

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
OF THE CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2015

1. **CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL**

The Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. and City Clerk Susan Ullery called roll.

Present: Councilmembers Jeff Altoft (arrived at 6:09), Sharon Ellison, Jim Hall and Mayor Jim Hodges.

Absent: Councilmember Matt Mayer.

Also Present: City Manager Mark Howe, City Clerk Susan Ullery, City Treasurer Suzanne Olin, Interim DPW Director Ron Woods, Police Chief Steve Bukala, LCTV Boardmembers Dennis Kent, Barb Zandstra and Patty Sellner.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by HALL to approve the agenda as presented.

YES: 2. NO: 0. ABSENT: 1. MOTION CARRIED.

3. **CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

No public comments were received.

4. **COMMUNITY FACILITIES REPORT.** City Manager Howe presented a report regarding community facilities. He pointed out these facilities cost City of Lowell taxpayers \$300,348 during the 2014/15 fiscal year (unaudited). This amount is equivalent of 3.3977 mills of the 15.9424 total collected for the city's General Fund (including the museum special millage).

Howe noted these facilities serve more than 15,000 residents of the greater Lowell area.

Englehardt Public Library

The library opened in February, 1997. It is an 8,800 square-foot facility, costing \$1.3 million to construct. The City of Lowell maintains the building and grounds, including janitorial and maintenance, supplies for cleaning and public restroom, public utilities such as gas, electric, water and sewer and insurance. All expenses are paid by City of Lowell taxpayers through the city's General Fund. The Kent District Library provides payment in the amount of \$1.50 per square foot to offset the cost of building and grounds maintenance. (Englehardt Public Library Net General Fund Expense – FY 2014/15 (unaudited) \$52,066.)

Museum (Graham Building)

The City of Lowell owns the Graham Building at the corner of Main and Hudson streets which now houses the Lowell Area Historical Society through a lease agreement which expires April 24, 2021. Under the lease agreement the historical society pays \$200 per month toward operating expenses of the building. The City of Lowell maintains the building and grounds, including supplies, public utilities and insurance, through the General Fund. (Museum (Graham Building) Net General Fund Expense (not including operational millage) – FY 2014/15 (unaudited) \$16,535.)

Riverwalk Building

The City of Lowell owns the Riverwalk Building which currently houses the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce through a lease which expires May 1, 2020. Under the lease, the chamber pays for operating expenses on the building at a rate of \$200 per month. The City of Lowell pays for the insurance and utilities through the General Fund. (Riverwalk Building Net General Fund Expense – FY 2014/15 (unaudited) \$845.)

Showboat and Riverwalk

The City of Lowell acquired the Lowell Showboat on May 21, 2001, through an agreement with the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce and the Lowell Showboat Corporation II. The agreement provides that the City of Lowell shall maintain the showboat and provide insurance. It gives the chamber primary responsibility for scheduling and coordinating events and provides that rental proceeds shall be shared equally among the city and chamber. (Showboat Net General Fund Expense – FY 2014/15 (unaudited) \$1,099.)

Community Parks

The City of Lowell owns and maintains several community and neighborhood parks including Recreation Park, Creekside Park, Stoney Lakeside Park, North Washington and other parks, trails and open spaces. (Parks Net General Fund Expense – FY 2014/15 (unaudited) \$124,963.)

Councilmember Ellison requested a breakdown of expenses for each park. She suggested an addendum be added.

Howe noted the Parks and Recreation Commission is close to putting together a Master Plan for Recreation Park.

Oakwood Cemetery

The City of Lowell operates Oakwood Cemetery. The General Fund covers the cost of care and maintenance such as grass mowing and trimming, snow plowing and conducting burials. (Oakwood Cemetery Net General Fund Expense – FY 2014/15 (unaudited) \$84,152.)

Ellison questioned how this compared to other cities with regards to maintenance and care. Are other cemeteries charging annual fees?

