

Jackson, Minnesota
March 2, 2020

The Jackson City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 2, 2020 with the meeting called to order by Mayor Wayne Walter. On the roll call, the following persons were present, Mayor Wayne Walter, Aldermen Matt Madden, Larry Anderson, Jeffrey Gay and Dave Cushman, City Administrator Matt Skaret, City Attorney Brad Anderson, Street Superintendent Phil Markman, Jackson County Sheriff Shawn Haken, Luke Ewald of Des Monies Valley Health and Human Services, City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff, Justin Lessman of the Jackson County Pilot and Dave Schmidt of KKOJ/KUXX Radio. (Aldermen Brandon Finck and Donnie Schoenrock were absent.) (A quorum of the City Council was present.) (The regular City Council meeting was held on Monday, March 2nd instead of Tuesday, March 3rd due to the Presidential Nomination Primary Election being held on March 3rd.)

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 Aldermen Brandon Finck and Donnie Schoenrock.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Unscheduled Guests:

There were no unscheduled guests at the meeting.

Council Discussion Items

LUKE EWALD – JACKSON ACTIVE LIVING PLAN SURVEY RESULTS

Luke Ewald explained he wanted to give the Mayor and City Council an update on the results from the recently completed Jackson Active Living Plan Survey.

Ewald said there were about 200 respondents to the survey. He noted the survey was sent to approximately 1,700 households in Jackson. Ewald said he was pleased with the response.

Skaret said the survey response was good especially considering there were no follow-up or phone calls made. He said the survey was sent out hoping that people would fill it out.

Ewald explained in reviewing the paper surveys and even with some of the online surveys, there were people who didn't answer every question on the survey. He said some respondents didn't say where they lived or how old they were so some of the information was skewed. Ewald said that was one thing to keep in mind.

Ewald reported 80 percent of those who took the survey live within the Jackson City limits. He said there were a few respondents who lived in the County and it was nice to also get some perspective from outside the City limits.

Ewald said what he found was very interesting is that about two-thirds of those responding to the survey were women. He noted of the Senior population, age 55-plus, respondents age 75 and older made up 54 percent of all the respondents so that kind of goes to show that we do have an aging community. Ewald said 35 to 44-year olds made up about 19 percent of those responding to the survey. He said it was good to see that kind of middle-aged audience also respond to the survey.

Ewald explained he broke down the comments from the survey into different sections. He said there were 56 positive comments, 75 comments that were categorized as constructive feedback, 10 comments that strictly pertained to healthy eating, and 56 comments that were maybe a little irrelevant that talked about taxes and other things that really don't have anything to do with what they were really trying to get out of the survey for active living.

Ewald said the next step he envisions is creating an action plan. He explained the survey results will be presented to the Trails Committee and the Park Board to determine what the top priorities are that residents from the community chose.

Ewald explained the Trails Committee and the Park Board will choose the top priorities. He said those groups will then forward a list of priorities to the City Council in a couple of months. Ewald said the City Council can then prioritize which goals they see as the most fit for Jackson. He said maybe if there's a few goals that are not selected they can be backups just in case those goals want to be pursued in the future.

Ewald asked the Mayor and Councilmembers if they had any questions.

Cushman asked how many surveys were actually sent out to residents.

Skaret said the surveys were included in the City's utility bills and there's about 1,700 that are sent out each month.

Cushman asked how many surveys were returned.

Ewald pointed out the survey was advertised on the City's Facebook page twice. He said there were approximately 200 surveys that were returned which is about over 10 percent. Ewald said he spoke with the Southwest Regional Development Commission when they originally conducted the Active Living Survey in 2015. He said a 10 percent return is not a bad percentage when you look at the overall population that responded to the survey.

Ewald outlined some of the top choices listed in the survey that people were interested in. He said some of the responses related back to the past Active Living Survey. Ewald noted there was, for example, discussion about disc golf. He said that was an idea the Park Board had and the latest survey sought to see if that was a hot item that people want to have.

Ewald said those responding to the survey also noted creating a safe walking and biking environment in Jackson. He said one of the top priorities listed in the survey, which garnered 128 responses, pertained to the pick-up and drop-off zones at the Library and Senior Center. Ewald said having the Riverside Preschool area as a drop off zone was a priority as well. He said, for example, with a Springfield Parkway drop off, that would be something that the City could maybe work with the schools on in association with the Safe Routes to School. Ewald noted with the Jackson Library and Senior Center, that might be a City or MnDOT project.

Ewald explained another priority noted in the survey regarded education pertaining to bicycling and walking. He said the survey results also prioritized biennial education about Active Living Programs whether its through letters to the editor, newspaper articles or radio programs. Ewald said that information could be provided for example by the Trails Committee and City or County officials.

