

Jackson, Minnesota
March 17, 2020

The Jackson City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 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, Jeffrey Gay, Donnie Schoenrock and Dave Cushman, City Administrator Matt Skaret, City Attorney Brad Anderson, Street Superintendent Phil Markman, Jackson County Sheriff Shawn Haken, Luke Ewald of Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough, Pastor Steve DeKok, Bridget Kolander-Gilbert of Bridget's Bucksnoorts Brew Ha-Ha and Grill, Helen Mekosch of the Senior Center, Community and Business Development Specialist Tom Nelson of Community and Economic Development Associates, John Weland, Kim Benes, Nathan Peterson, Pastor John Scheutz of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Jackson, City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff, Justin Lessman of the Jackson County Pilot and Dave Schmidt of KKOJ/KUXX Radio. (Alderman Matt Madden was absent.) (A quorum of the City Council was present.)

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Wayne Walter called the regular meeting of the Jackson City Council to order. He noted the roll call showed all Councilmembers were present except for Alderman Matt Madden.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Unscheduled Guests:

Mayor Walter asked if there were any unscheduled guests in the audience.

There were no unscheduled guests at the meeting.

Seeing none, Mayor Walter said the Council would proceed with the Council Discussion items.

Council Discussion Items

KIM BENES – USE OF BENES PARK FOR A FUTURE DOG PARK

Kim Benes introduced himself to Mayor Walter and the City Council. He said his mother lives next to the frisbee golf park.

Benes noted for the past few years the area hasn't been used as a frisbee golf park mostly due to the high water from the Des Moines River. He explained as the water levels go down, the park area isn't being maintained in his view for much of anything.

Benes said he has suggested in the past that Benes Park could be used as a location for a dog park in Jackson. He noted a newspaper article regarding the results from the recent Active Living Survey in Jackson that reported some people mentioned having a dog park in Jackson.

Benes said he doesn't know what the City or City Council wants to do with the land that currently has the frisbee golf course. He explained he was attending the City Council meeting to find out what may be worked out regarding the development of a dog park at the current frisbee golf park. Benes said there's no hurry in making a decision. He said he just wanted to hear the views of the Councilmembers.

Schoenrock thanked Benes for attending the meeting. He suggested Benes meet with the Park Board to discuss his idea and see what the Park Board's plans are for that property. Schoenrock said the Park Board could review Benes' idea and make a recommendation to the City Council.

Alderman Anderson said the next scheduled Park Board meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 14th at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

BRIDGET KOLANDER-GILBERT – LIQUOR LICENSE PERTAINING TO COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Kolander-Gilbert thanked the Mayor and City Council for scheduling her onto the Council's agenda.

Kolander-Gilbert said due to the changes to our society and the recommendations from the State Government due to the Covid-19 pandemic, her and other establishments similar to hers are limited to take-out food only with zero alcohol sales.

Kolander-Gilbert said she was asking the City of Jackson to look into possibly extending her liquor license to equal the number days that her business cannot serve alcohol. She said the liquor license is normally due in December. Kolander-Gilbert noted the shutdown could be eight days to three or four months. She said they are not selling alcohol and it directly affects her liquor license.

Kolander-Gilbert said she realizes it's a decision the City Council can't make at the March 17th meeting. She noted the shutdown for licensed liquor establishments is statewide.

Finck said with the effect the shutdowns are having on businesses it makes sense, in his opinion, to have some concessions.

City Attorney Brad Anderson noted with how fast things are changing, the Council almost needs to wait to find out what happens and then take Kolander-Gilbert's request under consideration.

Cushman said he thinks the City Council is certainly open to the idea. He said this is all new territory and the Council will have to see where this goes and then adapt. Cushman said he hears what Kolander-Gilbert is saying and is all in favor of it. He said he would like to make a decision about her request when the pandemic situation is over and we know exactly where we stand. Cushman said the City Council is going to support our businesses, but let's do it right when this situation is over. He said until we know what we have, it's easier to decide what we're going to do.

Alderman Anderson concurred with Cushman to wait to see how things are going to turn out.

Finck said he would like reflected in the City Council minutes that if the State and Federal governments don't have a program to assist business, the City will be willing to work with local businesses.

