

Mayor Dave Olson called the City Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. August 10, 2020 with the Pledge of Allegiance. Council present: Mayor David Olson, Cody Mathers, and Tony Schultz. Staff present: Brett Hurley, Michelle Quinn, Randy Thesing, Suzie Peterson

**Public Comment:** None

**Lincoln Street Project Zenke Payment #3:** Matt Mohs reported on pay estimate #3 for Zenke Inc. which is primarily made up of concrete sidewalk, drain tile, storm sewer structure and road not including blacktop. Schultz questioned the current schedule. Mr. Mohs stated blacktopping is expected to take place Friday followed by boulevard work. It was noted e-mail and text blasts go out weekly to those who signed up. Motion by Schultz, seconded by Mathers to approve the payment to Zenke, Inc. in the amount of \$221,287.47. Motion carried unanimously.

Mathers clarified blanket approval was granted to the Administrator to electronically sign construction documents via DocuSign when the Lincoln Street project commenced.

**WWTP:** Mr. Mohs reported because no bonding bill has been passed by State Legislature there is no grant funding available for infrastructure projects. Houston's Wastewater Treatment Plant Project is shovel ready currently. Recently, a working group met to discuss the project. It was the consensus of the group to wait to put the project out for bid until spring 2021 in hopes a bonding bill would be passed. There are risks associated with delaying the project. In the event a bonding bill was passed the City is prepared act quickly to put the project out for bid.

During a recent review of MN DOT District VI, it was noted the Cedar Street reconstruction project which had been slated to take place in 2024/2025 has been pushed down the list with an anticipated project date of 2027. Discussion has been taking place regarding the additional sanitary sewer work which will be coupled with the WWTP project. The City had Jefferson and Spruce Streets tentatively planned for upgrades however, with the State Cedar Street project on the horizon consideration was being given to whether that project could be substituted to meet criteria for affordability linked to grant funding.

Thesing noted the asphalt on the 400 block of Cedar appears to be sinking. In the event the Cedar Street project were completed the water would be upgraded. It was suggested due to the depth of the sanitary sewer sleeving the sewer would be effective and cost efficient. Dewatering to replace the sanitary sewer could cost up to \$300,000. This expense would be in addition to construction costs. Planning for sleeving the sewer would require televising the lines. Thesing reported on quotes received for this. This plan will be developed in greater detail as time passes.

**Native Plant Seed Proposals:** Dan Smith Jr was present to share a proposal whereby he would perform maintenance work on the native plantings in exchange for exclusive rights to harvest the seeds. Mathers expressed a desire to have a formal agreement prepared. Quantifying the arrangement will be challenging. Native seed collection requires special knowledge. Karla Bloem shared comments as to the needs of the native plantings, seed collection, cleaning, and sales. Jerry Mueller commented on chemical damage sustained by the native plantings as a result of drift from adjoining farmland. The City has a unique resource of native plants on the dike system. Mr. Mueller stated Council likely has several options however, council should be aware of a possible perception of favoritism. In the absence of an ordinance specifically prohibiting seed harvesting, it is likely the public may be able to harvest seed. He expressed an interest in participating in a bid process if one were to be established. It was noted current

options are likely leave things as is, pass an ordinance, collect the seeds using City staff or hire, put it out for bid. The Mayor noted the dike is technically under Army Corp of Engineers oversight which may limit the City's governing authority. Schultz expressed support for additional research to ensure the City is aware of obligations, limitations and options related to the native plantings in order to develop a plan for how to manage the native planting resource going forward. Discussion was held regarding the need for maintenance, value of the resource, potential for damage to the native plantings etc. Mathers there is a need to understand legal options. It was the consensus of the Council to allow collection of native plant seeds by those individuals who have approached the City due to the shelf life of the seeds. This will be for the current year. During the coming months additional research will be performed so that a plan can be developed, and the City can fully understand the process.

**CARES Act Funding Request:** Chris Cox, Ambulance Director, along with Anna Frauenkron presented a request for CARES Act Funding from the City. The first item requested was a power cot for the newer rig which has added structural support. Due to COVID, the ambulance has reduced staffing to mitigate possible exposure however, this increases the potential for back injury. It was noted the price of the power cot is at a 35% savings if CARES Act Funding is utilized for the purchase.

Ambulance representatives explained how current monitoring equipment has a cloth covering that they are unable to disinfect. They are hesitant to take the equipment into a scene where it could be contaminated. New equipment can be cleaned and disinfected and would provide greater continuity of care. It was noted refurbished equipment does not provide significant cost savings. Tri-State Ambulance operates the same equipment which would negate the need to have the patient have leads changed if a transfer took place further improving patient care. Frauenkron stated the monitors can be financed with payment taking place over a 3-year period. Would improve both exposure mitigation and continuity of care.

