October 18, 2022
Jackson, Minnesota

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, October 18, 2022 with the meeting called to order by Mayor Wayne Walter. On the roll call, the following persons were present in-person, Mayor Wayne Walter and Aldermen Brandon Finck, Nathan Peterson Marcus Polz and Dave Cushman. Also attending in-person were City Administrator Matt Skaret, City Attorney Brad Anderson, Street Superintendent Phil Markman, Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough, Jackson Fire Chief Dave Bond, Community and Business Development Specialist Dave Schmidt of Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA), Marj Fogelman, Mike Fogelman, Joe Pell, Mark Titus, Steve Yarns, Pastor Russ Steele of the Jackson United Methodist Church and First United Methodist Church in Lakefield and City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff. Attending the meeting via Teleconference and Zoom were First Assistant Fire Chief and Park Board Chairman Michael Haeffner, Lee Porter, and Taryn Lessman of the Jackson County Pilot. (Aldermen Michael More and Jerome Palmer were absent.) (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 the meeting in-person and by Teleconference and Zoom recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Walter called the regular meeting of the Jackson City Council to order. He said the roll call showed that Alderman Michael More and Alderman Jerome Palmer were not present.

There was no Public Hearing, Bid Lettings or Open Forum.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Walter entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

FINCK/PETERSON 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 Council Chambers.

Marj Fogelman introduced herself to Mayor Walter and Councilmembers. Fogelman said she's running for State Representative in Minnesota House District 21B. She said she wanted to introduce herself to the Mayor and Council and get to know the City's leaders. Fogelman thanked Mayor Walter and Councilmembers for allowing her to speak briefly to them.

Fogelman said her goals as a State Legislator would be to lower taxes and get our freedoms in check because she thinks that's important.

Fogelman said if anyone has any questions or wants to visit with her, she would be available after the City Council meeting.

Fogelman again thanked Mayor Walter and Councilmembers.

Mayor Walter thanked Fogelman.

Council Discussion Items

2022-2023 STREET AND UTILITIES IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT CHANGE ORDER NO. 1

Skaret explained Street and Utilities Improvements Change Order No. 1 had been talked about a while back but it hadn't been presented in a formal change order yet.

Skaret said the change order pertains to the cul-de-sac on Northridge Drive. He said this was not included in the original plan for the project. Skaret noted it was looked at later on about removing the island in the cul-de-sac. Skaret said the purpose of removing the island in the cul-de-sac was first, for staff purposes as far as maintaining the street for such things as street sweeping and snowplowing. He said removing the island in that cul-de-sac should make those maintenance items easier. Skaret said there's also some shrubbery on the island in the cul-de-sac that's gotten overgrown and is no longer maintained. He said in order to accomplish that, another part of the project is moving a fire hydrant and the installation of a short stretch of new water line.

Skaret asked if Water/Wastewater Superintendent Tony Oxborough had anything more to add.

Oxborough said after going through the numbers and the quantities, the cost is actually $24,061.50. He said he's already talked to the contractor about it. Oxborough said they're basically going to replace hydrants and a resident asked if the City could remove the island in the cul-de-sac. He said Skaret looked into what the cost would be to remove the center portion of the cul-de-sac and turn it into asphalt. Oxborough said one of the residents that lives by the cul-de-sac island has been maintaining it by mowing the grass and taking care of the shrubs.

Oxborough said as far as moving forward and eliminating the center of the cul-de-sac, it's going to be better for long-term maintenance. He noted if the street in that area is redone in 15 or 20 years, the City won't have to go into that cul-de-sac and fix any of the utilities other than updating or lining the sewer system. Oxborough said basically that's just a cost savings long-term. Regarding snow removal, Oxborough said the snow can all be pushed to the south. He said removing the center island of the cul-de-sac and making the necessary changes just makes sense. Oxborough said, in his opinion and from his perspective, he would advise moving forward with the project. He said he reached out to a contractor to check the cost numbers and the contractor said they are fair.