Nelson added he and CEDA will be monitoring any State and Federal programs that may be forthcoming to assist businesses. He said he will also be talking with local businesses to keep the City Council updated and working on programs the City could provide to assist businesses.

Cushman, Councilmembers and Mayor Walter thanked Kolander-Gilbert for informing them on how the shutdown is affecting her business and others.

HELEN MEKOSCH WITH THE SENIOR CENTER

Helen Mekosch explained she was attending the City Council meeting to thank the Mayor and Council for working with the Senior Citizens Center on the installation of the new automatic door, new toilets and fan. She said Skaret just informed her that the City has approved the bid for cleaning the air ducts in the building and thanked the Council for that.

Mekosch said it's hoped the Senior Center can continue to work with the City Council is getting some more needed things done at the Senior Citizens Building. She again thanked the Mayor and City Council very much for working with them.

Cushman thanked Mekosch for her persistence in getting things done.

Due to the Corona Virus, Skaret noted the dine-in portion of the Senior Citizens Building is currently closed. He said the Senior Dining Program is still doing meals on wheels.

Mekosch said take-out meals are also available if people call the Senior Center ahead of time. She said there have been a lot of extra meals.

Skaret thanked Mekosch and all the staff at the Senior Dining Site for all their efforts during this time.

Mayor Walter also extended thanks to Mekosch and all the Senior Dining staff.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Community and Business Development Specialist Thomas Nelson of Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) provided the Mayor and Council an update of the activities occurring at the Economic Development Office.

Nelson said the Economic Development Office has continued to work with the JEDC in marketing the JEDC's 30,000 square foot spec building. He said they've been working on a number of existing and new leads.

Nelson said the JEDC is also continuing to work on commercial developments as well.

Nelson reported a winner has been chosen for the second round of the Jackson Business Challenge. He said construction for the new business called the Rest Stop has started. Nelson said the second-place winner in the Business Challenge was Plaza Jalisco who is still in the process of looking for a building in Jackson. Nelson thanked the City Council for supporting the Business Challenge Program.

Nelson noted the Facade Improvement Program is still underway.

Regarding housing, Nelson said the Small Cities Development Grant Program has been active going into its final year. He said they are looking for about four more projects. Nelson said they are looking at utilizing all the funds in the current program to enhance the funding opportunities for future applications.

Nelson said the Economic Development Office continues to work with a developer who purchased the former Sacred Heart Mercy Health Care Center. He said that project will likely result in about 16 new units in our community focused on student and intern housing which is a great use of an asset in our community. Nelson said it's also been a partnering between AGCO and Minnesota West which has been great.

Nelson reported the EDA is looking to identify and compare potential different sites for market rate housing to provide housing for employees of businesses and manufacturers in Jackson.

Nelson said a list is being compiled of potential people that would be interested in Active Living or retiree housing. He said the Economic Development Office is essentially trying to partner them up with a contractor who would be interested in constructing a number of units at the same time for the purpose of dropping down the cost to make it more affordable for people who are looking to downsize and therefore hopefully free up more housing for families in our community.

Nelson reported he attended the Greater Minnesota Partnership and the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities Legislative Action Day this past week.

Nelson said CEDA is working on resources to respond to the affect the Covid-19 pandemic is having on businesses. He said CEDA will monitor what's occurring with State and Federal legislation. Nelson said CEDA is also taking ideas from the communities they serve that may assist businesses in Jackson.

Mayor Walter thanked Nelson for his report.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND DEFERRED LOAN REPAYMENT POLICY

Mayor Walter noted Nelson talked about the Revolving Loan Fund Deferred Loan Repayment Policy during his Economic Development Coordinator's report.

Cushman asked if the proposed policy has been recommended by the Revolving Loan Committee.

Nelson said the first request from a business to defer the Revolving Loan repayment for two months just came in this week.

Nelson said the recommendation is to establish a policy instead of taking action on each case. He explained the purpose of the policy is to allow the Economic Development Office to react because the Revolving Loan Fund has such a wide grouping.

Cushman asked if the business was requesting a deferred repayment for two months with the possibility of extending that.

Nelson said the request for now is to defer the payments for two months.

Finck asked if the request is to have the deferred loan repayment for two months as a policy. He asked if the policy would apply to businesses in the Industrial Park the same as it would to downtown businesses.

