

LAW AND FINANCE MEETING

Wednesday, August 27, 2014

5:00 P.M.

Council Chambers, 225 East Weatherspoon St., Sanford, NC

The Law and Finance Committee met on Wednesday, August 27, 2014, in the Council Chambers at City Hall at 5:00 P.M. The following people were present:

Law and Finance Committee:

Mayor T. Chet Mann	Mayor Pro Tem James Williams
Council Member Rebecca Wyhof	Council Member Sam Gaskins
Council Member Byron Buckels	Council Member Jimmy Haire
Council Member Charles Taylor	Council Member Norman Charles Post III
City Attorney Susan Patterson	City Clerk Bonnie Davis
City Manager Hal Hegwer	

Mayor Chet Mann called the meeting to order.

Consider Approval of Policies for the NC Housing Finance Agency 2014 Urgent Repair Program

Community Development Manager Karen Kennedy explained that there are two policies that are part of the start-up documents we need for the new 2014 Urgent Repair Program – City of Sanford Assistance Policy and City of Sanford Procurement and Disbursement Policy.

- City of Sanford Assistance Policy – (Exhibit A)

The Assistance Policy explains in detail what the program is about; the eligibility requirements; the income limits for this year’s program; the priority ranking system and how you score points as an applicant; how we go about researching for the clients from our waiting list; the type of assistance that is received; the process and how we hire the contractors and screen the applicants. It goes through the entire process. Everyone that applies for the project is sent an assistance policy and should they be selected, they need to understand everything.

Mrs. Kennedy said that 91 applications were mailed out two weeks ago. The application is due September 15.

- City of Sanford Procurement and Disbursement Policy – (Exhibit B)

Mrs. Kennedy explained that the Housing Finance Agency requires that we have this policy in place for how we work with securing the contractors. It will be signed by each contractor when they work on a home.

Consider Ordinance Amending the Annual Operating Budget of the City of Sanford FY 2014-2015 – (Exhibit C)

Communications Supervisor Pat Garner stated that the ordinance increases the current annual operating budget for 911. The City’s vendor, Century Link, informed staff late that the City needs a level three fiber optic connection between the City and the backup center at the Lee County Courthouse, instead of a level two. This will increase the monthly cost of approximately \$1,606 each month. For the next ten months, an extra \$16,060 will be needed until the fiscal end of the year.

City Manager Hegwer advised that the funds will come from the State; no City funds will be used. There will also be a contract to sign for the upgrade. Mr. Garner stated that the money will come from the 911 Funds from the State. This amendment will go before the County Commissioners on October 6. Mr. Hegwer explained that the funds come from the State to Lee County for 911; then the County appropriates those funds to the City, since the City is the PSAP.

Consider Information Regarding Purchase of Capital Outlay Through HGAC

Refuse Superintendent Larry Craig advised that the purchase of two trucks, a leaf vac and a knuckleboom truck, were approved in the 2014-2015 budget for the Solid Waste Division. Staff was asked to compare the pricing with the Houston Galveston Area Council Cooperative Purchasing Agency (“HGAC”) for these two pieces of equipment along with local pricing within our area. Staff has received quotations from Greensboro, Raleigh and Richmond, Virginia as well as HGAC in Texas. All vendors were given the specifications that staff requires for these two pieces of equipment. Upon review of the quotations we received, the lowest bid for both chassis’ were from Whites International in Greensboro.

Mr. Hegwer explained that the leverage by letting our vendors know that we were going to price it through the HGAC, saved us an additional \$4,000.

Mr. Gaskins asked if these quotes are not final; they are just for the chassis. Mr. Craig replied yes; the leaf vac is a piece of equipment that not everybody makes the back part and we bought five from one company (Old Dominion Brush) in Virginia. There are a few other people selling it but basically, it is their piece of equipment with their name on it, so we buy direct from the manufacturer. We have had two to three different kinds of knuckleboom trucks. Right now, he is waiting on a representative to come and give him a price on two different knuckleboom trucks; but this is basically a chassis price.