Skaret explained Engineer Wes Brown of Bolton and Menk would have been in attendance at the October 18th City Council meeting, but Brown is on vacation. He said Brown's vacation was previously planned before he stepped into his new role as the engineer for the City of Jackson.

Peterson said he thinks it makes sense to remove the center island of the cul-de-sac since it's not really being used for anything.

PETERSON/FINCK moved and it was carried on a vote of 3 in-favor and 1 abstention to approve 2022-2023 Street and Utilities Improvements Project Change Order No. 1.

Voting in favor of the motion were Aldermen Nathan Peterson, Brandon Finck and Dave Cushman.

Alderman Marcus Polz abstained.

CEDA CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR 2023

Skaret said the City has been contracting for economic development services with CEDA (Community and Economic Development Associates) since late 2017. He explained the contract between the City and CEDA is on a year-by-year basis.

Skaret said for the first time since the City has contracted with CEDA, the Finance/Personnel Committee met with the stakeholders of the community's various economic development groups. At that meeting, Skaret said the representatives from the economic groups talked about if they were happy or if there were any changes they would like to make, what's working or is there anything that's not working with the City's arrangement with CEDA. He said overall the group felt the City's arrangement with CEDA has been working very well and has been an asset.

Skaret said there are a number of advantages for the City in contracting with CEDA. He noted there's the continuity aspect of it in instances where there's a change of staff in the Jackson Economic Development Office. Skaret said CEDA maintains continuity in the Economic Development Office. He said CEDA has a network of staff members. Skaret noted in the event the Jackson Economic Development Office is down a person or two, CEDA staff members can step in and keep things on time and moving forward. He said CEDA has a vast network of resources available. Skaret said he's seen the benefit of those resources on projects where the City of Jackson has been able to tap into potential developers that the City would not have known anything about.

Skaret said the overall level of service from CEDA has been very good. He said CEDA has been responsive to the City's needs.

As with everything, Skaret said the cost is going up on the contract with CEDA. He said it's typically been a three percent increase on the contract. Skaret said this year it's a five percent increase going from $109,273 in 2022 to $114,735 in 2023. He noted it's always important to remember that the contract fee is not tied to individual wages of the employees of CEDA, but for the hours of coverage CEDA provides. Skaret said the City of Jackson's contract with CEDA is for 60 hours which is basically for one full-time person, which is Dave Schmidt, and for Administrative Assistant Shelley Pohlman who works 20 hours a week part-time as a support person. He said overall, the arrangement has been working well. Skaret said the Finance and Personnel Committee along with the City's economic development partners recommend moving forward with a contract with CEDA. Skaret asked if any of the Finance and Personnel Committee members had anything to add.

Polz, a member of the Finance Committee, said the Committee held a meeting on October 17th. He said the Finance Committee members were all happy with the City's arrangement with CEDA. Polz said the Finance Committee discussed what the positives were and what could be done better.

Polz said he spoke personally with Dave Schmidt on October 18th and said the Finance Committee likes where the City is at with its agreement with CEDA.

POLZ/CUSHMAN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the CEDA Contract for Professional Services for 2023 at a cost of $114,723.

RESOLUTION NO. 55-1022 APPROVING UPDATED CITY PURCHASING POLICY

Skaret said the City's Purchasing Policy hasn't been updated since 2015. He explained the reason for updating the policy is because of a couple of recent situations, particularly with construction projects. Skaret said earlier this summer with the airport runway project, there was a discovery of some broken tile lines that had to be fixed. He said the contractor had to stop work for a few days until a special City Council meeting could be held to approve the Change Order in order for the contractor to keep moving forward on the project.

Skaret said in the most recent situation pertaining to the Change Order for the street project on Northridge Drive, the contractor was ready to begin work last week but had to wait because the Change Order had not been approved yet. He said the contractor had to hold back and retool and shift gears. Skaret said those were two instances where there was a bottleneck in moving forward with a project.