Nelson said a list of requirements has not be put together yet. He said that could be compiled.

Finck suggested making this a temporary policy and not to make this a permanent policy until the Revolving Loan Fund Committee reviews it further and determines how it should really look like. He asked if it should be a policy for 2020.

Skaret said he would recommend it be a policy for the next two months, not for two months permanently.

Finck asked about the length of the deferment.

Nelson said they were looking for payments through May so it could be specifically tied to the month.

Finck asked if it could be looked at as a 60-day extension in the 2020 calendar year so businesses can apply this calendar year for a 60-extension.

FINCK/CUSHMAN moved and it was unanimously carried to adopt a Revolving Loan Fund Repayment Loan Payment Policy for 2020 to allow a 60-day, two-month extension of payments to businesses that apply in the 2020 calendar year and if a further extension is needed, the application needs to come back before the City Council.

CONSIDER NICOLE HALL FIX-UP LOAN APPLICATION

Nelson explained this fix-up loan application is a standard application that pairs with the Small Cities Development Grant Program.

SCHOENROCK/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Nicole Hall fix-up loan application in the amount of \$3,951 subject to necessary language changes.

COVID-19 VIRUS UPDATE

Skaret said a number of measures have been taken within the City to help slow the spread of the Corona Virus. He explained at City Hall, residents are being asked to please use the outside drop box to make their utility payments. Skaret said if customers need envelopes to make their payments, envelopes are available inside the entryway of City Hall. He said people are also being asked to do any business with City Hall by phone or email if that's possible.

Skaret asked if the City Council wanted to have further restrictions. He noted Jackson County and the banks have essentially locked their doors.

Finck noted starting on March 18th, the bank will be closing their lobby but will operate the drive-through. He said for the short-term it seems it would be the prudent thing to do. Finck said there's definitely a concern by health officials to slow the virus down through social distancing.

Schoenrock said City staff needs to be protected as well. He suggested leaving the decision to close or open City Hall to the discretion of Mayor Walter and the City Administrator.

Skaret pointed out City Hall would still be operating and business getting done even through the building would be closed to the public.

Street Superintendent Phil Markman noted the City/County Maintenance Facility is now closed to the public. He said the County is also having some employees working at home and employee breaks are taken on staggered shifts.

Skaret said precautions are also being taken at the Liquor Store where counters and surfaces that are touched are sanitized and the number of customers allowed in the store at any one time is being limited. He said limiting the number of customers in the liquor store has been difficult because of how busy they have been. Skaret said customers are getting used to the social distancing. He said sales representatives are limited in coming into the store and orders are being placed over the phone.

Skaret said for right now, City Hall is open unless the City Council decides differently.

Skaret noted the Library will be closing at 5 p.m. on March 18th and will be closed indefinitely until further notice.

Skaret asked if City committee and board meetings should be suspended.

Schoenrock said some of those committees and boards may not have to meet. He said it could be the discretion of the Mayor and City Administrator to have a board or committee meeting if it was deemed necessary.

Skaret said another issue that may need to be discussed is how will the City deal with utility bills if people lose their jobs and are unable to pay their bills on time. He said it may require a policy decision depending on how the pandemic situation unfolds.

Sheriff Shawn Haken noted according to information from the Centers for Disease Control and census data, about a third of Jackson County's population could be considered in the high-risk category for the Corona Virus.

Mayor Walter asked for a motion regarding the closing of City Hall to the public.

FINCK/SCHOENROCK moved and it was unanimously carried to close City Hall to the public, other than by appointment only, beginning at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 with City business to be conducted through phone calls and emails until further notice up to the discretion of the City Administrator and Mayor.

SANITARY SEWER EXTENSION PROJECT AMENDMENT – EXTENSION TO JUNE 30, 2022

Skaret said the City has been notified by the Public Finance Authority (PFA) regarding the City's Sewer Extension Project. He said the City entered into agreements back in 2016 because the City was receiving grant and loan dollars for those projects. Skaret said there was a deadline of June 30th, 2020 to get the project completed before the City loses their grant and loan dollars. But due to all the rain and high-water levels in the river, Skaret said the river hasn't fallen down to an acceptable level to make the river crossing so the last leg of the sewer extension project can be completed.