Consider Discussion Involving Signalization Study at Wicker and Steele Streets - (Exhibit D)

Community Development Director Marshall Downey explained that in 2010, the City hired McGill and Associates to look into enhancing Downtown and various improvements. As part of that, the intersection of Wicker and Steele Streets was looked at. There is a concept drawing (Exhibit D) that calls for curb extension, tree planters, and pavers to enhance the appearance of the intersection, as well as slow the speed and narrow the street. One issue that McGill and Associates recommended at that time was to look at the existing signal light at the intersection and whether or not it would be worthwhile to consider removing the light. They recommended at that time to hire a transportation engineer to perform a signalization study and that was done by Ramey Kemp and Associates, Transportation Engineers. The study was done in 2012. He referred to Exhibit D that listed the findings of the study. One important point was that it was determined that no minimum traffic volume for the intersection was met that warranted a traffic signal. In addition, there were no single hours for which the volume thresholds were met – primarily, because the volume on Wicker Street was well below the transportation standards that major street volume thresholds would require. The study also showed that if the traffic signal was replaced with a two or four-way stop, that the intersection would function acceptably. Under the two-way stop, delay would be minimized for drivers on Wicker Street, but the four-way model would help facilitate pedestrian traffic at the intersection.

In addition, if the traffic signal would be removed during the improvement process, there would be a total cost savings of \$125,000.

Based on the lack of traffic, the potential cost savings of the improvement and the promotion of pedestrian safety, Community Development Staff is recommending the removal of the existing traffic signal at the intersection of Steele and Wicker Streets during the improvements and proceeding with the four-way stop.

Council Member Wyhof inquired as to whether any updated assessment had been performed since the 2012 study. Paul Weeks, City Engineer, explained that an increase of 3% annually had been suggested. Member Wyhof also inquired as to whether patterns varied for different days of the week, specifically weekend days compared to weekdays. Director Downey explained that although the study was not presented in full detail format, the eleven hour count which was performed was a typical model to account for maximum volume. Even the highest volumes indicated by the report were far below the thresholds required.

Council Member Post requested clarification on the \$125,000 savings from removal of the traffic light, specifically annual savings to the City for removal. Director Downey responded that the estimated savings is approximately \$5,000 annually, which will be seen as a result of lowered maintenance costs.

Mayor Mann expressed his view that the improvements and stop light removal were a great idea, in light of the safety factor and the report from DOT verifying a volume far below their recommended threshold for traffic lights. He shared his view that similar beautification projects in other areas seem to work well and that the apron serves to narrow the street. He also has noted that there are typically no more than two vehicles behind him at this intersection when he is stopped, regardless of the time of day.

Council Member Gaskins noted that similar projects in Wilmington have served to slow the traffic down and that it flows beautifully. He lived previously for four years in Valperazo Indiana, where four-way stops are frequently utilized, as well as in West Jefferson, North Carolina; none of these locations have problems with the four-way stops.

Council Member Buckels requested confirmation that allowing for a total increase of 6%, which would include the 3% increase for both 2013 and 2014, would keep the volume far below the recommended threshold, which Director Downey verified.

Council Member Williams stated that at previous discussions of this issue in 2012, he was very much opposed to the concept since he is in the area daily. Due to the decrease in traffic since that time, he is no longer opposed to the project.

Mayor Mann questioned whether the savings associated with removal of the stop light could be reallocated to other components of the project. Manager Hegwer explained that the overall design would be reconfigured and the redesign would allow for better elements. The change would reduce the total cost and allow funds to be used for other components. Mayor Mann suggested that perhaps more benches and planters would be more appealing to the public.

Consider Discussion of Golf Course Fees for School Utilization

City Manager Hegwer explained that the purpose of this discussion was to clarify some questions posed by Council regarding the initiation of these fees. Several years ago when the budget short-fall was approximately \$1.4 million, staff was challenged to find ways to eliminate costs. At that time, no fees were charged to the schools for use of the Sanford Golf Course. Since that time, Lee County High School, Southern Lee High School, East Lee Middle School, San-Lee Middle School, West Lee Middle School, Lee Christian School and Central Carolina Community College have used the facility. Typically no fees are charged to the schools at county-owned facilities since local county taxpayer funds are used.

Regarding the use of facilities which are not typically available to the schools (such as pools and golf courses), some type of rental agreement is normally utilized. Other golf courses in the area charge fees. Last year, approximately \$4,325 was collected from schools in the county by the golf course for these expenses. Lee County and Southern Lee High Schools each pay approximately \$800; each of the three middle schools pay approximately \$400, a lower amount since they have fewer teams and seasons. A \$45 fee is charged to out-of-town teams. Highland Country Club charges a flat fee of \$300; Gates Four charges a \$500 fee; Whispering Pines charges no fee but they are a public/private course not owned by taxpayers. Carolina Trace does not charge but they usually allow only one match per year. Another factor to consider is the fact that the course is often used by the schools at a time when it would otherwise remain unused by other members of the public.