Skaret said one of the parts of the updated City Purchasing Policy would be if the engineer and the respective City Department Head makes a recommendation, the updated Policy would authorize the City Administrator to basically pre-approve the change order before it gets brought to the City Council. He explained that way the project doesn't need to wait a week or two for a City Council meeting or the need to call for a special City Council meeting so projects can continue seamlessly. Skaret said in those cases, he or whoever the City Administrator is, would be required to let the City Council know by email, text or phone call that a change order was approved. He said then, at the next City Council meeting, the Council would ratify it. Skaret said the change in the City's Purchasing Policy is not giving anyone a blank check.

Finck asked if there's currently a dollar limit on when change orders can be approved by a City Department Head or the City Administrator without first going to the City Council for approval.

Skaret said the current dollar limit is up to $5,000 for the City Administrator and up to $2,500 for Department Heads. He said under the proposed changes, there wouldn't be a dollar amount set to the limits. Skaret said he's seen where cities have a limit based on a percentage of the project contract such as five percent. He explained if the change order did not exceed five percent of the original value of the contract, then the City Administrator could pre-approve a change order. Skaret said he would not object to having that language in the City's Purchasing Policy.

Finck said he wanted to be cautious not to have a blank check out there on a million-dollar project if there's a $200,000 change order. In those cases, Finck said he thinks that type of change order would need to go through the City Council. Finck suggested setting a cap for pre-approval of change orders.

Discussion ensued among Councilmembers on what the cap limit should be for pre-approved change orders before it has to first come before the City Council for approval.

Skaret said the other part of amending the City Purchasing Policy would be increasing the spending limits for the City Department Heads and City Administrator. He said currently, the Department Heads have a spending limit of up to $2,500 and the City Administrator is limited to up to $5,000 without having to go to the City Council for approval. Skaret explained with inflation and all the price increases and changes that have occurred since 2015, there are purchases that aren't large purchases, but are for repairs and maintenance and supply items. He noted such purchases would be for such things as poles to have spares on hand for street lights and that sort of thing. Skaret said he can't hardly purchase a street light pole for less than $5,000 anymore.

Skaret said he proposed increasing the spending limits for Department Heads up to $5,000 and up to $10,000 for the City Administrator without having to go to the City Council for approval. Skaret said it would be fine by him if the Council wanted to choose a different spending limit amount. He noted the spending is for repair and maintenance items, not for capital purchases.

Cushman asked Street Superintendent Phil Markman how often he runs into having to make purchases that are over his current spending limit of $2,500.

Markman said it occurs probably three or four times per year. However, Markman said he always contacts City Administrator Skaret for any large repair, or parts that may be needed for equipment.

FINCK/CUSHMAN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 55-1022 approving the updated City Purchasing Policy setting the spending limits without City Council approval up to $15,000 for the City Administrator, up to $5,000 for City Department Heads and to allow the City Administrator to pre-approve project change orders up to 5 percent on a $50,000 project.

MNDOT MEETING RECAP RE: TRAFFIC STUDY

Skaret reported that he and Economic Coordinator Dave Schmidt, Engineer Scott Thompson of the Minnesota Department of Transportation along with Jackson County Engineer Tim Stahl met last week. He said Stahl talked about the developments that are going on along Industrial Parkway and Highway 71.

Skaret said there's going to be an increased flow of traffic in that area. He said the City has already received some comments from the public about what is the City going to do at the intersection of Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway for safety. Skaret said the request has been for the City to be more proactive than not.

Skaret said during the meeting with Thompson, it was discussed if there's concerns about that intersection, what are the steps that need to be taken to address those concerns.

Skaret said the first step is a traffic study that was conducted in 2013 that looked at traffic projections basically through 2035. He said the 2013 traffic study looked at the proposed usage at that time which was for a mix of retail, industrial and single-family housing.

Economic Coordinator Dave Schmidt noted the 2013 study did include projections for multi-family housing, but it primarily focused on single-family housing. He said the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) originally said the City needed to do a new traffic study. But Schmidt said the thought was after last week's meeting that maybe the traffic study that was done in 2013 would still be applicable. Schmidt said MnDOT sent a copy of the 2013 traffic study to the City of Jackson. He noted the study is more than 600 pages in length. Schmidt said he's read about half of it so far. He said where we're at is basically reviewing the 2013 traffic study and taking a look at MnDOT's conclusions.

