Lakefield would be helping out on things for Jackson. He noted both Jackson and Lakefield will benefit by having a person gain more experience from working in both communities.

Cushman noted the Economic Development Office deals with real sensitive issues that he would be concerned about. He said he hopes CEDA has some steps in place. Cushman said Lakefield is in our community but also a competing community. He said he's worried about confidentiality items and just wanted to make Nelson aware of it. Cushman said maybe CEDA has addressed that and maybe it's not that big of a deal.

Nelson said CEDA as a whole, deals with that a lot. He explained in some cases, the same CEDA person is working in neighboring communities. Nelson said CEDA hasn't found that there's been any problems specifically regarding confidentiality matters. He noted in cases where confidentiality is required, all members of the local organizations involved with a project, staff members and CEDA personnel sign an NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement).

Cushman thanked Nelson for the information.

Mayor Walter entertained a motion regarding the CEDA contract renewal for 2021.

PETERSON/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the CEDA contract renewal for 2021.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Community and Business Development Specialist Tom Nelson of Community and Economic Development Associates greeted Mayor Walter, City Councilmembers and those attending the City Council meeting.

Nelson said he wanted to provide the Mayor and City Council an update on what the Economic Development Office has been involved with during this past year. He noted the JEDC is going to be having a strategic planning meeting coming up soon. Nelson said the EDA usually does goal-setting at the beginning of the year as well. He said he's hoping to update the Mayor and Council at a future City Council meeting to talk about future plans and what the JEDC and EDA are hoping to be working on for this next year.

Nelson said Covid-19 has obviously had a big effect on the local economy. He reported there were a number of different items the Economic Development Office were able to work with to assist the local business community. Specifically, Nelson pointed out the 20 City loans the City Council approved as Small Business Emergency loans which the Economic Development Office administered.

Nelson said CEDA was one of the different distributing entities for the State Loan Program to assist businesses due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He noted there were only a couple businesses that applied through CEDA, while most applied for the State Loan Program through SWIF (Southwest Minnesota Initiative Foundation), but CEDA did help out with a couple of those applications as well.

Regarding the Jackson County Grant Program, Nelson said CEDA was actually contracted for that work separately by the County, but for the entities inside the City of Jackson, Administrative Assistant Trish Porter and himself worked to get the word out and helped to get a lot of those applications signed. He said that resulted in 59 grants totaling nearly \$1 million getting out to the community.

Nelson explained a lot of the rest of the work that the Economic Development Office did during that time was assisting businesses with technical assistance, PPE (personal protection equipment) questions and just helping people navigate through what the different new regulations were and getting clarification of those regulations.

Nelson said during the past year, the Economic Development Office worked on a refinancing loan to assist a business that was going from a contract for deed situation to a direct buy helping to ensure that the business had a much more stable situation financially.

Nelson reported there was one new loan this year through the City's 802 Fund which is the Small Business Commercial Fund, for a downtown building to install a new roof.

For the 804 Fund, the housing fund, Nelson said there were eight new loans this year. He said specifically those loans are for housing loans, fix-up loans, that are tied to the Small Cities Development Program in the community that are 80 percent grant and 20 percent loan. Nelson explained those loans fill out the rest of the gaps. He said the Economic Development Office was able to put eight loans out to the community to help those housing projects get fulfilled.

Nelson said the former New China restaurant building has been sold. He said the new owner is still working on the project in terms of what that's going to look like there. Nelson noted it was a couple of years in the making and he's really excited and hopefully there will be an announcement soon on what the new business will be. He said the new business is the culmination of a number of years of efforts.

Nelson said the Economic Development Office has continued to work with the Jackson Center for the Arts supporting a number of different grant applications. He said they have also been working with “Rebuilding Together” which is an organization primarily focused out of the Twin Cities that has been looking this year to locate a satellite office to work in Jackson, Cottonwood and Nobles Counties. Nelson explained the Rebuilding Together organization is very similar to other organizations that work on utilizing volunteer time to get projects completed. He said through the Economic Development Office’s help in getting that going, a position has been funded and there will be a staff person starting at the beginning of the year to work on a lot of different projects such as fixing up different housing areas.

