

FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING

A special meeting of the Farmington City Council was held on Monday, March 3, 2008, in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Mayor Knol.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Buck, Knol, McShane, Wiggins, Wright.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

CITY ADMINISTRATION: City Clerk Halberstadt, City Manager Pastue, Treasurer Weber.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

03-08-038 MOTION by Wiggins, seconded by McShane, to approve the agenda as submitted. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

CONSIDERATION TO APPROVE BIDS FOR POWER ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

City Manager Pastue advised bids received for the Power Road Project were approximately \$250,000 lower than the engineer's estimate. He further advised the City's consulting engineers, OHM, recommended awarding the contract to the low bidder, Sole Construction Inc. He stated Public Services Director Gushman has reviewed the bids and concurs with OHM's recommendation.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Buck, Pastue stated he did not believe any of the contract bidders were from Farmington or Farmington Hills.

Councilmember Wiggins noted the low bid amounts for this project indicated a trend toward lower costs for future projects including the Grand River Streetscape/Grove Street Project.

Councilmember Wright noted the importance of a performance bond especially in a low bid situation.

RESOLUTION 03-08-039 Motion by McShane, seconded by Buck, to accept the Power Road construction bids and award a contract to Sole Construction Inc., 5940 Commerce Drive, Westland, Michigan, in the amount of \$991,495.37 and authorize the City Manager to sign the contract on behalf of the City.

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ROLL CALL

Ayes: Knol, McShane, Wiggins, Wright, Buck.

Nays: None.

Absent: None.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

REVIEW OF SPRING 2008 NEWSLETTER

City Manager Pastue reviewed the proposed content of the Spring 2008 newsletter including: critter/rodent control, yard waste program, Grand River Streetscape Project, Power Road Project and Farmers Market.

Pastue stated, at the request of Councilmember McShane, the newsletter would also include recognition of recently deceased individuals who have served the City on boards and commissions including: Ernie Sauter and Lee Ratliff.

Councilmember McShane requested the newsletter include: Mansion dates and times, Founders Festival dates, and the permanent addition of a *volunteer* number to call.

Mayor Knol requested the addition of items presented by the Commission of Aging including: spring clean-up assistance for seniors and Project Healthy Living planned for April; and requested the inclusion of ordinance information on grass cutting.

McShane noted bird feeders as a food source for rodents should be added to the critter/rodent section of the newsletter.

Councilmember Buck recommended leading the newsletter with the Grand River Streetscape Project and include the DDA Promotional Plan for the project.

Councilmember Wiggins suggested citing the below estimate bids received on the Power Road Project which may indicate lower costs for the Grand River Streetscape Project.

Mayor Knol suggested addressing the issue of decks as a refuge for wild animals and offer recommended solutions.

FISCAL 2008/09 BUDGET UPDATE

City Manager Pastue discussed the budget process and questioned whether Council would like to meet with departments heads to review their budgets. Council agreed to meet with department heads as time allows.

Pastue discussed enhancing communication with residents and requested Council feedback on communication priorities relative to the calendar, website, etc. He suggested appropriating extra dollars to SWOCC programming in order to provide someone other than staff to coordinate Farmington productions. He stated a coordinator could provide high quality productions on a timely basis.

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Responding to a question from Councilmember Wright, Pastue stated the Cities of Novi and Farmington Hills both have paid staff at SWOCC dedicated to their programming.

Councilmember Buck noted a production coordinator could also provide assistance with taping Council meetings.

Mayor Knol recommended a separate meeting to address communication goals.

Pastue noted North Star, Branding Study consultant, will provide communication recommendations. He stated all forms of communication are up for review and funds for any one medium should not be taken for granted.

Councilmember McShane expressed the importance of communication and how the City markets itself.

Responding to a question from Mayor Knol, Pastue stated he would forward an itemization of communication costs to Council and would arrange a subsequent meeting.

Pastue provided an update of the FY 2008/09 budget including recommendations for balancing the General Fund. He noted Street Funds are in good shape for the next five years and recognized a surplus in the Civic Theatre Fund.

Pastue proposed rate increases to water and sewer rates and issuance of bonds for a number of water replacement projects. He identified a number of upcoming capital improvement projects including: Grand River/Grove Street, Power Road Reconstruction, Shiawassee Park Project, Nine Mile Road and Slocum Street Reconstruction Projects.

Pastue discussed specific recommendations for balancing the General Fund including: health insurance reductions, changes in accounting for the 2003 sewer debit; changes in accounting for the sidewalk replacement millage and the addition of an administration fee to City tax collections. He noted the proposed budget includes a \$40K contingency fund to address any unexpected expenses.

Discussion followed regarding continued decrease in property values and balancing future budgets.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Wiggins, Pastue stated the sidewalk replacement program would be protected by setting aside specific funds in the Capital Improvement Fund for future budgets. He noted \$250K will be earmarked in FY 2010/2011 for that program.

