

Mayor Edwards called the Board of Appeals and Equalization to order at 5:30 p.m. Present were: Mayor Connie Edwards, Cheryl Sanden, Matt Schutte, Kevin Knutson and Tony Schultz. Also present were: Chris Peterson, Audrey Hegland, Ed Jacobs, Randy Thesing, Ellyn Baumann, Chief David Breault, Jim Kochie of Davy Engineering, Audrey Alfson, Roger Meyer, and Cindy Cresswell from the Assessor's Office.

Cresswell reviewed the Houston County 2016 Local Board of Appeal and Equalization for Townships and Cities report, outlining the property tax system, and included information on building and land values, properties sold during the year and current status of property valuation. There was no property owners present who wished to speak. Mayor Edwards closed Board of Appeal and Equalization at 5:50 p.m.

Mayor Edwards called the Council meeting to order at 5:52 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Changes to Agenda: Move Item C to the top of the Agenda.

Nature Center Update – Park play feature, interior painting, exterior staining: Chris Peterson stated there are two pieces of large playground equipment that may be donated to the Nature Center from the MN Zoo, subject to Council approval. There are no requirements to the donation other than it is intended for the Nature Center/Trailhead Park. The connection of Trailhead Park with the Root River Trail and DNR affiliation was a factor in the Zoo's consideration of this donation. Alfson said the pieces will not be placed in the Natural Playground area but would be a welcome addition elsewhere in the Park. The Park & Rec Board will be consulted as to where the equipment is to be placed. MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY SCHULTZ TO ACCEPT THE DONATION OF THE CATERPILLAR AND LADYBUG PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT FROM THE MINNESOTA ZOO; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Alfson spoke to the recent changes taking place at the Nature Center. She said that the role of the Friends of the Nature Center needs to be clarified since they have experienced many changes, including the loss of much of their income since Karla Bloem and the Owl Center left. Now their income comes from grants and donations; Alfson is currently working on a CMET grant. They carefully allocate where the money they have is spent; at this time, they support the Natural Playground and children's programming. Future projects they would like to see at the Nature Center would be to incorporate artistic displays.

She stated that the Friends remain very supportive of the Nature Center. The building itself needs work - the exterior needs to be re-stained and the interior painted; the Friends are willing to purchase the materials necessary, and Karla and Hein Bloem have volunteered to do the outside staining. Also needed is some repair and work done to the Natural Playground. The Friends will also pay for a knowledgeable person to maintain the plantings to keep the landscaping around the Nature Center in good shape. The Friends have purchased new boot/shoe scrapers for the Natural Playground and pavilion and ordered a handicapped port-a-potty as well.

It was suggested that at the beginning of each summer, the Friends come to the Council with a list of items that must be done so the City's Maintenance Department can determine how much they can help.

Alfson closed by saying the Friends serve in an advisory capacity and remain very dedicated to the Nature Center; they look forward to working with the City on its behalf. Peterson suggested that Connie Verse and/or Alfson attend the next Park and Rec meeting.

Nature Center Bee Exhibit – Roger Meyer: He has volunteered to install a four foot visible bee hive in the Nature Center, donated by B&B Honey Farm. Refurbished by Meyer, it will be mounted on the wall with glass on both sides so the public can watch the bees from both angles, with a tube entrance and exit to the outside. A local bee club will provide a guest lecturer to explain the bee activity and how they communicate, etc. Meyer stated everything for this project has been donated so there is no expense to the City. The bees will be purchased and will arrive in June.

School Building Project – Trailers and Equipment: The school is undertaking a large ventilation project at the Elementary School and will be using the blocked-off portion of Elm Street as a place for the equipment necessary. Thesing commented that during the hot summer, the large equipment may be heavy for the pavement. Another question was voiced regarding accessibility for the fire department in case of an emergency.

Property Insurance Renewal: Peterson stated this insurance is through the League of MN Cities and is due in August. The agent has been Jerry Lee Insurance but she recommends that it now be switched to Danielson Insurance. The City already has other insurance with this company so it would be a streamlined coverage. MOTION BY SANDEN, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO SWITCH THE CITY'S PROPERTY INSURANCE AGENT TO DANIELSON INSURANCE AND BEGIN THE RENEWAL PROCESS; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Engineering Report for Water Treatment Project – Jim Kochie: Kochie presented a power point on the proposed radium treatment plant. Three priorities were addressed:

Priority A is to build the water treatment plant with modifications to Well #1 and also to Well #3 and its Transmission line, estimated cost: \$2,532,260.

Priority B is to construct a 150,000 tank for additional water storage to meet current and future water demands, estimated cost: \$357,710. This construction is not critical and be postponed until financing is available.

Priority C - Distribution System: Current water mains are 6" or less, with older ones show significant interior build-up of deposits which limit water flow when needed, for example, when necessary during a fire. Potential replacement areas would be: Lincoln Street to Elm to Cedar; Jackson Street to Elm to Cedar; Elm Street to Grant to Ellsworth. Proposed is to put in larger pipelines in Lincoln and Jackson and tie into Elm and on to Ellsworth, which will bring better flow; estimated cost: \$722,275.

