

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 24, 2020

The City of Jackson Finance Committee met at 6 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 2020 in the City Council Chambers of the Jackson City Hall. Attending were Finance Committee members Mayor Wayne Walter, Brandon Finck and Dave Cushman. Also attending were City Administrator Matt Skaret, Co-Director of the Jackson Food Shelf Laura Stubbe and Recording Secretary Dave Maschoff.

JEDC LOAN

City Administrator Matt Skaret said the City asked awhile back if the JEDC would consider paying off some of their loan to the City. Skaret asked Finck if he had any new information pertaining to that.

Finck said he didn't have any new information.

Skaret said he spoke with Economic Development Director Tom Nelson last week. He said Nelson indicated the JEDC is looking at building a strip mall next to the liquor store to try and get some retail development in that area. Skaret said the JEDC would essentially release the mortgage on those properties and then the City would receive some money back that way.

There was no further information available at this time for the Finance Committee.

FOOD SHELF FINANCING REQUEST – LAURA STUBBE

Laura Stubbe reported long-time Jackson Food Shelf Director Tracey Schley resigned last fall. Stubbe said she and Tara Hanson have taken over as the co-managers of the Food Shelf.

Stubbe said things are going well at the Jackson Food Shelf. She said it's been a good transition and Schley is very available to answer any questions and help them with anything that comes up.

Stubbe said in starting a new year and with a new Food Shelf Board, one of the questions that was asked by the Board is if the Food Shelf is receiving money from the City and the County. She said the Food Shelf Board wanted Stubbe to look into that.

Stubbe said she visited with City Administrator Matt Skaret. She said she understands the Finance Committee looked a request for funding from the Food Shelf last fall.

Skaret said because of the transition in managers last year, the Food Shelf didn't submit their funding request to the City until September or later. He noted the deadline for submitting funding requests was July 30th.

Skaret said the Finance Committee talked about the Food Shelf funding request late last fall. He said there was never really any action taken. Skaret noted last year the City provided some funding for the Food Shelf but it was more project related. He explained the Food Shelf bought the building and made some improvements to the building and to the site such as curb and sidewalk and so forth. Skaret said as far as the City helping with funding for the on-going operations and maintenance, the Finance Committee didn't really take any action on that.

Stubbe explained the majority of the funding the Food Shelf receives is from grants that they write and from donations. She said in the grand scheme of things, the donations don't go real far.

Stubbe said the Food Shelf received \$25,000 from the Jackson Healthcare Foundation to redo the ramp and install new rails and a new door in the front of the building to meet ADA standards. She said the Food Shelf is very appreciative of the City's help in redoing the curb.

Cushman asked how much money the City provided for redoing the curb at the Food Shelf.

Skaret said all total it was about \$4,200.

Stubbe provided information to the Finance Committee about the Food Shelf's general budget. She said the Food Shelf's annual budget is about \$44,000.

Stubbe said the Food Shelf is sitting good. She said the Food Shelf is not in a situation where they are desperate. Stubbe said they have applied for a couple more grants that they are hoping will help.

Stubbe said looking forward, they know that eventually the Food Shelf will have to upgrade the electrical service in the building and things like that. She said the Food Shelf doesn't want to drain down their resources too far.

Stubbe explained the Jackson Food Shelf serves an average of 150 families per month from Jackson County.

Stubbe said the Food Shelf receives the majority of their food through Second Harvest Heartland which is a large food shelf in the Twin Cities. She said they also receive food from a Federal program that is commodity based.

Skaret asked if Stubbe had an idea of what the breakdown would be of how many families from the City of Jackson are served by the Food Shelf compared to the rest of the County.

Stubbe said she would guess the breakdown would be 60 percent of the people served are from the City and the rest from the County.

Stubbe said she hasn't spoken yet with the County Commission regarding a funding request. She is planning to talk with them in the next couple of weeks.

Stubbe said the Food Shelf was requesting funding to help them with their utilities. She said that would be huge.

Stubbe reiterated that the Food Shelf is not in a desperate situation. She said they are not on the verge of closing down or anything. Stubbe explained the Food Shelf is just trying to be somewhat proactive and looking forward to not wanting to be in that situation.

Stubbe provided informational statistics on the number of families the Food Shelf serves each month. She said some people come into the Food Shelf once and they never see them again and there are others that are regular visitors. Stubbe said if somebody comes in and says they need food; the Food Shelf wants to be able to provide that for them.

Stubbe explained they report to Second Harvest the ages of people that the Jackson Food Shelf serves. She said the age categories are zero to 17, 18 to 64 and 65 and older along with the number of pounds of food. Stubbe said Second Harvest's recommendation is that they would like to see each person receive 25 to 30 pounds of food in their household.

Stubbe said in January of 2019, the Food Shelf served 112 families. She said in January of 2020, the Food Shelf was up over 100 families from the year before. Stubbe said 216 families were served in January of this year at the Jackson Food Shelf.

Stubbe explained the Food Shelf is open six hours a week on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and on Thursday evenings from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Stubbe said the Food Shelf has seen an increase in the need.

Stubbe said changes in the economy, layoffs and different issues contribute to the increased need.

Cushman asked Stubbe how much funding the Food Shelf wants. He explained then the Finance Committee would look at it and discuss the request. Cushman asked when the Food Shelf would need the funding. He also asked Stubbe when the Food Shelf plans to talk with the County regarding funding.

Stubbe said the Food Shelf would like to receive \$250 per month from the City and \$250 per month from the County to cover the Food Shelf's utilities. She said that would be huge. Stubbe said that would help in taking care of the electricity, natural gas, garbage and those types of things.

Cushman inquired for how long a period is the Food Shelf asking for that funding.

Stubbe said it would be for the long term.

Stubbe said the Food Shelf is asking if that's a request the City would be open to or could be negotiated. She said she doesn't know if the Food Shelf will ever be in a position where they couldn't use that funding. Stubbe said it's not like the need is ever probably going to go away. She said the Food Shelf is an organization that's helping our community.

Stubbe said the Food Shelf is not in desperate need of the funding right now. She said she didn't know how the City's budget was determined for the year and whether the City has any flexibility.

Cushman said he thinks it's critical going forward that the County shows some sort of involvement. He said they've been given a pass on this and a lot of the people being served by the Food Shelf are the County's residents.

Finck pointed out everyone is the County's residents. He said everyone pays County taxes whether you live in the City or live outside of the City.

Cushman said a lot to him is going to depend on what the County is going to do.

Finck suggested tabling the Food Shelf's funding request until the County takes action on the request.

Cushman said at least the Finance Committee has a monetary figure from the Food Shelf. He said previously the Finance Committee didn't have an amount being requested.

Finck asked Stubbe to report back to Skaret on how her conversation with the County goes and what the County approves would give the Finance Committee guidance.

Skaret asked Stubbe if she had anything scheduled yet to meet with the County.

Stubbe said she doesn't have a meeting scheduled with the County at this time. She said she has a call-in to two of the County Commissioners but hasn't heard back from them yet. Stubbe said she's hoping to meet with the County Commissioners in the next couple of weeks.

Cushman suggested contacting County Coordinator Steve Duncan to find out about getting on the County Commission's meeting agenda.

Cushman said he thinks we all know there's a need. He said now it's a matter of do we do it, if any, as the County and City share in this.

Stubbe thanked the Finance Committee for their time to visit with her.

PARKS DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR POSITION

Skaret noted the Finance Committee had talked about the Parks Department Coordinator's position during budget time. He said Street Superintendent Phil Markman had talked about the need.

Skaret said with the City's park system growing with the addition of Memorial Park and more and more park responsibilities, it was penciled into this year's budget to have a Parks Department Coordinator.

Skaret explained this isn't adding to the City's staff. He said it's basically taking one person of the Street Department's staff and appointing them as the coordinator or foreman for the parks to be in charge of the day-to-day activities, supervising the seasonal staff and putting the parks "first" in their job duties.

Skaret explained right now everyone in the Street Department is focused on streets and sewers first and as time permits, or if there's a crisis, then they do the parks.

Skaret reported one of the common comments made in the recent Active Living Survey was for the City to fix up their parks.

Skaret said he thinks having a Parks Department Coordinator would help somewhat. He noted the Finance Committee talked about it at budget time.

Skaret said we're getting closer to spring. He said Street Department Superintendent Phil Markman wanted to present the proposal again to the Finance Committee to see if they were OK with moving forward with the position and how they wanted to go about in filling it. Skaret said there could be an internal posting to give everyone a change to apply for it or someone could be appointed as Parks Department Coordinator.

Cushman asked how things would work.

Skaret explained Street Superintendent Phil Markman would be the supervisor of the Parks Department Coordinator. He said if the Street Department needed help on something, then the Parks Department Coordinator would help.

Skaret said the Parks Department Coordinator would still be a rover between the parks and Street Department. He said the parks would come first, but then the streets as needed. Skaret said the person would still plow snow in the winter. He said the person wouldn't be abandoning the Street Department but just putting a higher focus on parks.

Cushman commented so the City isn't really creating another layer with more people, but just taking and giving the responsibility of the parks to one person.

Mayor Walter asked if there would be more pay for the person that would serve as the Parks Department Coordinator?

Skaret explained the intent would be that the person as Parks Department Coordinator would be moved up a grade on the City's pay scale. He said it would probably amount to maybe \$5,000 a year extra.

Cushman asked if any other equipment would have to be purchased?

Skaret said no new equipment would be purchased for that position. He said the Parks Department Coordinator would be a working supervisor that would be working in the parks and not running things from an office.

Finck said he would really think the position needs to be posted internally.

Skaret concurred and said he would recommend that the position be posted internally.

Cushman said if in three years from now the Parks Department Coordinator's idea isn't working can the City end the position or can the position be revisited every once in a while?

Mayor Walter said he doesn't think it would hurt to revisit the position on an annual basis.

Skaret suggested having the stipulation of trying the position of Parks Department Coordinator for one year.

Mayor Walter noted the position is something totally new. He said on paper it sounds like the right way to go.

Skaret provided copies of the job description for the Parks Department Coordinator to the Finance Committee members. He pointed out the person serving in that position would be required to obtain their pool operator's license. Skaret said then there would be two people on staff that have a pool operator's license. He noted Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough just obtained his license.

Cushman asked Skaret if he was going to post the Parks Department Coordinator's position internally.

Skaret said he would post it internally with a copy of the job description.

It was the consensus of the Finance Committee members to post the position internally.

Cushman noted the pay grade will go up for the person that will serve as Parks Department Coordinator. He asked what the pay grade will do in the winter months when the parks are basically shut down. Cushman asked if the pay grade would stay the same.

Skaret said the pay grade would stay the same. He pointed out there's still some things that can be done in the parks during the wintertime.

MAYOR WALTER/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the City Council to authorize City Staff to internally post and approve the job description for the position of Parks Department Coordinator.

SPLASHPAD FINANCING UPDATE

Skaret said he doesn't really have an update regarding Splashpad financing. He explained updated numbers aren't available.

Skaret said Markman was asked to get a local quote on digging in a line for the rain diverter at the splashpad. He said the quote received was \$12,000 to do the boring.

Skaret pointed out another issue that came up which will probably be another expense that wasn't included in the splashpad project. He said Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough attended the CPO certification class and had a conversation with the instructor about Jackson's upcoming new splashpad.

Skaret said the instructor told Oxborough that he won't be able to keep the combined chlorine under .5 parts per million which is one of the standards. Skaret said if you're not at .5 parts per million, then you need to vent the underground tank or invest in a UV bulb. He said there is added cost with that.

Skaret said Oxborough has tried reaching out to an official with Vortex who is the vendor for Jackson's splashpad. He said last he's heard Oxborough hasn't heard anything back. Skaret said Oxborough was trying to start some conversations on how we can exactly do that.

Skaret noted the vendor said "no" you don't need that but the instructor at the CPO class who has worked with a lot of splashpads and with his previous company before, says you will need that UV bulb or venting of the underground water tank.

Cushman said now's the time to find out if that's needed.

Finck agreed. He said to get it done right.

Skaret said the cost figure Oxborough gave him was \$11,000.

Finck said you have to do it or otherwise it may damage the splashpad equipment.

Skaret said more information will be forthcoming.

AIRPORT FARM LEASES

Skaret said there are two airport farmland leases that the City needs to set the rental rate for this upcoming growing season.

Skaret explained the way Craig Fransen's lease reads is their per acre rental rate is set by the average rental rate for the preceding year that's compiled by the University of Minnesota Extension Service for Jackson County. Skaret said that rate was \$187 per acre that the City used for last year. He said going by the 2019 rate, it actually jumped to \$211 an acre.

Skaret said in talking with City Attorney Brad Anderson, he suggested maybe the City go with a rental rate of \$200 an acre taking into consideration the local farm economy.

Skaret noted it would still be an increase in the rental rate over last year. Skaret also noted the City is trying to work with the Fransen's on the airport land acquisition.

Finck asked when do the airport leases come up again for renewal.

Skaret said Fransen's lease is on a year by year basis until 2022. He said both of the airport leases are until 2022. Skaret said one lease was for five years and the other airport farmland lease was for either five or seven years.

Cushman asked what the acre count was on each of the leases.

Skaret said Fransen's lease is for about five-and-a-half acres and Benson's is for approximately 30 acres. He said regarding the farmland Benson leases, it's not really well drained. Skaret said he and City Attorney Anderson had a meeting with Benson last spring. He said the City was going to have City staff try and make some corrections to improve the access to that farmland, however that wasn't done because it was too wet.

Skaret said last year the lease was at \$190 an acre for Benson. Skaret said he and City Attorney Anderson proposed leaving the lease rate at \$190 per acre taking the drainage into account.

Mayor Walter asked where the farmland is located that Benson leases.

Finck said it would be the farmland located around the airport.

Cushman said if Benson's lease rate remains the same, so should Fransen's.

Mayor Walter and Finck agreed with Cushman to leave Benson's and Fransen's lease rates the same as the year before.

FINCK/CUSHMAN moved and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the City Council to leave the airport farmland lease rates for 2020 the same as the year before at \$187 per acre for Craig Fransen and \$190 per acre for Matt Benson. (Note: Upon review of the leases by City Administrator Matt Skaret following the Finance Committee meeting, the farmland rental rate in the lease for C & S Farms (Craig Fransen) is \$187 per acre and for Matt Benson the rental rate is \$185 per acre and \$170 per acre for the Garber/JEDC portions.)

AMBULANCE COVERAGE FOR THE RACES AT THE JACKSON MOTORPLEX

Cushman said he received a phone call from Jackson Motorplex General Manager Doug Johnson who said he wanted to talk about the news he received that the Jackson Ambulance can't provide ambulance services to the races at the Motorplex anymore.

Cushman noted Johnson said that kind of puts the Jackson Motorplex in a tight spot.

Cushman said Ambulance Director Michael Muchlinski had gone to Johnson and said the Ambulance Service can't staff the races anymore because they just don't have the staff to do it.

Skaret said the Jackson Motorplex has approximately 23 races during the racing season. He said a few more races have been added to their schedule.

Cushman said Muchlinski doesn't feel the Ambulance Services has the personnel to cover all the shifts throughout the year.

Cushman said his first response was that's not acceptable. He said he contacted City Administrator Skaret and said this isn't a good deal and we have to figure this out.

Cushman said he, Skaret and Muchlinski met last week and listened to Muchlinski's story and the reasons behind it. He said they explored many options. Cushman explained the reason he brought up the issue at the Finance Committee meeting is to see what other options are out there. He said it's not a matter of money. Cushman said you can't charge them double for what they're asking for. He said it's a matter of having an ambulance and two staff people.

Skaret said the Motorplex needs a minimum of two staff people and one of them has to be an EMT.

Cushman noted the Ambulance staff responded to over 700 calls last year. He said the Ambulance Service is having a hard time getting volunteers.

Cushman said some things that were talked about included renting an ambulance. He noted the Jackson Ambulance Service has three ambulances. Cushman said there's not a shortage of wheels.

Cushman said one thing talked about was could there be a First Responder, which could be a firefighter, an EMT and an ambulance of Jackson's to sit there at the racetrack. He said the Jackson ambulance only goes around the track, it's there and then it transfers the patient to another ambulance at the gate. Cushman noted the races can't continue if an ambulance is not present. He said Muchlinski wasn't much in favor of that. Cushman said there may be some legal issues that need to be explored. He said we need to look at all the options.

Cushman said another option would be for the Jackson Motorplex to rent an ambulance from Rock Rapids, Iowa and then man it with the same staff when they could or contract it out separately.

Cushman said the other option is that the City tells the Jackson Ambulance Service that they have to be at the Motorplex. He said Muchlinski said if the Jackson Ambulance Service is told to be there, they will be there. Cushman said he doesn't want to be that guy because he doesn't want to tell the Ambulance Service how to run their business.

Cushman said he was disappointed in how it was first handled through an email to Doug Johnson informing the Motorplex that the Ambulance Service wasn't going to provide service this season.

Skaret said Muchlinski has spoken with Doug Johnson about the challenges the Ambulance Service was having and did not know if they would be able to staff the ambulance for race nights this year. He said that's when Johnson talked about renting the ambulance and basically have a private party staff the ambulance.

Skaret said back on January 24th is when Muchlinski had emailed Johnson and basically confirmed that they wouldn't be able to staff the races this year with the Jackson Ambulance like they've done in the past. Skaret said in the email, Muchlinski indicated he agreed with the suggestion of having the Motorplex rent an ambulance and staffing it. At the time, Skaret said it sounded like the situation has been resolved and the Motorplex was going to provide their own ambulance. Skaret said Cushman contacted him last week and it sounded like Doug Johnson was pretty upset about it.

Cushman said he doesn't know how we go about this. He said there's probably some liability with either one of these scenarios. Cushman said his thought is that all four of the options discussed need to be explored. He said rather than just say "no we can't do that"; the City has to show why we can't. Cushman said if there's something the City can do, great. He said Johnson said it's not a matter of money, it's a matter of personnel.