Ewald said another top priority was the School Busing Policy. He explained that would relate to the Safe Routes to School with the School District.

Ewald pointed out doing things with signage, markings, safety and designating bike lanes on the streets were also big responses on the survey. He said traffic visibility regarding making pedestrians and bicyclists more visible to motorists and having safe street crossings were also noted. Ewald said it's been discussed in the past about the City doing some things with "bump outs" at street crossings.

Markman said bump outs are planned on Sherman Street at the intersection of Highway 71 and Sherman Street when the traffic lights are replaced in 2021.

Ewald explained other comments on the Active Living Survey pertained to creating a more inviting atmosphere in Jackson, promoting tourism, improving the City's parks, developing a dog park and promoting the community art campaign. He said the Jackson Center for the Arts could be involved with the community art campaign such as doing some building murals.

Ewald said survey respondents commented about having more outdoor winter recreation activities in Jackson such snowshoeing, cross country skiing or fat tire biking. He said there were also comments about walking and shopping locally. Ewald said there could be more expansion and promotion of activities on Thursday nights when the stores are open later.

Ewald explained there were also comments regarding an Age in Place Campaign that would involve senior citizens and their well-being.

Ewald said other responses pertained to making the Des Moines River in Jackson more of a recreation destination for kayaking and canoeing. He noted that had the most votes of any topic or selection on the survey. Ewald said people want more river recreation.

Ewald noted other survey responses pertained to snow removal in the City and the sidewalk repair program. He said he's aware the City already has a sidewalk repair program, but suggested maybe the City could expand on that to create safer and more ADA compliant sidewalks if possible.

Ewald said there were a lot of comments regarding senior citizen needs. He said the responses included having a new Senior Citizens Center, offering Senior Citizen classes like exercise classes, transportation services and art and music therapy.

Regarding healthy eating, Ewald said survey respondents suggested community garden plots and doing more education in the community about healthy eating such as gluten-free and low sodium diets.

For Youth Active Living, Ewald said survey results showed promoting efforts to get children more active. He said suggestions included playground equipment in the parks and a seasonal bike obstacle course to learn bike safety. Ewald said there was also more of a focus on the Safe Routes to School regarding "biking and walking school buses". He explained that's where there is a drop-off zone and children can then walk to school as a group together. Ewald said that would be something the School District could work on.

Ewald said survey respondents were asked how often do they walk and bike from April through October. He said the majority said three to four days a week. Ewald some interesting comments included that people don't like to walk or bike up hills because we are in a valley. He said some people noted it's hard to get around in their wheelchair.

Ewald said there were approximately 200 comments on the survey. He said overall he thought it was an interesting survey and the number of surveys returned was pretty good.

Skaret said there are many items that were listed in the survey and sometimes it can be overwhelming. He said some may wonder how these things can be accomplished with limited manpower or resources.

Skaret said he thinks one potential untapped resource is volunteers. He said he's experienced in the past what volunteers can do. Skaret suggested volunteers could spearhead some of these initiatives like developing the dog park or improving the existing disc golf course or relocating it. He said a call for volunteers could be issued to find those that may have the passion, time and dedication to spearhead a project. Skaret it may be a case of having a coordinated volunteer effort on planning and organizing some of these things.

With a lot of these projects, Ewald said they're not looking for the City to be paying for these projects. He said the projects could be paid for through grants. Ewald said with some of these goals, there's really no cost. Ewald said it's just finding a group that's passionate and willing to volunteer to spearhead a project and see it come to fruition.

Ewald noted there may be some goals listed in the survey that would require a City policy or ordinance but the majority of the goals could be implemented and sustained through volunteer efforts.

Gay pointed out without a survey like the Active Living Survey, you don't get the ideas for projects. He said the survey provides a baseline for what people in the community want. Gay said the information can be pared down to what will work and items that can be slowly added as you go. He said without the survey information, the City never hears about what residents would like in the community. Gay said he also likes the idea of volunteers to spearhead and implement projects.

Ewald said in a couple of months, all the survey results should be compiled and he will bring that information back to the City Council. He said the Council could then prioritize projects to pursue. Ewald noted that's what was done when the survey was conducted in 2015.

Alderman Anderson thanked Ewald for his work on the survey. He said the information gathered from the survey will help the Park Board in determining priorities for the parks.

Mayor Walter and City Councilmembers thanked Ewald for his survey work and presentation.

Ewald asked about publicizing the survey results in the newspaper and discussing it on the radio once the final results are compiled.

Gay said he thinks it would be good to publicize the results because it will create more interest among the public. He said the results may spur more interest in projects or inspire more ideas.

Cushman said he thinks those who participated in the Active Living Survey would want to see the results.