Nelson said usually what the Economic Development Office does a lot of during the year are business visits. He said unfortunately they were not able to complete as many this year. However, Nelson said the Economic Development Office was able to visit about a half-dozen of the major industries in town. He said the visits are really important to see where the industries are at, how their employment numbers are looking and what concerns they may have.

Nelson pointed out one thing the Economic Development Office did different than in years past. He said usually they will focus on the employers and small businesses but this year the Economic Development Office actually visited with 13 professional services in Jackson. Nelson said visits were held with the doctors, lawyers, insurance agents and such. He noted in a lot of communities, if the professional services are gone, that’s when a community starts worrying about it. Nelson said the Economic Development Office is really trying to focus on succession planning and getting the professional services to focus on what those transitions need to look like.

Nelson reported the JEDC sold a building this year to an existing tenant which was AGCO. He said it’s a great deal for AGCO and to continue to see more investment in the community especially during these times. Nelson said that’s something the JEDC specifically has been able to provide for a number of businesses allowing them the ease of expanding. He said the JEDC has also be renegotiating some leases with tenants.

Nelson said the JEDC continues to work on commercial prospects as well as industrial prospects for their spec building. He noted this year a number of those prospects have been pushed back. But Nelson said, as we look into the new year, that's one of the big items the JEDC will be discussing at their strategic planning meeting on how to bring different entities to the community.

For the EDA, Nelson said major work was done to identify different sites in town for multi-family housing. He said the EDA is continuing to work with a potential developer for an apartment project in the community hoping to increase the number of market rate units available.

Regarding the Small Cities Development Program, Nelson reported that all the funds for the program have been spent. He noted over the last three years, the Small Cities Development Program has been active and has been extended twice. Nelson said now all those funds have been expended and the grant should hopefully be closed by spring.

For the JBDC, Nelson said in partnership with the EDA and the JEDC as well as a couple other entities for funding, the Jackson Business Challenge was held for the second year. He said there were seven applicants in this year's program and the winner was the Rest Stop which opened on September 1st.

Nelson said for the second year of the Facade Improvement Program, there was almost \$20,000 of funds distributed from the City resulting in around \$40,000 of private investment. He said it was really great to see the amount of private investment verses the public investment and the impact that it had.

Nelson reported the Jackson Signage Program will be starting next year to look at those outside of the Main Street area in terms of attracting travelers to them.

Nelson said the JBDC joined the Minnesota Mainstreet Organization to try and bring extra technical assistance to the community.

Nelson also reported the Economic Development Office has been recruiting new members to the JBDC. He noted the JBDC has elected a new slate of officers to kick-off the new year.

Nelson said he thinks this year has been fairly successful for the Economic Development Office. Unfortunately, a lot of things have been pushed back, but Nelson said he's really happy to see the work that they were able to do this year with a lot of the struggling businesses in the community.

Nelson said he hopes to report to the Council in a month or two to talk about the future.

Mayor Walter and Councilmembers thanked Nelson for his report.

RESOLUTION NO. 47-1220 ACCEPTING SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA BROADBAND DONATION ON INTEREST PAID

Skaret explained shortly after Southwest Minnesota Broadband was formed, Southwest Broadband did get loans from the participating Cities. He said the City of Jackson was the biggest founding shareholder of the group.

Skaret said Southwest Broadband had about \$422,000 worth of loans from the City of Jackson. He said Southwest Broadband is doing very well financially. Skaret said the Finance Committee met with representatives from Southwest Broadband a couple of months ago and reviewed the finances with them and things are going well.

Skaret said Southwest Minnesota Broadband has paid off their debt to the City of Jackson. He said Southwest Broadband paid off their balances and they actually overpaid their interest by \$492.51. Skaret said the City offered to give the overpaid interest back to them, but Southwest Broadband said "no, keep the change".