Total rounds played by Lee County school teams constituted roughly 2.8% of total rounds played. The fees charged, even though they are discounted, still constitute a significant source of revenue to the City and are therefore deemed to be appropriate. If county tax dollars didn't pay to rent the facilities, it would then be borne only by the City. With students from all areas of Lee County, in addition to out-of-county students, it was felt that the fees were appropriate.

Council Member Gaskins expressed a desire to assist the county schools in light of the recent reductions in sales tax receipts and cuts in funding at the state level. He stated his belief that this was one way to keep them off the streets and interested in golf and exercise, as well as being a family past time.

Closed Session

City Attorney Susan Patterson read a motion to go into closed session in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a) (5) to instruct the public body staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken on the price or other material terms of a contract for the acquisition of real property. So moved by Council Member Rebecca Wyhof and seconded by Council Member Norman Charles Post III, the motion carried unanimously.

Return to Regular Session

City Council returned to regular session around 5:55 P.M.

Other Business

Council Member Taylor extended his condolences to the family of David Thornton and members of the police community, as well as to L.I. "Poly" Cohen and his family upon the passing of Mr. Cohen's wife.

Council Member Taylor reminded everyone that September 30 was the deadline for submission of public comments to the Mining and Energy Board. He attended meetings here in Sanford this past Friday night, as well as in Greensboro on Monday night. At the meeting last Wednesday in Raleigh, 510 people attended with 110 speakers. Four-hundred-twelve people attended the Sanford meeting with 100 speakers registered to speak and 86 who actually spoke. In Wentworth this past Wednesday, 466 were in attendance and there were 116 speakers.

The four-hour hearing obligation by the Board was greatly exceeded. Recurring themes included seven dominating topics: chemical disclosure, open pits, open containers, bonding for mining companies, setbacks, first responder medical emergency personnel confidentiality agreements regarding chemical disclosure, and compulsory pooling-land rights. During a recent television interview conducted by FOX-8 News in Greensboro, the question immediately asked was whether Mr. Taylor thought the meetings were producing useful informative on the rule set. Mr. Taylor's response was that they were absolutely useful and that already there were tens of thousands of comments received. He encouraged those responding to be very specific when identifying and addressing the rule set and not to just express your support or opposition to fracking itself to occur in the community. For example, if your concern is setbacks, cite the rule specifically addressing setbacks or the area for reference, which will assist the staff in filtering responses and answering concerns. He also reminded everyone that although only one hearing was state mandated, four were actually held by the Mining and Energy Commission.

Council Members expressed condolences to the families of David Thornton and Poly Cohen.

Mayor Mann concluded the meeting by emphasizing that the Crisis Intervention Training Program was utilized by approximately 75% of our local law enforcement community. The members of our police and sheriff's departments perform very stressful jobs. Hopefully this CIT program will be of assistance in this loss of a member. He again extended condolences to the family of David Thornton and Poly Cohen.

Mayor Mann also stated that the Boomer Expo which was held earlier today continues to grow and has a great theme of "Celebrate Living Well". These members contribute greatly to our community, both economically and with regard to lifestyle.

Mayor Mann also reminded everyone of the upcoming presentation on the bond referendum for Central Carolina Community College, scheduled for the meeting next Tuesday, September 2. He also reiterated the needs of many organizations in our community in addition to Brick Capital, including The Bread Basket, Family Promise, The Salvation Army and the Boys' and Girls' Club. He shared his opinion that development of economic engines will help to generate more jobs and enable the area to grow out of unemployment and poverty issues.

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He also expressed his appreciation to everyone who supported and participated in the recent ALS Ice Bucket Challenge. Much positive feedback has been received on this event.

Adjournment

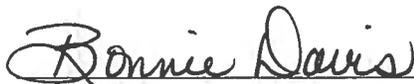
Council Member Rebecca Wyhof made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Samuel Gaskins, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



T. Chet Mann, Mayor

ATTEST:



Bonnie Davis, City Clerk