Ewald thanked Mayor Walter and the City Councilmembers.

WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE RENEWAL QUOTE 2020

Skaret said it's that time of year to renew the City's Worker's Compensation Insurance. He noted the policy is in effect yearly from April 1st to March 30th.

Skaret said unfortunately this year's workers compensation insurance quote spiked quite a bit from previous years. He said the City's premium is up about \$20,000 from last year which is about a 50 percent increase. Skaret explained the driving force behind the increase is claims. He said when workers compensation insurance premiums are reviewed, the insurance company is basically looking at a three-year period with a year of lay time. Skaret explained the insurance company is looking at claims from early 2019 and claims from 2018, 2017 and part of 2016.

Skaret said in the past, the City has had a really good "experience factor" which has helped keep premiums down. However, Skaret said the City has had higher dollar claims, especially in the last year, that was weighted in determining premiums. He said it's also anticipated another claim will be submitted. Skaret said the City is looking at several years of higher premiums for workers compensation insurance than what the City is used to paying. He said the little things can make a big difference in premium costs. Skaret said safety was stressed at the Safety Training session held on March 2nd with City employees and also at City Department Head meetings. Skaret said the number one goal is that the City doesn't want to see employees injured and miss time from work. He said those incidents also impact the City.

Cushman said the City really doesn't have much choice regarding the premiums.

Skaret said the City doesn't really have much choice. He said it was certainly sticker shock regarding this year's premium.

ANDERSON/CUSHMAN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Workers Compensation Renewal Quote of \$59,495 for 2020.

CITY HALL LAWN CARE PROPOSALS FOR THE 2020-2021 GROWING SEASONS

Skaret explained the City has been bidding the City Hall lawn care in two-year contracts. He said the current contract is expiring this year.

Skaret said the City solicited proposals from each of the local lawn care companies. He noted two bids were submitted.

Skaret said the low bid was submitted by Dave Polz Lawn Care at \$40 per time at City Hall which is the same price as Polz had charged in the previous two-year contract so the price will remain the same.

MADDEN/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the low bid from Dave Polz Lawn Care at \$40 per time for lawn care at City Hall for the 2020-2021 growing seasons.

SECOND READING – ORDINANCE NO. 104 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 153.037 OF THE JACKSON CITY ZONING CODE OF ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO DETACHED ACCESSORY BUILDINGS AND CHAPTER 153.005 PERTAINING TO DEFINITIONS OF ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

Skaret said Ordinance No. 104 was discussed at the February 18th City Council meeting during first consideration of the ordinance.

Skaret explained there is really two main parts of Ordinance No. 104. He said the ordinance increases the maximum size of an accessory building on a residential lot from 720 square feet to 1,000 square feet. Skaret said it also allows people to use an existing lot in a residential area to have a storage or accessory building as the principal building with Planning Commission and City Council approval.

Skaret noted the Planning Commission worked very hard on this over the last three or four months to get the verbiage right and to make sure there weren't any unintended consequences.

CUSHMAN/MADDEN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Second Reading of Ordinance No. 104 amending Chapter 153.037 of the Jackson City Zoning Code of Ordinances pertaining to Detached Accessory Buildings and Chapter 153.005 pertaining to Definitions of Accessory Buildings.

SECOND READING – ORDINANCE NO. 105 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 72.10 OF THE JACKSON CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO PARKING HOURS AND 94.05 PERTAINING TO NUISANCE PARKING AND STORAGE AND CHAPTER 113 PERTAINING TO PEDDLERS AND SOLICITORS

Skaret said Ordinance No. 105 has been nicknamed the Jackson Nationals Ordinance but it also pertains to any of the racing events at the Jackson Motorplex or any special events designated by the City Council such as larger community celebrations or similar events.

Skaret explained Ordinance No. 105 would allow residents in Jackson to rent out spots in their yards for parking and camping during these special designated events. He said Ordinance No. 105 makes changes to the City's parking ordinance particularly the 24-hour parking limitation requiring vehicles to be moved on City streets. Skaret noted that would be relaxed during special designated events.

Skaret said Ordinance No. 105 sets parameters for vendors. He pointed out one change that was made to Ordinance No. 105 since the February 18th City Council meeting. Skaret noted a question came up about the fairgrounds and how vendors set-up there would be handled. He explained that would be the County's jurisdiction because the fairgrounds are owned by the County and is outside the City limits. However, Skaret said there is a sliver of the fairgrounds that's in the City limits and so City Attorney Anderson drafted clarification in the ordinance stipulating that the vendors on any part of the fairgrounds, even the portion that's in the City limits, would be under the jurisdiction of the County. He explained on the fairgrounds, it's difficult for people who aren't familiar with the fairgrounds to realize what area is in the County and what area is in the City limits.

