



CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING
Municipal Court Room
Monday, August 15, 2011
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sharon Konopa called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilors present: Councilors Bill Coburn, Floyd Collins, Ray Kopczynski, Bessie Johnson, Dick Olsen

Councilors absent: Councilor Jeff Christman

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no business from the public.

CITY MANAGER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Konopa said that the evaluation came out very well and there were some good comments.

Councilor Bill Coburn said that he is still concerned that sometimes a rosy picture is being painted regarding the budget process. He said that at some point we will need to prioritize services. He said that he is a bit frustrated because the Council hasn't had to take a hard look at the issue more closely.

City Manager Wes Hare said that the Council will have an opportunity to take a look at this today with the discussion of the public safety levy. The Directors are having some frank discussions about concerns for the future. He said that there are a lot of pitfalls on the horizon and he worries about them all of the time. He said that he believes we have done a good job at staying on top of the budget and appreciates Coburn's comments.

Councilor Floyd Collins said that we have lost a lot of skill and expertise through the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP). He said that we need to take tighter control with the younger staff. He said that we need to emphasize that the City is open for business and that hasn't necessarily been the message getting out across the counters. He said that anytime an issue comes up he likes the attitude of, "let's see if we can get to yes and if we can't, you'll know why" as opposed to "we can't do that." Hare said that he believes that is the starting point of most of our staff, and at the same time we are given the Albany Municipal Code (AMC) that we have to work with. He appreciates the feedback and said that anytime a Councilor hears from someone that they are not getting a responsive attitude, to please tell him about it.

Konopa said that when we lose senior staff, we are losing a lot of knowledge and it can hurt the organization. Hare said that we are participating in the emerging leaders program through International City Managers Association (ICMA). He said that we have some rising stars within the City.

Councilor Bessie Johnson said that the senior staff have made careers out of public service. She said that the new generation has a different attitude and what she is seeing is that they just want to get people in, take care of them, and then get them out. She doesn't believe that is good customer service. She said that you have to tell the younger generation that they have to be nice. Hare said that we have a praise coupon system and we have gotten quite a response from it. He said that we strive for excellent customer service.

Konopa said that Hare has said that he doesn't want a raise. She said that he hasn't had a merit raise in five years and no cost of living raise in three years.

Coburn said that he understands where Hare is coming from in regards to leading by example, but he thinks there is nothing wrong with your employer saying that they appreciate and recognize your work and that you are entitled to a raise. Councilor Ray Kopczynski wondered if there was something in lieu of cash that we can offer such as an increase to deferred compensation. Hare said that he doesn't feel like he is being undercompensated. He said that when he took this job, he felt that the contract was very fair and agreeable. Kopczynski suggested taking a fresh look at this in six months from now. Collins agreed that waiting six months would be appropriate.

Council directed staff to bring this back for consideration of a wage increase in six months.

PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATING LEVY AND FACILITIES PLAN

Hare said that if we want to continue current service levels, then we need to consider increasing the levy rate. He said that the recommendation is to raise it to \$1.15 per thousand of assessed value from 95¢. He said that this is a 20¢ increase. He said that we are preserving the amount of money we are receiving for public safety.

Collins said that due to compression and tax delinquency we wouldn't be collecting the actual full levy amount. Coburn said that it would be hard to explain that to the voters.

Finance Director Stewart Taylor explained Attachment 2 in the agenda packet. He said that the increase would generate net property tax collection almost equal to the current year levy amount before compression.

Coburn doesn't understand how we will still be staying at the same collection amount. Hare said that it is due to inflation. Konopa said that the Linn County Sheriff's Office levy passed last year.

Konopa said that public safety is clearly a priority and something that the Council needs to deal with fairly quickly. Collins said that his priority is addressing the services needed. Johnson said that she would like to discuss this when Councilor Jeff Christman is back from vacation.

Konopa asked if the Council wants to go out in spring 2012 for the public safety levy and if they agree with the \$1.15 per thousand of assessed value amount. The Council agreed. Taylor said that a Public Hearing and an ordinance are required. Konopa suggested getting this on the agenda in the next month so we can move forward with the process.

Council directed staff to bring the levy plan back for action at a Regular Session in September.

Hare said that his recommendation is not to proceed with the proposal of using \$147,000 to do a site plan and floor plan for the existing police department site. He said that doing it incrementally will likely end up costing more money. He said that he thinks it is better to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) and see what each builder can do with the amount of money the City is able to spend. This is called the design build process. If the Council decides to go this route, Taylor and Christman have some suggestions about how to accomplish it.

Hare said that there are more questions regarding the fire station. He said that the site analysis would cost \$68,000 to look at all three proposed properties and he suggests moving forward with that.

Collins said that sometimes the proposers are not given a dollar amount. He said that he has found this way to be very successful for RFPs. His immediate concern is the public safety levy. The Council needs to focus on the levy and see where that takes us. He said that if the levy is successful, we can work on a plan with the community for the public safety facilities.

Coburn said that Christman should be involved; we might find ourselves in a prioritization issue again about what we are going to build first. Coburn agrees with the design build process as it not only saves money, but it also saves time. He agrees with Collins about not giving the proposers and actual dollar amount.

The Council decided to bring back the public safety facilities plan for discussion at a work session on September 26.

Hare said that his advice to staff is to say nothing that can be interpreted as advocacy about a proposed levy because they can be fined for advocating or opposing the levy.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS

Johnson said that her laptop needs a new battery.

Collins said that there is a short Albany Revitalization Agency (ARA) meeting following.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Hare said that Community Development Director Greg Byrne and Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney would like to place a plaque on the table upstairs in honor of former Councilor Ralph Reid. The plaque will say "Ralph's Office." The Council agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Diana Eilers
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewed by,

Wes Hare
City Manager