Skaret said in order for the City to "keep the change" so to speak, the City has to adopt a resolution accepting the extra interest as a donation.

ANDERSON/CUSHMAN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 47-1220 accepting the Southwest Minnesota Broadband donation of \$492.51 on interest paid.

FIRST CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE NO. 111: ADOPTING CITY FEE SCHEDULE FOR 2021

Skaret said every year about this time, the City Council goes through and adopts an ordinance updating the various fees that the City charges.

Skaret highlighted the changes in the fee schedule from the previous ordinance. He said most of the changes are minor.

Skaret pointed out a clarification regarding wire transfers when people wire the City money. He said people wiring money to the City are responsible for paying the actual bank fee.

Skaret said Ordinance No. 111 incorporates the new garbage rates that were approved in the new contract with Waste Management. He said the new rates are incorporated into the City's new fee schedule.

Skaret pointed out the new fee schedule also reflects the sewer televising camera that the City bought this year for the Sewer Department. He explained the City gets requests to rent the camera. Skaret said the recommendation is to have a \$100 minimum base charge to cover up to two hours. He said for each additional hour, there would be a charge of \$50 per hour to rent the camera.

Regarding water rates, Skaret noted 2020 was year three of the City's three-year phase-in of water and sewer rate increases that resulted from the study the City had done back in 2017. He said the recommendation from the Finance Committee is to increase water rates by two percent. Skaret noted there's been a lot of demands on the water fund and there's a lot of future needs coming up. He said it's better to keep increasing those rates incrementally rather than hitting people with a larger increase maybe next year or the year after. Skaret said it's better to keep it in small increments. He noted the City would be doing a two percent increase in water rates. Skaret said the base service charge for water is currently \$7.30 a month which would increase to \$7.45 a month in the new fee schedule. He noted the water usage charge for inside the City Limits would go from \$7.17 to \$7.31 a month. Skaret explained if a person has a house that uses 2,000 gallons of water a month, that would result in maybe about a two dollar a month increase. He said it's actually more like a dollar a month increase.

Skaret said another clarification in the fee schedule includes requests for temporary electric services, for example if someone was going to host a block party or event and needed to have temporary electric service set up. He said the Finance Committee is recommending adding a fee of \$50 for one day and \$10 a day after that.

Skaret said the Utilities Commission met on November 30th and discussed the City's AMI water and electric meter project. He explained the City has already come across residents who do not want the AMI water and electric meters because of concerns about radiation and issues like that. Skaret said for the record, the radiation and the waves that are emitted by the AMI meters are miniscule compared to a microwave or cell phone. Nonetheless, Skaret said there's still concerns out there. He said the Utilities Commission recommended having the City charge a \$50 a month fee on utility bills for those who do not want one or both of the AMI water and electric meters. Skaret explained for those who do not want one or both of the AMI meters will create extra administrative work. He noted that was the recommendation the Utilities Commission approved on November 30th.

Skaret also noted a minor change in the proposed fee schedule regarding ambulance fees. He said the change pertains to the loaded mile charge which is proposed to go from the current \$11.43 per mile to \$11.54 per mile or up to the maximum that Medicare will pay which is similar to the language in the current fee schedule.

Regarding the meal allowance for those that travel out of town on City business, Skaret noted those rates haven't been updated for a long time. He said it's proposed to increase those rates by one dollar on the breakfast allowance, two dollars for lunch and a two dollar increase on the dinner maximum.

Skaret said those are the highlights of the changes in the City's fee schedule.

Peterson asked if the proposed charge of \$50 a month for those who don't want an AMI water or electric meter is for both meters or one meter.

Skaret said the \$50 charge would be for one meter or both. He said it would be a flat rate. Skaret if the person did not want either AMI water and electric meter, the charge would be \$50 and if the person just didn't want to have the water meter, it would still be \$50.

Mayor Walter entertained a motion for the first consideration of Ordinance No. 111.

Cushman asked if this was the first reading of Ordinance No. 111.