ANDERSON/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Second Reading of Ordinance No. 105 amending Chapter 72.10 of the Jackson City Code of Ordinances pertaining to parking hours and 94.05 pertaining to Nuisance Parking and Storage and Chapter 113 pertaining to Peddlers and Solicitors.

CIVIC READY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Skaret said it never fails that after a Snow Emergency takes place in Jackson, there are people that receive tickets for not moving their vehicle off the street claiming they didn't know there was a Snow Emergency in effect. Skaret explained those are the comments that are heard even through the City publicizes when Snow Emergencies are in effect on the City's Facebook page, on the radio, the newspaper's website and the local cable TV access channel.

Even after widely publicizing that a Snow Emergency is in effect, Skaret said there are people that still get tickets and say they didn't know they needed to get their vehicle off the street.

In today's age, Skaret said it's getting harder and harder to reach people. He explained not everyone has Facebook and not everyone checks their Facebook regularly. Skaret said people also don't listen to the radio very carefully or read the newspaper's website.

Skaret said the Civic Ready Public Notification System is a system that Jackson County has used for some time to get notices out to the public. He explained it's a voluntary notification system that people have to sign-up for.

Skaret said he met with Jackson County Emergency Management Coordinator Tawn Hall. He said Hall has the City of Jackson all set up to piggyback onto the County's system to get notices out to the public for such things as Snow Emergencies. Skaret noted if the City has a construction project and needs to get a notification out to residents about a particular street being closed for construction or another reason, the Civic Ready Public Notification System can get the word out in a relatively fast manner. He pointed out the system can also target certain areas of the City.

Skaret noted the public will have the choice to sign up for which notices they would like to receive through the Civic Ready Public Notification System. He said he thinks the System will really be a great tool going forward. Skaret said he appreciates that the County is willing to let the City piggyback on their system for free.

Skaret said he looked into several other notification systems on the market. He said those systems cost thousands of dollars a year to subscribe to along with set-up fees. Skaret noted everyone pays emergency management fees anyway. He said it's a win-win for everyone.

Cushman asked how the notifications to the public are received.

Skaret said notifications can be sent through the phone or email if a person wants the service.

Alderman Anderson said the Civic Ready Public Notification System is well worth it. He said it's used by the Sheriff's Office. Alderman Anderson pointed out the system can be used to receive tornado warnings, tornado watches, severe thunderstorm watches and warnings, amber alerts and a lot of different notices. He said it's easy to send notices out to the public. Alderman Anderson said he assumes Skaret would send the notices out through the computer. He explained you type in the notice on the computer and hit send and the message will go to everyone who's registered for the Civic Ready Public Notification System.

Cushman asked if those that claim they didn't know there was a Snow Emergency in effect still get a ticket.

Skaret said they do.

ANDERSON/CUSHMAN moved and it was unanimously carried for the City to piggyback and use Jackson County's Civic Ready Public Notification System to make announcements to the public.

RESOLUTION NO. 07-0320 – RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPOINTMENT OF ONE ADDITIONAL ELECTION JUDGE FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION PRIMARY ELECTION ON MARCH 3, 2020

City Clerk Maschoff explained he had one person who notified him that she was unable to serve as an Election Judge for the Presidential Primary Election on March 3rd. He said he had another person who has undergone training and was available to fill that vacancy but who's name had not been included in a previous resolution approving the list of Election Judges for the Presidential Primary.

ANDERSON/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 07-0320 approving the appointment of one additional Election Judge for the Presidential Nomination Primary Election on March 3, 2020.

Other:

Alderman Jeffrey Gay – Update on Animal Shelter

Gay gave an update on the Animal Shelter. He said they may have a building for an animal shelter. Gay said that is currently under discussion.

Gay said Tuesday night, March 2nd, will be the Animal Shelter's first Board of Director's meeting. He said he may have something further to report to the City Council following the Board of Director's meeting.

Gay said they also took in two dogs over the past weekend.

City Administrator Matt Skaret

City Administrator Matt Skaret noted the Presidential Nomination Primary Election was going to be held on Tuesday, March 3rd. He commended City Clerk Maschoff for lining up all the Election Judges, coordinating and organizing for the Election. Skaret pointed out this is the first time since 1992 that a Presidential Primary Election is being held in Minnesota. He said it's something new and unknown on how things are going to go but we're as ready as we can be.

Skaret thanked Street Superintendent Phil Markman and the Street Department personnel for helping with setting up the polling place.

Skaret also thanked the Election Judges who will be serving for the March 3rd Presidential Primary Election.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, MADDEN/GAY moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the City Council meeting at 7:12 p.m.

David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

Wayne Walter, Mayor

