

**PROCEEDINGS
OF
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OF THE
CITY OF LOWELL
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2020, 7:00 P.M.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; ROLL CALL.**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor DeVore and City Clerk Sue Ullery called roll.

Present: Councilmembers Cliff Yankovich, Marty Chambers, Jim Salzwedel, Leah Groves and Mayor DeVore,

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Michael Burns, City Clerk Susan Ullery, DPW Director Dan Czarnecki, Chief of Police Chris Hurst, LL&P General Manager Charlie West, Waste Water Treatment Plant Supervisor Brian VanderMeulen, and City of Lowell Attorney Jessica Wood.

2. **APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

- Approval of the Agenda as amended.
- Approve and place on file the minutes of the December 07, 2020 regular meeting.
- Authorize payment of invoices in the amount of \$478,259.08.

IT WAS MOVED BY SALZWEDEL and seconded by CHAMBERS to approve the consent agenda as amended.

YES: Mayor DeVore, Councilmember Salzwedel, Councilmember Yankovich and Councilmember Chambers, and Leah Groves.

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

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

There were no comments.

4. **OLD BUSINESS.**

a. Lowell Township Water/Wastewater.

City Manager Michael Burns explained the 50 year & 100 year projections for the 457 on the spreadsheet he provided and stated they were good projections. Mayor DeVore and City Manager stated once the expansion study is presented to the task force, they will put together a bullet point presentation to bring back to Council and for the general public.

b. Showboat – Update.

City Manager Michael Burns stated we received a grant from the community foundation as well as approximately \$83,000 in donations coming in from the Chamber. We have enough to pay the contractor in full. The fundraising is still going on and is going well. Construction is moving along

and also going well. The Non-profit committees' first meeting will be January 6, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Councilmember Salzwedel stated we are about \$190,000 short of our \$800,000 goal but he believes we will get there within a month or two.

c. MERS.

City Manager Michael Burns explained since our last meeting, we have filed all the paperwork necessary to make the modifications to our pension plan. Last week we had webinars for our employees to have them get an understanding of what the changes are. Later this week we are going to make the \$125,000 payment and then after the first of the year we will start looking at and working with MERS on the financing component.

d. COVID-19.

City Manager Michael Burns stated COVID -19 is still here. COVID -19 public restrictions are still in place at least until January 15, 2021 so that means meetings will continue to be held via zoom. The Senate and House passed an extension to the law pertaining to on-line virtual meetings, it is ready to go to the governor's office for signature, so if that is signed, the on-line virtual meetings will be in place until at least March 21, 2021.

Burns continued stating we have gotten some limited communications from Kent County about getting vaccines to our employees if they so choose. We do have certain sectors of employees who would be tiered higher to actually get the vaccine when it does become available to us. At least from the police end, if the officers want to take it, it could be available to them as soon as sometime in February. But at this point, we are getting limited information from the Health Department.

e. Line Shack.

City Manager Michael Burns gave an update explaining Lowell Light & Power Board did discuss this at their last meeting. They are in the process of getting an appraisal for the building and looking at putting a budget together for how they want to market it. They are hoping they can work with the City to make a recommendation on it.

Perry Beachum stated he would like to see the City put an easement on the back side of it so if they ever decide they want a riverwalk along the backside, it will be less painful to work through.

5. NEW BUSINESS.

a. PROTEC – Membership.

City Manager Michael Burns read his memo explaining the Michigan Coalition to Protect Public Right of Ways Organization has been an organization for 24 years and its purpose it to take the lead to

coordinate actions to protect local government interests and to inform municipal officials of significant developments of public right of way management.

IT WAS MOVED BY YANKOVICH and seconded by CHAMBERS that the Lowell City Council approve the City's membership in PROTEC.

YES: Mayor DeVore, Councilmember Salzwedel, Councilmember Yankovich, Councilmember Chambers and Councilmember Groves.

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

b. Social District.

City Manager Michael Burns stated that these social districts have become more of a topic since the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Twenty-three Cities in Michigan have established these social districts, which is basically a special liquor license that allows a municipality to designate a certain area of a district where businesses can extend their liquor licenses out and allow people to gather in public places to eat or drink alcohol. City of Rockford just opened theirs up and it has been a big success. City Attorney Jessica Wood explained the process and what needs to be done to establish the Social District.