Financial assistance possibilities may be available through the Small City Development Program, USDA Rural Development, Drinking Water Revolving Loan which may be accompanied with a principal forgiveness. A USDA representative will be coming to meet with Peterson regarding funding. Also, Bubany will be coming on April 25th to discuss this as well.

Flood Levee Maintenance Quotes: The levee recertification analysis shows two lower areas that need to be raised. The levee should be raised with Class 5 material, approximately six inches in depth and 10 feet in width, for 140 feet and 4,225 feet, and needs to be completed by June 1, 2016. Two quotes were requested for the work but only one was received. A DNR program is available that may pay 50% of the expense. The start of the work will be delayed until the DNR funds are in hand which may be two to three weeks. MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO APPROVE THE QUOTE FROM BOTCHER BROTHERS FOR \$16,470; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. A second MOTION WAS MADE BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT WITH THE DNR FOR THE SHARED LEVEE REPAIR EXPENSE; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

OHV Committee: So far six community members have expressed interest in serving on the OHV Advisory Committee: They are: Bob Borowiak, John Hibbs, Ken Johnston, Jr., John Beckman, Steve Rischette and Tony Schultz. Other suggested representation could be from law enforcement, EMS, Maintenance, County Commissioners, Soil and Water, Chamber and also user groups and clubs. Eight to 12 people would be a good number to serve on this Committee. One of the main responsibilities of the group will be to set trail parameters such as hours of operation and to develop rules and structure that will protect the interests of the City. Meetings will likely be held every month during the first year. This will be placed on the next Council agenda.

2016 Seasonal Maintenance Employee(s): The Personnel Committee interviewed two people and also one via telephone. Thesing recommended the City hire all three with priority hours being given to Leonard Olson and Leslie Roesner for three days per week, and five hours per week will be given to Ken Carrier. He will be trained and able to provide backup when necessary. All must first pass the pre-employment screening. There is \$7,000 budgeted for the

seasonal expenses. MOTION MADE BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY SCHULTZ TO HIRE LEONARD OLSON, LESLIE ROESNER AND KEN CARRIER, EMPLOYMENT CONTINGENT UPON HAVING A VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE AND PASSING THE PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Part-time Marketing/Chamber Position: The Personnel Committee interviewed five individuals for the position, which will be part-time City Marketing and shared with the Chamber. Based on the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, MOTION MADE BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY SCHUTTE TO EMPLOY SARAH JOY WEXLER-MANN FOR THE PART-TIME, 10-HOUR PER WEEK MARKETING/CHAMBER POSITION, CONTINGENT UPON PASSING THE PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Park Trees: Thesing requested the Council's approval to remove the three trees in the City's Central Park; the trees will be cut down to approximately 10 feet, provided they are not hollow, to allow a local artist to create wood sculptures of the remaining tree trunk. Council agreed with his request.

Notice of special Council Meeting 5 p.m, April 25, 2016: Mike Bubany, City's Financial Advisor, will be present to discuss the financial aspects of the projects that need to be accomplished in the City.

Minutes: MOTION BY KNUTSON, SECONDED BY SCHULTZ TO APPROVE THE MARCH 14, 2016 MEETING MINUTES; MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Financial Report/Review of Bills: MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO PAY THE BILLS; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Department Reports:

Maintenance: Thesing reported that Botcher Brothers delivered one load of rock for the alleys; requested payment of the bill of \$114.00. MOTION BY SCHULTZ, SECONDED BY KNUTSON TO PAY BOTCHER BROTHERS \$114 FOR THE LOAD OF ROCK FOR CITY ALLEYS; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The mains have been flushed; will be hauling sludge from the sewer plant next week; will have to shut off a portion of Plum Street to accommodate the large tankers; will be posting No Parking signs for this purpose.

A recent State audit listed several deficiencies, most of which just needed more information on the forms provided. Flow meter records were incomplete but have now been sent in.

A certified thermometer needs to be purchased to monitor the temperatures in the sample cabinets.

Police: Houston is the only City in the County that does not have the necessary equipment required to electronically file tickets, etc. with the State; no paper documents will be accepted any longer. Chief Breault has submitted an application to AcenTek for a \$2,500 grant and the County has been approved for a state grant which has not materialized as yet toward the expense. He will equip the old squad car with portable equipment available. Peterson stated that the County is pressuring our Police Department to get the system in place as soon as possible. The County's IT person will come to the next Council meeting with specific costs. By that time, Breault may know whether he has received the funding from AcenTek. Breault mentioned that he and Officer Daveau will be participate in EMR training. Thesing indicated that all new firemen must also participate in this training.

City Administrator: Rick Frank of Houston County's Environmental Services could not be present at the Council meeting but a County Recycling mailer will be sent out. Houston's curbside recycling is through Waste Management. A budget information sheet was included in the Council packet.

On April 23, the Root River Trail group is having a Trail clean up; cleaning supplies are available at the Nature Center. Annexation: Peterson will check with Attorney Hammell for an annexation update. Schultz attended the recent Legislation Day and stated he made good contacts that he felt will be of future benefit to the City.

MOTION BY SCHUTTE, SECONDED BY SCHULTZ TO ADJOURN AT 8:10 PM; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY