

**PROCEEDINGS  
OF  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
OF THE  
CITY OF LOWELL  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2021, 7:00 P.M.**

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

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

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

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Treasurer Sue Olin, DPW Director Dan Czarnecki, Chief of Police Chris Hurst and City Attorney Tim Forshee.

2. **CONSENT AGENDA.**

- Approval of the Agenda
- Approve and place on file the minutes of the December 6, 2021, Regular City Council Meeting
- Authorize payment of invoices in the amount of \$385,154.47.

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

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

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

There was none.

4. **OLD BUSINESS.**

There was none.

5. **NEW BUSINESS.**

a. **Audit Presentation.**

Peter Haefner of Vredeveld Haefner LLC reviewed the City of Lowell's financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2021.

In their opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the discretely

presented component unit, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City of Lowell, Michigan, as of June 30, 2021, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United State of America.

b. Fire Station Key Cards.

City Manager Michael Burns read memo stating the City of Lowell owns the building where the fire station resides. He has received a request from Chief Witherell from the Lowell Area Fire Department to purchase the same security key card system, the City uses for the Police Station, DPW Building, Showboat and City Hall for the Fire Station. The Fire Department has received a proposal from Allied Universal for the system. Total cost to add the system is \$18,098.24. Request is only for the City of Lowell rather than for all three municipalities because the building is owned by the City and the quote received is valid until January 2, 2022 and there is anticipated 10% increase for this after the date the quote is valid. Key Card cost will be funded in the following expenditures.

c. Unassigned Fund Balance.

City Manager Michael Burns read his memo stating in November, I had mentioned last fiscal year (2019-2020) we had approximately \$200,000 in fund balance added to the general fund giving us approximately \$1.2 million in reserve. At the time, we were 33% funded (\$1,000,000) prior to these funds being added to the reserve, we took \$75,000 of this and applied it toward the Fire Truck purchase and the remaining \$125,000 to make a payment towards the unfunded pension liability. As the final amounts were tailed this year, it appears these payments never needed to be made from the fund reserve but were from our 2020-2021 revenues. Burns then broke down the expenditures from the additional fund balance asking City Council to consider.

IT WAS MOVED BY CHAMBERS and seconded by YANKOVICH that the Lowell City Council approve the expenditures of \$401,465 from our unassigned general fund balance in the manner explained.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

d. Water Billing Assistance.

City Manager Michael Burns read his memo stating he received notification from Kent County Community Action (KCCA) that \$1.7 million for low income household water/wastewater assistance is available. These funds would be allocated as direct payments to municipal water/wastewater utilities for low income households who are at risk of utility shutoff for non-payment. This program would be eligible to households who are eligible at 150% of the poverty level or below. The maximum payment per fiscal year is \$650 which would include any fees needed for reconnection. One stipulation is the municipality who receives payment for the affected household must guarantee service for at least 90

days after receipt of payment. KCCA will work with the applicant directly to ensure they qualify for the program and are in jeopardy of being connected. If the City is interested in having this program eligible for residents in need of this service, the City needs to approve the agreement. The program would remain in place until September 30, 2023.

IT WAS MOVED BY YANKOVICH and seconded by SALZWEDEL that the Lowell City Council partner with Kent County Community Action for them to provide assistance to low income residents of the City of Lowell to prevent utility shutoff for non-payment of water/sewer services.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

e. Recreation Master Plan Update.

DPW Director Dan Czarnecki stated the current five-year Recreation Master Plan expires at the end of 2022. The process of updating and submitting a new Master plan takes a while to work through all the necessary steps. A new five-year document is needed in 2023 that will inventory the available recreational opportunities, list the needs of the community, and will provide us a roadmap to follow for making needed improvements the community would like to see. At their December 14<sup>th</sup> Parks Board meeting, the board discussed getting started on updating the current plan. We received a proposal from Andy Moore with Williams & Work to help with the development of a new master plan. He assisted the City to develop our current Recreation Master Plan in 2017. He has provided a list of services to help the City work through the process of gathering community information, receiving public input, working to define goals and objectives, developing an action plan, and providing us with a finalized plan that should meet the MDNR requirements. Process will take 6-8 months. The goal is to have the document approved by MDNR and adopted by the City by the end of the calendar year 2022.

IT WAS MOVED BY SALZWEDEL and seconded by GROVES that the Lowell City Council approve the update of the five-year Park and Recreation Plan, Scope of Services with Williams & Works, as outlined in the letter dated December 2, 2021, with both online survey and focus group options, in the amount not-to-exceed \$10,400.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

f. Gee Drive.

DPW Director Dan Czarnecki read his memo stating in July 2021, the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) performed their annual Sanitary Survey of our water plant and

distribution system. From that review of our entire water system, EGLE came up with a significant deficiency and two other deficiencies that needed correction. They also sent us an Administrative Consent Order to make upgrades to the pumping situation at the Gee Dr. station to complete an updated Reliability Study. The station improvements (the significant deficiency) and the Reliability Study are being worked on at this time. The two other deficiencies are with the Gee Drive storage tank. One item is the installation of a gasket on a hatch cover, and the other is installation of a mesh screen on an overflow pipe that also includes a vacuum/pressure mechanism. Both items will require a contractor to make modifications to the tank to allow for their installation. Williams & Works has provided us with an estimate not to exceed \$6,000 for the engineering work on these two items.

IT WAS MOVED BY CHAMBERS and seconded by SALZWEDEL that the Lowell City Council approves the Gee Drive Storage Tank Improvements Engineering Services with Williams & Works, as outlined in their letter dated December 20, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$6,000.

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

NO: None.

ABSENT: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

6. **BOARD/COMMISSION REPORTS.**

Mayor DeVore had Fire Authority meeting where they discussed the key card security. Burns and DeVore talked with the Township again on the water 425 discussion that went well and it is coming along.

7. **BUDGET REPORTS.**

City Manager Michael Burns explained that we have an emergency expenditure at the Wastewater treatment plant on the aerator that has failed, this runs full time and must be replaced. Potentially in the range of \$30,000. Also, we need to clean up some things on the budget, mostly just the way things were transferred for the Amity Street project. The budget projected for next year, is coming in less so that is great news.

8. **MANAGERS REPORT.**

- Looking at next year moving our healthcare insurance into an insurance pool to keep our risk and percentages down.
- We did have our small urban meeting with MDOT, Kent County and the Rapid. We were able to move the Monroe project to Gee Drive, which will be up for paving next year in 2022 and then in 2024, we have funds about \$385,000 funds secured for Foreman Street for a mill and overlay between Gee Drive and Beech Street.
- Lineshack project- Mr. Slagel has approached the Michigan Economic Development Corporation for the community revitalization program. Needs a 10% local contribution of that from the City. DDA did agree to \$5000 for sidewalks. Still working on.
- DDA is going to take ownership of the charging stations that we have in the City. Looking at updating them to be able to service two cars at a time.

- Judge Suzanne Krieger in Ionia County saw no merit for the charges filed against Jason Diaz and has dismissed all of his charges. We are thankful and hope this gives him an opportunity to move forward.

9. **APPOINTMENTS.**

There were none.

10. **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilmember Groves wishes everyone Happy Holidays!

Councilmember Chambers wishes everyone a safe and Happy Holidays!

Councilmember Salzwedel hopes everyone has a safe and happy New Years and go Michigan on that day!

Mayor DeVore wishes everyone a Happy Holiday as well.

11. **ADJOURNMENT.**

IT WAS MOVED BY SALWEDEL and seconded by CHAMBERS to adjourn at 7:52 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

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Mike DeVore, Mayor

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Sue Ullery, Lowell City Clerk