The Councilmembers discussed at length and decided to do some more investigating, talk to restaurant owners, get their input and bring it back to next Council meeting. City Manager Michael Burns will get a resolution ready for the next meeting.

6. **BOARD/COMMISSION REPORTS.**

Councilmember Salzwedel stated the LCTV Board's cutoff date to get your applications in to Susan Ullery at City Hall is February 5, 2021 by 5:00 p.m.

Councilmember Chambers stated at the Planning Commission meeting, there were three different items to approve. First Culligan Water was approved to build to a new building. Grand Rapids Gravel was approved to start mining, this will be a 10-year process with intent to have a 27-acre lake with 22 condos going up on it. Third was a recreational marijuana establishment that wants to move into a strip mall. It came down to concern with ventilation issues and if there is a complaint they have 10 days to correct it and after that we can site them and pull their license. The marijuana establishment is going to come back with their detailed ventilation plan as well as a security plan to present before it is approved.

Councilmember Yankovich wrote a grant request for the Historical District for \$100,000 for some plans for the building on the North side to be restored and also for King Milling who would like to upgrade the outside and make their McQueen Building more historic.

Councilmember Groves met with Parks & Rec and discussed the ball fields usage and how to divide it up, will continue at next meeting. Also, had two members agree to renew, Teresa Mundt and Susan Pomper. Next meeting will be going over the project and recreation commission projects' priorities list.

Mayor DeVore stated Fire Authority, DDA and Water Task Force were all cancelled for December. Fire Authority will meet January 6, 2021 for the Showboat Committee and Fire Authority will be January 14, 2021 where they will discuss the open burn ordinance.

City Manager Michael Burns stated no changes really on the budget updates. We still have the same situation with the officers' investigation, we have a new officer that is out on injury right now, on short term disability for six to eight weeks. We have a reimbursement coming through the CARES ACT, not sure of exact the amount but think it will be significant.

7. **MANAGER'S REPORT.**

City Manager Michael Burns went over the following:

- Had a discussion with Dave Pasquale, Jim Hodges and Dick Wendt who were all around when the situation at Root Lowell and Bushnell happened. The situation was with a plume that went into the Bushnell property from some solvents that had been dumped in the late 60's on the Root Lowell property. They took the steps with DEQ at the time to try and address the situation. They believe they had done what they were supposed to be doing. The City is not a party in this matter but Burns has reached out to the school and Eagle regarding the health concerns with this matter. This was never addressed at the City level. We will try to assist in any way that we can.
- We have hired Jeff Phillips for a new full time position at the Public Works, with his experience it is a no brainer. Still looking for a person to fill the sexton position for the cemetery.
- Will be looking at the open burning ordinance with the fire chief probably sometime before the first of the year.
- Last week the budgeted capitol project at the wastewater treatment plant was completed. The lid was repaired at the digester #3.
- Want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

8. **APPOINTMENTS.**

Mayor Devore asked for a general consensus on Theresa Mundt and Susan Pomper continuing on the Parks & Rec board as well as Steve Doyle and Nancy Wood on the Historic District and there was a general consensus for them all to continue. They will work on DDA open appointment at the first meeting of the year.

9. **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilmember Yankovich would like to say to anyone watching, if you can get a meal and support the Lowell local restaurants right now, please do so. The value of our restaurants in the City of Lowell is huge and they need our support right now. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone.

Councilmember Chambers stated to Councilmember Yankovich's note, if you go to a local restaurant or Ionia restaurant bring in your receipt and you will get 25% off an item at Tap House Bo and at Red Barn

Antiques. Canfield is also doing a promotion if you buy a gift card at a restaurant in Lowell, he will match the amount for a gift card to be used later in the restaurant up to \$25,000.

Councilmember Salzwedel stated support your local businesses and be sure to support our residents so they can get back to work however they can. Wished everyone a healthy and happy holiday season.

Councilmember Groves asked to support the local businesses and the citizens that support those businesses. Merry Christmas and enjoy the holidays.

Mayor DeVore reminded us to buy gift cards for our local Lowell restaurants and don't forget about Lowell bucks. A great gift you can use now or later and be sure to tip the workers.

10. **ADJOURNMENT.**

IT WAS MOVED BY SALZWEDEL to adjourn at 8:08 p.m.

YES: 5. NO: NONE. ABSENT: None. MOTION CARRIED.

DATE:

APPROVED:

Mike DeVore, Mayor

Sue Ullery, Lowell City Clerk