Cushman said he called Johnson back and pointed out if the ambulance that's at the race track is there and an ambulance comes to the gate for a transfer and another call for an ambulance comes in, the Motorplex is officially done racing anyway. He said the ambulance is at the race track but if the ambulance has to leave because of an emergency there are some issues there.

Cushman said if the Motorplex had their own ambulance they could continue with the races. He said that would leave three ambulances outside the gate verses just two. Cushman noted at some 700 ambulance calls per year, that number is going to go up.

Cushman said he doesn't think Johnson and Motorplex owner Tod Quiring are real excited about the challenge ahead of them.

Cushman said he's heard from First Responders that they would be available, but are they?

Skaret asked if it's a liability or comfort issue if the City just has a First Responder and an EMT at the race track if they have to respond to a critical incident.

Skaret said if the City told Muchlinski to find a way to staff the Ambulance for the races no if's, and's or but's, he fears half of Muchlinski's ambulance crew may quit.

Cushman said Muchlinski covers a lot of shifts himself. He noted the Ambulance Service is not fully staffed to do what they are doing and now you would be adding weekends and more of them. He said he doesn't think that's the answer but we need to find out why the other Ambulance Service personnel won't work those shifts. Cushman said there's probably a matter of legalities why they can't work, but the City then needs to present that to Johnson and Quiring.

Skaret reported the Jackson Ambulance Service is down to 21 crew members.

Mayor Walter said it seems to him like we've been losing a lot of Ambulance crew members. He said he would like to know why. Mayor Walter said the Ambulance was fully staffed at one time and now we're down six or eight crew members. He asked what happened?

Cushman said part of the reasons the number of crew members is down is because some crew members didn't want to work weekends anymore.

Skaret said members have to work a minimum amount of weekends when they're on the Ambulance crew.

Mayor Walter said also some of the Ambulance crew members he's talked to left because they just weren't physically able to do it anymore.

Cushman said ambulance staffing is probably a long-term fix to try and figure out. He said we have a short-term problem that the City somehow needs to at least give the sign that we're trying to figure something out.

Cushman suggested maybe Skaret could gather some information if we looked at having MedStar provide an ambulance at the race track. He pointed out the Jackson Ambulance would still have people on call that night just like any other Saturday night or evening during the week. Cushman said if they received a call, it may be at the gate at the race track. He said that would be an option.

Cushman said another option, if it's legal, is to have the Jackson Ambulance with a First Responder from the City's Department and have the Motorplex hire an EMT.

Finck said he would be in favor of having MedStar provide ambulance services to the race track and not even involve Jackson's ambulances. He said that's what MedStar does and that's what they are there for.

Cushman said MedStar from Rock Rapids, Iowa is only going to be able to supply an ambulance. He said they won't be able to supply staff.

Skaret said MedStar would just supply the ambulance and the staff would come from somewhere else. He said Johnson could hire someone from Sherburn, Fairmont or even one of Jackson's EMTs if they wanted to work and staff the MedStar ambulance.

Finck said if the Jackson Ambulance was used, he'd asked Muchlinski to hire an EMT and staff it under the City's umbrella. He said for liability reasons, he doesn't like the idea of having the Jackson Ambulance at the race track and someone else hiring a crew to staff it.

Cushman explained he wanted to bring up ambulance coverage for the races to gather some input from the rest of the Finance Committee members.

Cushman said he will talk further with Doug Johnson about hiring MedStar to provide an ambulance for the race track.

Skaret said he will talk to Muchlinski about the options discussed at the Finance Committee meeting. He said he will talk to Muchlinski about having a First Responder, even if it's from the Fire Department and an EMT to staff the races. Skaret said he will also ask Muchlinski if the City can hire an EMT, even if we have to go outside the community, one or two people, just to work the races.

Because of liability concerns, Finck said he doesn't want to see the Motorplex hire their own people to staff the Jackson Ambulance at the races.

Other:

Street Lights not working on Brown Street

Mayor Walter said he had a resident contact him that the street lights aren't working on Brown Street.

Skaret said he submitted a work order to fix the street lights on Brown Street. He said the lights were supposed to be fixed last week.

Mayor Walter said the resident said they saw the Electric Department working on the street lights, but they still aren't working.

Skaret said he would follow-up with MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Jeremy Boogerd regarding the street lights on Brown Street.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the Finance Committee adjourned their meeting at 7:03 p.m.

David A. Maschoff, Recording Secretary