Finck asked Schmidt if the 2013 traffic study is applicable timeline-wise and if the study is about where the City thought traffic counts would be with the development that's taking place in that area.

Schmidt said the City is probably about on pace of where the traffic study said the traffic counts would be. He said he personally thinks the traffic counts will be higher by 2035 than what the 2013 study projections. Schmidt said the traffic study shows by 2035, there will need to be some kind of traffic control at the intersection of Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway. He noted the study showed there were actually four other intersections in Jackson that would need some kind of traffic control as well.

In addition to some kind of control at the intersection of Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway, Schmidt said the study also recommended some kind of traffic control for the intersections at Highway 34 and Highway 71, on Highway 71 at the Liquor Store and Golf Course, at the intersection of Highway 71 and Springfield Parkway and at the intersection of Industrial Parkway and Jackson County Road 23. Schmidt said at all those intersections, MnDOT was looking at some form of roundabout with the exception of the intersection at Highway 71 and Springfield Parkway where they were proposing a four-way traffic signal.

Schmidt said the traffic study will be reviewed and then another meeting scheduled with MnDOT. He said the City is trying to be proactive. He noted the frustrating part is that MnDOT Engineer Scott Thompson said in the MnDOT District that Jackson is located in, there are approximately 80 intersections within that district that have had a fatal head-on crash. Schmidt said out of those approximately 80 intersections, there are 50 or 60 intersections that MnDOT actually has projects in the pipeline for right now.

Schmidt said regarding the intersection of Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway, the biggest issue is the fact that no one has died at that intersection so it isn't a high priority by MnDOT. He said that was the argument to MnDOT is how many people need to die before MnDOT takes a look at doing a project at the intersection of Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway. Schmidt said MnDOT's argument was that they have five percent of their budget they're allowed to use on safety projects which the intersection at Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway would be considered as. He said MnDOT noted they have only five percent of their budget that they can apply to safety projects and there are other intersections where there have been fatality and head-on collision problems. Schmidt said MnDOT is not saying they won't be able to help the City of Jackson but Jackson is going to be pretty far down the list.

Skaret noted the overall costs of these projects. He said a simple single-lane roundabout currently costs about $3 million. Skaret said in the case of the intersection at Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway, a double-lane roundabout would be needed so the cost would be higher.

Schmidt said the cost of a double-lane roundabout would probably be somewhere around $8 million in today's dollars. He said MnDOT said if a four-way stop was installed at the intersection of Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway, it doesn't stop head-on or T-bone collisions because someone could run a red light causing a collision. Schmidt said MnDOT says if there's a roundabout, motorists have to slow down or, at least theoretically, they should slow down.

Schmidt said MnDOT made it abundantly clear that if the City of Jackson wanted to do something at the intersection of Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway, they would be willing to look at it, but Jackson would be pretty far down the list.

Polz noted in the original MnDOT report that roundabouts reduced traffic fatalities by 80 percent and was why they would be utilizing a roundabout as a safety project as opposed to a four-way stop.

Schmidt said even a four-way stop would be considered as a safety project because, in theory, traffic would be slowed down.

Cushman noted back in 2015, when the Council voted against going forward with installing a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway, there was also going to be some land acquisitions that needed to be made otherwise there wasn't going to be enough girth to work with.

Skaret said that was talked about at the meeting. He said land would still have to be acquired on at least two corners of the intersection to put in a double-lane roundabout.

Skaret noted if a roundabout was installed at the intersection of Highway 71 and Industrial Parkway, MnDOT would be responsible for half of the cost, Jackson County a fourth and the City a fourth of the cost. He said getting MnDOT to fund a project in Jackson would be very difficult right now because Jackson is way down on their list for projects.

Schmidt said, at this point, if the City would want to move forward with a four-way stop or roundabout at that intersection, the City would have to front the cost.

Skaret said there was no Council action needed for this agenda item. He said it was an informational update only.

NOVEMBER 9TH, 2022 SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING REGARDING THE POOL WILL BE STARTING AT 6 P.M. RATHER THAN 5:30 P.M.

Mayor Walter explained the pool engineers had a scheduling conflict and asked that the Council's November 9th meeting be moved back a half-an-hour to 6 p.m. rather than 5:30 p.m.

Skaret noted there will be some new Councilmembers that will be elected on November 8th and taking office in January. He said he would strongly encourage the newly elected Councilmembers to attend the November 9th meeting so they can get up to speed on the pool as well. Skaret said the next Council will undoubtedly be addressing the pool in one way or the other.

Mayor Walter asked if the City Council also needed to set a date for a meeting to canvass the votes from the November 8th election.

City Clerk/Council Secretary Maschoff said the Council could canvass the November 8th election results at their regular meeting on November 15th.

Other:

Alderman Marcus Polz

Polz noted in the Park Board minutes that City staff was working on winterizing the City's parks. He asked if the computer at the splashpad is taken out of the splashpad utility shed for the winter or does it stay in the utility shed. Polz also asked if an extra computer for the splashpad will be sought for next year so there's one on hand in case the current computer quits working.

Skaret explained he spoke with the representative from CRS about the splashpad computer. He said the CRS representative said the City staff didn't need to do anything with the computer for the winter because it's designed for cold winters.

Street Superintendent Phil Markman explained if the splashpad computer was pulled out of the utility shed, it would then have to be reprogrammed again next spring.

Polz asked if the cost for a new splashpad computer would be $1,500 in order to have one on hand.

Skaret said that was correct.

Polz asked if the City could get an extra splashpad computer to have on hand. He said it would be helpful to have another computer on hand so the City doesn't end up in July with the same situation that occurred this year. Polz said he was just trying to cover his bases for $1,500.

Skaret said getting a spare computer for the splashpad can be looked into. He said he also asked the CRS representative about getting an extra computer as a spare for the splashpad. Skaret said the CRS representative said getting another computer as a backup should not be necessary. He said the CRS representative said the City will not have another problem.

Finck asked if the splashpad isn't open in July, will the CRS representative come to Jackson to explain why?

Skaret said the City can order a spare computer for the splashpad. He noted Polz is knowledgeable about computers and asked if the spare computer doesn't have to be used for four or five years, is it worth having it on the shelf.

Polz said most likely you should be able to update the software on the computer. He said in his opinion, for $1,500, having a spare computer for the splashpad is minimal insurance.

Cushman suggested first seeing what the lead times would be to get another computer coming into another year. He said we're coming off the chip shortages and things of that nature and maybe things are improving a little bit on getting another computer in days instead of months. Cushman asked what the lead-time for a computer for the splashpad was for this year.

Finck said it was about two-and-a-half months. He said it was a long time.

Cushman said maybe now the lead-time is just days. He said it's worth having the conversation on how readily available computers are for the splashpad.

Finck agreed with Cushman.

Cushman said to get a computer today seems silly if in April there's a problem and a new computer can be delivered in a month.

Polz said he agreed. He said if there's a warehouse full of splashpad computers and you can get it delivered in just a couple days, that's not an issue.

Finck said Skaret could check in February regarding getting another computer for the splashpad. He said if it's still a two-month lead-time, a computer can be ordered then. But, Finck said if it's just a one-week lead time, then maybe the splashpad can be tested earlier and if there's a problem, a computer could be ordered at that time. Finck suggested inquiring about a back-up computer for the splashpad on the calendar for February. He said if it's addressed in February, the City is safe in ordering a computer either way if the lead time is two months or just a week.

Finck noted there were some other parts for the splashpad that were also difficult to get delivered in a timely manner this past summer.

Markman said Bob's Fleet in Jackson had a couple of the pieces needed for the splashpad and he would also check at Plumb Supply in Spirit Lake.

Finck said he just wanted to make sure the City has a nice supply of items for the splashpad on hand. He said Polz brought up a good point about having a spare computer available.

ADJOURNMENT

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

PETERSON/POLZ moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Jackson City Council meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Mayor Walter thanked everyone for attending.

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David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

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Wayne Walter, Mayor