Skaret said it was.

CUSHMAN/ANDERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve first consideration of Ordinance No. 111 adopting the City Fee Schedule for 2021.

RESOLUTION NO. 46-1220 DESIGNATING THE GOOD SHEPHERD HALL AT 1015 SHERMAN STREET AS THE CITY OF JACKSON'S LOCAL POLLING PLACE FOR ELECTIONS IN 2021

Skaret explained this is something that the City is required to adopt every year. He said even though there are no scheduled elections for 2021, the City is still required to designate a polling place in case there would be a special election for something that comes up next year. Skaret noted the City has been using the Good Shepherd Hall for a number of years and it seems to be working well. He said it's proposed to use the Good Shepherd Hall as a polling place once again. Skaret said City Staff has contacted the Good Shepherd Church and they have given permission for the City to continue to use their Hall as a polling facility.

ANDERSON/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 46-1220 designating the Good Shepherd Hall at 1015 Sherman Street as the City of Jackson's local polling place for elections in 2021.

COVID CARES ACT FUNDING RECAP

Skaret said the Covid CARES Act funding recap is to show everyone where the City's CARE Act dollars exactly went. He said the CARES Act funding was talked about at a number of meetings and decisions were made along the way. He said the final reports have been issued and all the checks written.

To recap, Skaret said the City received \$256,684 in Covid CARES Act funding. He said in taking a look at the breakdown, for payroll, the City is capturing the expenses they had from having employees stay at home in the springtime. Skaret explained the City had employees on alternate schedules just to ensure continuity of operations in the Street and Water/Sewer Departments. He said the City also had a few employees test positive for Covid and, of course, they had to stay home and quarantine. Skaret said there were also a couple of employees that had exposures to Covid so they had to stay home and quarantine. He said when you add up all the time and the cost of having people stay home for all of those reasons, the cost is just over \$67,000.

Skaret said the biggest portion of the CARES Act funding that went out was to the City's Small Business Loan Forgiveness Program plus the extra support the City gave the Chamber of Commerce along with the liquor license refunds. He said if you add those together, there was \$166,091.44 that went to what was considered as small businesses or business community support.

Skaret reported there was \$17,223.35 that went towards technology upgrades that were made at City Hall due to Covid. He explained those technology upgrades included a new phone system, a new conference phone, and a new laptop computer so Zoom meetings could be held.

Skaret said \$2,816.50 was spent on plexiglass, extra cleaning supplies, gloves, PPE and those types of things.

For the Ambulance Department, Skaret said they are also eligible for FEMA funds for the extra expenses they had. He said the Ambulance Department qualified for just under \$15,000 in FEMA funds. Skaret explained there's also a local match that's required so the City used about \$3,286 of CARES Act funding as the City's local match for that.

Skaret said that was a summary of how the City of Jackson's Covid CARES Act funding was used.

Mayor Walter said Skaret did a good job explaining how the CARES Act funding was used. He thanked Skaret for all the extra work and time he put in figuring that all out when the community was first starting to struggle.

Skaret thanked the Finance Committee for the many extra meetings and the City Council for all of their input as well.

FIRST READING: ORDINANCE NO. 112, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 94.05(F) OF THE JACKSON CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO NUISANCES AFFECTING PEACE AND SAFETY

Skaret noted that Ordinance No. 112 was discussed at length at the November 17th City Council meeting and it was tabled. He said Ordinance No. 112 was discussed at the Special Finance Committee meeting on November 30th and there was some support for revisiting this ordinance.

Skaret pointed out when Ordinance No. 112 was discussed at the November 17th meeting, the debate was on what the shut down time should be, 8 p.m., 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. and how does the City regulate or establish the proper hours for operating heavy equipment and machinery that's associated with construction projects, landscaping and so forth.

Skaret said another idea came up as an alternative to having a set time in the ordinance of when the operation of heavy equipment must shut down in the evening. He said it was suggested to have the hours of operation correlate with the sunset similar to what the various hunting seasons follow.