Skaret said the PFA is aware of the situation and recommended the City request an extension which the City did.

Skaret reported the PFA has granted the City a two-year extension until June 30th, 2022 to complete the project. He said as a result of that, there are some revised agreements. Skaret explained the City received funding from two different sources which included a Point Source Implementation Grant Agreement and a Clean Water Revolving Fund Loan with Wastewater Infrastructure Fund Grant. He pointed out those agreements have been revised with the revised dates for completion.

Skaret said a motion is requested to approve the revised grant and loan agreements.

CUSHMAN/ANDERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the revised grant and loan agreements for the Sanitary Sewer Extension Project to June 30th, 2022.

2020 STREET AND UTILITY PROJECT UPDATE

Skaret said Engineer Greg Mitchell from Bolton and Menk is planning on attending the next City Council meeting to go over the final plans and receive authorization to go out for bids for the 2020 Street and Utility Project.

Right now, considering that schedule is followed, Skaret said we'd be looking at a bid opening in late April with construction starting possibly as soon as late May assuming that everything goes well. He noted the Corona Virus pandemic is throwing a monkey wrench into everything and potentially even these plans.

Skaret said Mitchell is looking at phasing the project starting on the west end of North Highway at Sayles Drive and going up the hill to the hospital and completing that portion of the North Highway first. Skaret noted there's a high-pressure water main in that area. He said if that can be completed first, it would make the logistics for the rest of the North Highway project in that area easier.

Skaret said Phase Two would be on North Highway from the hospital down to Logan Avenue near the Methodist Church.

Skaret explained Mitchell is looking at having the project done over two construction seasons. He said North Highway would be done this construction season along with paving the parking lots at City Hall, the Water Plant and the Library. Skaret said that could be done this year. He said in 2021, the project would focus on South Street. Skaret explained South Street is a little bit more complicated. He said there's a natural gas main on the east end of North Highway and a natural gas main on South Street that need to be moved. Skaret said starting on the west end of North Highway will give the gas company time to move the gas mains on North Highway and South Street.

Skaret said the South Street project would be done in 2021 and then be paved before winter. He said in 2022 the second lift of bituminous would be applied on South Street. Skaret noted the South Street project would include new curb, gutter, street and utilities except the sanitary sewer. He said the sanitary sewers have been lined on both South Street and North Highway.

Markman pointed out there are new manholes and the lining of the sewers were done in previous years.

Skaret said on South Street there's storm sewer that's relatively new and appears to be in good shape.

Markman said the storm sewer was going to be televised to make sure it was still good.

Skaret noted the Corona Virus situation has resulted in extra low interest rates. He said there should be favorable interest rates if the City bonds later this summer for the street projects.

Skaret said the 2020 street and utility project update was just an informational item for the Mayor and City Council.

SPLASHPAD UV BULB SYSTEM

Skaret said the UV Bulb System was something that wasn't included in the initial price of the splashpad. He said Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough recently attended pool school.

Oxborough explained he spoke with his instructor at pool school and asked him what the obstacles would be to maintain a healthy splashpad. He said the instructor recommended a UV light. Oxborough said he consulted with the Minnesota State Health Department which licenses splashpads and they strongly recommend a UV bulb system for the tank. He said he was informed that UV lights are mandatory in other states for splashpad systems. Oxborough said it's expensive but it will be worth it.

Skaret said the added cost for the UV blub system is \$15,185. He said there would be no extra charge for installation. Skaret said he would recommend moving forward with installing the UV blub system.

Cushman asked Oxborough if the UV blub would help in maintaining the splashpad in the future and assist in keeping it safe.

Oxborough said it would. He noted he was told the UV blubs need to be replaced every three or four years. Oxborough said the benefit would be peace of mind in keeping the splashpad safe and running a lot smoother.

CUSHMAN/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the installation of the UV Blub System for the Splashpad in the amount of \$15,185.

TREE TRIMMING NOTICES

Skaret said tree trimming notices have been issued to properties in Jackson who have trees with branches hanging less than eight feet in height from the sidewalk and 14 feet above the street. He explained the City ordinance has always required property owners to maintain trees along the boulevard and right-of-ways. Skaret said the purpose of trimming is to avoid damage to street equipment as they plow snow or maintain the streets. He said the tree trimming also clears the sidewalks so people can walk.