Pastue recommended implementation of a complete solid waste user fee system whereby residents would incur the costs for solid waste and yard waste collection, recycling, leaf program and household hazardous waste program. He noted currently these services are paid through a combination of millage and a special assessment of approximately \$96 on the summer tax bill. Under the proposed plan, a user fee of approximately \$160 per year would be assessed in two payments and there would be a

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slight reduction in millage. He stated there would be no change in revenue as a result of this proposal. He noted the change would do three things: 1) direct cost for services to residents, 2) commercial businesses would no longer subsidize a service they don't use, and 3) reduces dependency on property taxes.

Pastue confirmed the current assessment for recycling covers only part of the cost and the remainder is covered by millage.

Pastue stressed the efficiency of the proposed budget and the limited latitude the City has in making marginal changes.

Mayor Knol cautioned against a short term approach of one-time budget fixes, noting a prediction from Oakland County that revenue will not return to the 2006 level until 2015.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was heard.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kim Thompson-Everett, 23210 Lilac, asked about the City's follow-up to the rodent problem in Floral Park Subdivision. She noted a dumpster at Fink and Orchard Lake Road that consistently has garbage spilling out of it. She inquired about the City's contact with Farmington Hills concerning the rodent problem. She spoke about the impact the rodent problem has on her quality of life. She requested increased communication to residents regarding their responsibility in resolving this problem.

Councilmember Buck asked Ms. Thompson-Everett to review the content of the City newsletter regarding this issue and provide feedback and additional information where necessary.

Ms. Thompson-Everett recommended the Cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills work together to address this issue.

Councilmember McShane asked Ms. Thompson-Everett to keep Council apprised of the rodent issue in Floral Park.

Jennifer Kindseth, 33719 Oakland Street, asked regarding plans for the stretch of sidewalk on the south side of Grand River beginning at Focal Point to Farmington Road which is narrow and unsafe. She further asked if there are any plans to connect the neighborhood south of Grand River and west of Farmington Road to the Downtown.

City Manager Pastue stated there are plans to install a crosswalk on Farmington Road just south of State Street. He stated the City recognizes the narrowness of the sidewalk in front of Focal Point and plans to address it sometime in the future.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilmember McShane noted the substantial amount of trash behind the Downtown Center on Orchard Street and requested the City have it removed. Referring to Council's earlier denial of a sign variance request for an LED sign on a gas station canopy, she noted she could not find any LED signs on canopies anywhere. She stated it is incumbent on Council to do their homework when a variance request is made.

McShane asked regarding the establishment of Council of Residents and the potential use of neighborhood watch. She further asked regarding the re-establishment of a Beautification Committee.

McShane asked regarding the status of the old courthouse property. Pastue responded Evangelical Homes is looking at the feasibility of the site.

Concerning the joint meeting on the collaboration study, McShane asked whether a second or final draft would be presented by Plante & Moran.

Discussion followed regarding the format of the meeting and presentation of the collaboration report. Pastue stated it is unlikely any substantial changes would be made to a second draft that will be presented. He stated any changes would result in a final report.

McShane expressed concern a presentation of the second draft would provide the public with a biased and slanted report.

Councilmember Buck noted the second draft is seriously flawed. He stated Council should be allowed the opportunity for input before a formal presentation is made.

Mayor Knol noted Council will have the opportunity to respond to the report following the presentation.

Councilmember Wiggins stated he is prepared for the joint meeting and will offer his comments at that time. He asked whether the City had a sufficient supply of salt. Pastue responded yes.

Councilmember Wright stated the City needs to address a budget shortfall now rather than delaying cutbacks until future budgets. He concurred with Councilmember McShane that he has not seen LED signs on gas station canopies, however, he has seen such signs at the same height as canopies, noting there may not be much of a difference.

Pastue confirmed he met with the Valero Gas Station owner and informed him the sign ordinance is currently under review including the issue of LED signs on canopies.

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Responding to a question from Councilmember Wright, Pastue stated a sign permit was erroneously issued to the Valero Gas Station due to a misunderstanding by the Building Department.

Wright pointed out there are inaccuracies in the collaboration study and would like the opportunity to address them with Plante & Moran. He stated even though the report is preliminary, the findings should have been more meaty or substantial.

Councilmember Buck noted the inconsistent administration of signage in the City. He stated the code should provide consistent treatment of signage and provide specifics related to the gateways of the City. He noted City ordinance or practice should not be based solely on what other cities are doing.

Buck expressed concern that the format and content of the collaboration study presentation would not meet expectations Council discussed and agreed upon. He noted the release of the second draft to the public would make it the final report. He felt this process is not giving the cities the best opportunity to fully collaborate on shared services.

Mayor Knol expected the presentation will show efficiently run cities that have the opportunity for further partnership and cooperation.

Knol noted an invitation she received from the Mayor of Northville for Council to visit and tour his City. She stated Northville has done some interesting things with signage and streetscape development. She requested City Administration arrange a visit.

Knol requested Council schedule a bus tour of the City this spring. She noted a thank-you letter received from a resident for addressing her concerns regarding the issue of the DDA and Library funding.

ADJOURNMENT

03-08-040 MOTION by Wright, seconded by McShane, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Valerie S. Knol, Mayor

Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

APPROVED: March 17, 2008