Skaret explained Ordinance No 112 would set the time at 30 minutes past sunset. He said after that, no more operating of heavy machinery would be allowed within the City limits. Skaret pointed out the proposed ordinance is not targeting snowblowers, lawnmowers, leaf blowers or those types of things. He said Ordinance No. 112 would pertain to heavy construction equipment, skid loaders, dump trucks, chainsaws and equipment that makes excessive noise.

Skaret pointed out there is a provision in Ordinance No. 112 that would allow for force majeure or acts of God, such as tornados or horrible wind storms when people need to patch holes in their roof to save their house. He said the proposed ordinance provides for exceptions like that.

Skaret said in cases where someone knows they will have a two-day project and they're going to work an hour past sunset or think they're going to; the person can get an exception from City Hall. He said either the City Administrator or City Clerk can grant that if there's written consent from the adjacent neighbors.

Skaret said the idea is that going by the 30 minutes past sunset time would give people the flexibility in the summertime when it's lighter later to get those extra projects completed and still be done at a reasonable time. Whereas in the wintertime, Skaret said it's less acceptable to be out at 8 or 9 o'clock at night in the pitch dark unless it's an emergency and there is a provision in the proposed ordinance for those types of emergencies.

Gay asked about the numbering at the top of the proposed ordinance noting it stated Ordinance No. 111 instead of No. 112.

Skaret said there was a mix-up on the numbering. He said that will be corrected for the second reading at the next City Council meeting.

ANDERSON/PETERSON moved and it was carried on a 5 to 1 vote to approve First Reading of Ordinance No. 112, an ordinance amending Chapter 94.05(F) of the Jackson City Code of Ordinances pertaining to nuisances affecting peace and safety.

Voting in favor of the motion were Aldermen Larry Anderson, Nathan Peterson, Dave Cushman, Matt Madden and Jeffrey Gay.

Voting against the motion was Alderman Brandon Finck.

Mayor Walter said he wanted to thank the committee that worked on bringing Ordinance No. 112 forward.

TRAIL SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

Skaret said removing snow from the trails has been discussed on and off for a while. He noted there's getting to be more and more requests for doing some snow removal on the trails.

Skaret explained what was discussed with the Finance Committee, and approved earlier this fall by the City Council, was to limit the snow removal on the trails to the Safe Routes to Schools. He pointed out the City has received federal grant money for those trails and it's a requirement that the City maintain those trails including the wintertime.

Skaret said the City has always been hesitant to get into removing snow on the trails for liability purposes. He said he had talked with the League of Minnesota Cities some time ago about removing snow from the trails. Skaret noted there are Cities that do snow removal on part or all of their trail system in the wintertime. He said the big thing is to have a policy in place and follow it.

Skaret explained the proposed Trail Snow Removal Maintenance Policy is basically incorporating what the City Council had already approved as far as doing the snow removal on a trial basis and just putting it on paper.

Skaret explained the snow removal would be on the Safe Routes to Schools which would include the sidewalk or trail on Springfield Parkway from Highway 71 going up to Dewey Street, the Dewey Street trail from Springfield Parkway to North Highway which was just installed last year and the North Highway sidewalk on the north side of the road from the Jackson Medical Center to Frost Avenue. He noted the City already clears the snow on the sidewalk from the medical center to Frost Avenue which would remain the same under the proposed policy.

Skaret pointed out it clearly stipulates in the Policy that the snow plowing of the streets takes priority and the snow removal from the trails won't be done right away. He said the snow could be removed on day two or day three after a snowfall and the trails won't be the first thing to be plowed.

Skaret said the policy also includes removing snow on the trail along Springfield Parkway from the First Baptist Church to Dewey Street after March 15th.

Gay asked if there was any provision in the policy for removing snow on the trail along Highway 71 to Eagle Ridge and the liquor store.

Skaret said the trail along Highway 71 is not included in the Trail Snow Removal Maintenance Policy right now.