Skaret said the Street Department delivered hundreds of tree trimming notices to homes and City staff has fielded many questions. He explained there will be a grace period on the 10 days that are stated on the notice as this is the first time in recent memory that notices have been issued. Skaret said the purpose of the notices was to let people know they have trees that need to be trimmed.

Skaret said once the notices have all gone out, City staff will evaluate whether it's feasible for City staff to trim the trees or if contractors will need to be hired. He noted the fee set is \$150 per property if the City does it and the actual cost plus a \$25 administrative fee if the City hires a contractor to trim the trees.

Skaret noted a lot of tree trimming has been underway by residents.

Street Superintendent Phil Markman said he probably fielded over 70 phone calls about tree trimming on March 17th in addition to the 54 messages on his voice mail at the office. Markman said he's explained to people the notices were to make property owners aware that their trees needed to be trimmed. He said as the trees leaf out, the branches become heavier and sag down which then strikes street equipment and garbage trucks. Markman said he's explained that it's beneficial to have the tree trimmed instead of getting a branch broken off by equipment that may cause more damage to the tree. He said several tree trimming contractors are available to trim trees if a property owner can't do it themselves.

Markman said he's been working with citizens regarding the tree trimming issues.

Skaret said he wanted to give the Mayor and City Council an update.

BELMONT PARK SINGLETRACK MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL LETTER OF SUPPORT AUTHORIZATION

Skaret said authorization from the City Council is being requested in order to send a letter of support from the City for the Belmont Park Singletrack Mountain Bike Trail as the local group planning this project continue to apply for grants and outside funding. He noted Luke Ewald from Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services has spoken to the City Council in the past about the project. Skaret said the project is the mountain bike park that will be located in Belmont Park.

Skaret said if the mountain bike park comes to fruition, it's anticipated that it would be somewhat of a regional attraction. He noted it may host competitions since there would be nothing like it in this part of the State. Skaret said it would benefit Jackson and the surrounding communities.

SCHOENROCK/ANDERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the City's Letter of Support for the Belmont Park Singletrack Mountain Bike Trail.

Other:

Mayor Wayne Walter regarding retirement of Denny Frodermann from the EDA

Mayor Walter informed the City Council that due to health reasons; Denny Frodermann has announced that he needed to retire from the EDA. He said the EDA accepted Frodermann's retirement with regrets. Mayor Walter said Frodermann was very kind and brought forward having Mike Brinkman appointed to fill his vacancy on the EDA. He said the EDA accepted appointing Brinkman.

Mayor Walter said another question that arose was how long Frodermann served on the EDA. He said it's believed Frodermann served for 28 years.

Mayor Walter asked to have a letter of thanks and a plaque prepared for Frodermann and to verify how long Frodermann served on the EDA.

Mayor Walter said he would entertain a motion to appoint Mike Brinkman to the EDA and accept Denny Frodermann's retirement.

ANDERSON/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to accept Denny Frodermann's retirement and Mike Brinkman's appointment to the Jackson EDA.

Alderman Donnie Schoenrock

As it appears online learning is going to be conducted by the schools due to the Covid-19 shutdown of schools, Schoenrock said he has talked with Southwest Broadband General Manager Travis Thies. He said if there are any students that don't have internet service, to call Southwest Minnesota Broadband and they will work to provide internet service to students so they can do their schooling.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Walter asked for a motion for the City Council to go into Closed Session.

SCHOENROCK/ANDERSON moved and it as unanimously carried for the City Council to go into Closed Session.

The City Council went into Closed Session as allowed by Attorney-Client Privilege pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.05CD.

RETURNING TO OPEN SESSION

FINCK/SCHOENROCK moved and it was unanimously carried for the City Council to go out of Closed Session.

APPROVE AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Mayor Walter asked for a motion to approve an agreement for professional services.

SCHOENROCK/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried for the City to enter into an agreement for professional services with SEH to evaluate the engineering on Lift Station No. 4.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Walter entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

SCHOENROCK/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the City Council meeting at 8:22 p.m.

David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

Wayne Walter, Mayor