5. **POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET.** Police Chief Steve Bukala presented a power point presentation regarding the police budget from 1995 to present. In 1995 the department consisted of the Chief of Police, Sergeant, Patrol Investigator (Detective) and three full time patrol officers. At that time the department's budget was \$503,145. In 1997, the department received a grant and added a full time officer and a permanent part time officer at 32 hours a week. From 1997 through 2007 the department consisted of the Chief of Police, Sergeant, Detective, four full time patrol officers, two permanent part time officers and approximately 10 part time officers. In 2007 budget cuts began. Bukala stated today's budget of \$770,230 (\$105,000 of this is zoning/code enforcement) is comparable to the budget in 1995.

Bukala also presented charts from the 2012 Census showing the City of Lowell has an estimated 3883 citizens and 647 citizens to one officer.

6. **STREETS PROJECTS.** City Manager Howe presented a five year street plan that identifies current and future street projects for consideration and planning purposes. The plan will be reviewed regularly by staff and city council after gathering input from the general public, business owners, school officials and other stakeholders.

Crack Sealing will be completed every three years, once a road has been milled and resurfaced.

It has been determined there are many utilities located along Monroe and it is best to not rush this project but rather take time to review carefully and complete the project in the Spring.

Interim DPW Director Ron Woods explained "crush and shape" is a very good alternative when there is no curb and gutter on a street. It is less expensive than "mill and fill" because the material does not have to be taken away.

City Manager Howe stated the five year street plan will be presented at the next City Council meeting. It will also be posted to the website, facebook and newsletter.

7. **LCTV FUND DISCUSSION.** The Council as well as members of the LCTV Board discussed the distribution of funds from the LCTV Fund. Councilmember Ellison wished the entire LCTV Board was present. As a councilmember she consistently hears citizens complain about the streets.

LCTV Boardmember Dennis Kent stated the board has always raised concern about using the funds for street repair. The board did not like the way the Council handled the distribution of funds last year. He suggested 50 % be used for street repair and 50% be used for "softer" projects.

Boardmember Zandstra agreed with Kent regarding the way the Council handled the distribution of funds last year. Zandstra noted she was not aware of the need to repair underground infrastructure. Maybe the LCTV Board needs to consider a recommendation of 50% to streets for a period of time.

Boardmember Sellner agreed with the Zandstra and Kent. The Council did not handle their recommendation appropriately. She was frustrated that she did not know the exact amount of the fund. Sellner believed the LCTV Fund could make a huge difference for smaller projects.

City of Lowell resident Dave Austin brought up the idea of 50% of the funds going toward community buildings such as the library.

Mayor Hodges was not in favor of rushing a resolution. City Manager Howe noted the Council committed to the LCTV Board that a decision would be made by September 1.

Hodges proposed 50% of the funds go toward streets and 50% be made available to other applicants.

Councilmember Hall proposed 100% be granted for streets in this next round.

Councilmember Altoft suggested the LCTV board recommend where 100% of the funds should go. He also suggested a resolution be brought forward so that the grants could be used for operating expenses.

Councilmember Ellison proposed 100% of the funds go toward street repair.

Altoft did not believe a resolution had to be presented at the September 8, 2015 meeting and could hold off until September 21, 2015.

Ellison suggested blanks be on the resolution, which would allow the Council to fill in at the September 8, 2015 meeting.

8. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAFF.** City Manager Howe questioned the development of this. Should staff be hired?
9. **PROMOTE ACCOMPLISHMENTS.** City Manager Howe questioned how this should be handled.
10. **TRASH ORDINANCE UPDATE.** City Manager Howe questioned if this ordinance should be reconstructed.
11. **PROACTIVE CODE ENFORCEMENT.** City Manager Howe questioned how this should be handled.
12. **OTHER ITEMS.** No other items were added.
13. **COUNCIL COMMENTS.** No comments were received.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED at 9:39 p.m.

DATE:

James W. Hodges, Mayor

APPROVED:

Susan S. Ullery, City Clerk