Gay said he sees a lot of people walking on Highway 71 when the trail along Highway 71 is not plowed. He said to him that would be a safety issue.

Finck said when the issue of removing snow from the trails was discussed, the discussion was where do you stop outside of the youth school areas. He said where does the City stop and where do they start plowing snow on the trails for adult traffic. Finck said because of the trails, people can walk out towards the City/County Maintenance Facility which may get used more than the trail along Highway 71, and then along the County road and along river path, but where does the City start and stop removing snow from the trails. Finck said he's guessing if the City were to remove snow from all the trails, it would take a person all day to plow the trails and if the snow blows, then they would be moving that snow.

Finck said the Finance Committee really looked at the use of the trails and keeping the youth off of Springfield Parkway and North Highway as a safety issue for kids that have to walk to school. He said the March 15th date opens the trail plowing to Sayles Drive for those that walk from that area to school. Finck said it was felt that was a good date when you would probably start seeing foot traffic from that area. Finck explained that's what the Finance Committee felt the City had the manpower for and is why they picked that date.

Markman said currently the City has nine miles of trails. He said to plow the full width of the trail you would have to make two passes so that would be 18 miles to maintain. Markman said that's just not possible with the manpower and the equipment the City has to plow all the trails along with all the other things the Street Department needs to do at this time. He said the Street Department is basically plowing the Safe Routes to School.

Peterson asked if it's known how many children live in the Eagle Ridge development.

Finck said he didn't know.

Peterson noted the children in that development have to get to school also.

Gay said he just wanted to bring the question up and clarify that the plowing of snow on the trail along Highway 71 is not going to be done at this time.

Skaret said plowing the trails on the Safe Routes to School is kind of a first-time trial run for the City. He noted there is a clause in the Trail Snow Removal Maintenance Policy that says additional segments of the trail may be plowed at the Street Department's discretion-based on time and resources available, volume of usage, location, and ability to access trails with equipment. He said which trails are plowed is something that can be looked at again as time goes on and the City gets a better feel on how removing snow from the trails goes.

Cushman said he thinks that was also part of the conversation to see how the initial plowing of the Safe Routes to Schools trails go. He said the City can always add trails. Cushman pointed out once you start plowing trails from the beginning, it becomes an expectation and people will count on it. He said the City had to take baby steps is what was decided because this is something relatively new. Cushman said its unknown what kind of time it's going to take to plow the trails.

Markman explained the hard part of plowing the trails that are adjacent to Springfield Parkway is what do you do with the snow. He said Springfield Parkway is a County Road and the County plows it so the question is where does the City go with the snow off the trail. Markman said with the amount of sand and chemical that the County uses on Springfield Parkway; residents don't want that snow on their yards so the City can't windrow the snow over onto the homeowner's side of the trail because it's tough on yards. Markman said the Street Department will either have to pick up the snow and blow it into trucks and that's time and equipment along with hauling the snow. He said it's going to be a learning process on how things are going to work. Markman noted there's some driveways involved along Springfield Parkway where the Street Department can't obviously push the snow into their driveways because residents would not be happy with that. He said the Street Department gets enough complaints about that on a regular basis.

Finck said to be clear, the City is just clearing the trail along Springfield Parkway and not clearing the trails out to the Sunset Addition. He said it's just the trails along Springfield Parkway and North Highway and that's to Highway 71.

Markman said the School District takes care of the plowing on Springfield Parkway from Park Street to Highway 71. He said the City and the School District kind of share around the curve where the road was vacated after the Highway 71 bridge project. Markman said the main thing from now until March 15th will be the trail from Park Street to Dewey Street along Springfield Parkway.

Alderman Anderson asked Markman if the Street Department uses a blower or a broom on the trail.

Markman said it depends. He said if there's not a big windrow, the Street Department can broom the trail a lot of the time. Markman noted the Street Department has the same issue along North Highway when they plow that. He explained when the Street Department plows North Highway, they have to get the street widened because that's the emergency route to the hospital so the plows kicks the snow up on the boulevard. Markman said when they plow the sidewalk with the skid loader, they try to push the snow to north of the sidewalk which creates a ridge. He said when the wind blows, the snow drifts back in. Markman said it's a combination. He said the Street Department has a V-plow, a broom and a snow blower for the skid loader. Markman said sometimes the Street Department uses all three attachments. He said it all depends.

Markman said the snow gets pretty deep along North Highway. He said sometimes the Street Department will plow the snow with the motor grader and push it into the street and then use the big blower and haul the snow out of there because it gets built up so much. Markman said it will be the same issue along Springfield Parkway because of the east-west road and the north wind that's going to have a tendency to drift the snow.

Cushman said he assumes the Council will review the Policy throughout the course of the winter and make a decision come May.

Skaret said the Policy is a work in progress.

Cushman said perfect.

Mayor Walter entertained a motion to approve the Trail Snow Removal Maintenance Policy.

GAY/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Trail Snow Removal Maintenance Policy.

2018-2019 UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC CONVERSION PROJECT FINAL PAY APPLICATION

Skaret reported the 2018-2019 Underground Electric Conversion Project has been wrapped up. He said all of the turf restoration has been completed.

Skaret said this was year five of the five-year underground electric conversion project. He said the City has been holding \$31,571.87 in retainage. Skaret said the final pay application would release that amount and close out the project. He noted the contractor has done everything they were suppose to. Skaret said MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Jeremy Boogerd and the engineer have reviewed things. He said they're recommending the City release the retainage and close out the project.

CUSHMAN/ANDERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the 2018-2019 Underground Electric Conversion Project Final Pay Application of \$31,571.87 to Castrejon, Incorporated.

VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

Skaret said the City has some outstanding volunteers that deserve to be recognized. He said the plaques have been made but with the Covid situation and the Governor's latest Executive Orders, it was felt it wasn't appropriate to have the awards presented at the December 1st City Council meeting.

Skaret said normally there would be a reception with refreshments and invited guests and the opportunity to show appreciation to the outstanding volunteers. He said a reception and presentation will have to be held at a later date. Skaret said the City wanted to at least get the word out of who the award recipients were for this year. He said hopefully sometime sooner rather than later next year there will be a presentation of the plaques and a reception.

Skaret thanked Aldermen Larry Anderson and Jeffrey Gay for serving on the selection committee. He said the City has some outstanding volunteers.

Skaret noted there were three categories, Senior Citizen, Individual and Youth. He said this year's Senior Citizen award recipient is Arnold Benson, the Individual award recipient is Dave Schmidt and the Youth Volunteer award recipient is Olivia Anderson.

Skaret said thank-you to all three of those outstanding individuals. He noted there were several other nominees that were certainly worthy of being honored and might be award recipients in the future.

Mayor Walter said he would like to thank Skaret, Alderman Anderson and Alderman Gay for taking the time to review the nominations. He also wanted to extend his congratulations to this year's Volunteer Award recipients.

Other:

City Administrator Matt Skaret

Skaret reported the City Hall office is fully staffed again. He said Gloria Pell began working in the office on November 23rd and it is very nice to be fully staffed again.

Skaret noted staff training on the City's new AMI metering system was held on November 30th. He said there's really a lot the City will be able to do with the AMI software. Skaret said it's one thing to learn about the system on the screen and have an instructor outline things, but really the hard-core learning takes place afterwards when we're working with the AMI system directly. He said AMI has support services well after the training.

Skaret said the AMI Project is moving along. He said Boogerd is waiting for more AMI electric meters to arrive. Skaret said the installation of new water meters in homes has been suspended for now due to the Covid situation. He said it's probably not a good idea to be going into people's homes right now.

Skaret said there have been 550 electric meters installed so far and approximately 150 water meters.

Mayor Walter thanked Skaret for the updates.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mayor Walter entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

ANDERSON/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Jackson City Council meeting at 7:28 p.m.

David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

Wayne Walter, Mayor