The other item for consideration is the purchase of Toughbook's for both ambulance rigs. The current laptops are not able to be sanitized. Recently crew members learned when they sanitize the computer equipment it renders the touchscreen unusable until the screens have air dries.

Discussion was held. Council clarified whether the items were presented in preference order. Representatives noted the cot and Zoll Monitors are the highest priority. The cot would mitigate staff injury potential.

Ambulance representatives reported another item on their "wish list" would be a Lucas device. This device would further limit potential exposure and improve patient care. The cost for a Lucas device is approximately \$16,000. It assists a caregiver with CPR.

Quinn provided overview of City CARES needs. Information was provided related to requests, funds already approved and spent, and approved items with cost estimates for council information in prioritizing how CARES funds are allocated.

**New Community Center Renovations:** Council clarified the City's obligations with regards to the New Community Center. The Mi Energy loan requires an essential city service be housed in the building. The city is obligated to the agreement it entered with Brickl for construction management services. Discussion was held regarding cash on hand which remains from various grants received for the benefit of the project, the current budget which would not support additional cash outlay, specific costs which are rising and will impact taxpayers and the city's option to bond for the project. Schultz stated there is a

need for a New Community Center and a desire to complete the project. Discussion was held. Motion by Schultz to adopt base plus option c and d failed for lack of a second.

Chief Hurley commented, in the event the garage is not installed Council will need to find a suitable location to store the squad when not in service.

Motion by Schultz, seconded by Mathers to adopt Resolution 2020-16 Establishing Procedures Relating to Compliance with Reimbursement Bond Regulations Under the Internal Revenue Code. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Schultz, seconded by Mathers to accept the apparent low bids for Base, Option A, Option B, and Option C. Motion carried unanimously.

**Elections Grant Funding:** Quinn reported the City is eligible to receive \$628.71 in COVID funding specifically for elections. This can be used to cover the cost for framework and cough curtains, face shields and supplies necessary to keep our polling experience safe and compliant with Health Department recommendations. Motion by Mathers, seconded by Schultz to adopt Resolution 2020-17 and approve the State of Minnesota, 2020 Cares Act Grant County – Municipality Agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

**Business Relief:** The Planning/EDA Board met on August 3, 2020 and has recommended utilizing the draft provided by Houston County for a business relief grant application and program. They recommend non -profits which are not affiliated with a religion and have a physical presence within the City of Houston be eligible. Schultz shared his experience and information from being a member of the County EDA Board. Discussion was held regarding how much Council will dedicate towards business relief and what the maximum grant amount should be. Motion was made by Schultz, seconded by Mathers to approve Cares Act Funding in the amount of \$10,000 be dedicated to business relief, to approve the City of Houston CARES Business Relief Grant Program Description and application, to establish a maximum grant amount being \$1,000, to authorize CEDA continue to administer the program and to authorize the Clerk/Administrator to work with CEDA to establish an application launch and grant deadline. Motion carried unanimously.

**Houston Nature Center Hours, Wood Duck Houses, COVID Safety Barrier and Firearm Season Campers:** Motion by Mathers, seconded by Schultz to approve memorandum dated August 11, 2020 as presented.

**Fireworks:** Leonard Olson expressed frustration with fireworks going off intermittently throughout the summer season. It is his understanding fireworks are illegal and legal fireworks launching requires an individual be properly licensed and permitted to be shooting them off. The fireworks agitate his dog. He stated while he enjoys organized fireworks displays, when Houston Hoedown has their fireworks display, he leaves town with his dog to prevent her from being stressed. With the intermittent launching of fireworks, he is unable to protect his dog from agitation. Chief Hurley commented how challenging it is to catch violators. He encouraged residents to make formal reports and to take photos of perpetrators if it is possible to do so safely. This will aid in apprehending offenders and provide evidence. He shared plans to utilize social media to promote good order reminders, rules, and regulations. He further indicated he may engage in some community policing tactics with individuals in hopes of reducing the intermittent fireworks launching. He reported on 3 calls which his office has received related to fireworks.

**Carport in alley at 512 Spruce Street West:** The carport has been relocated to an acceptable location which no longer interferes with the ability of the City to properly maintain the alley and sanitary sewer.

**Deceased tree located at 102 South Grant Street:** It was the consensus of Council that the Landowner failed to fully comply with the Order and City staff should continue with the process to enforce the order.

**Minutes & Bills:** Motion by Mathers, seconded by Schultz to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2020 meeting and bills. Motion carried unanimously.

**Department Reports:**

**Public Works:** Thesing noted discussion was held related to televising portions of the sanitary sewer. He reported the alley west of City Hall had been patched with hot mix. There is a problem area on Jefferson which they may perform a similar repair to. Department staff have been painting parking spaces and completed the crosswalks. Once the resolution to establish the one-way has been formally adopted there will be painting to complete related to that change. He has been contacted by the dealership to switch out the City pick-up for a newer model. He expects to do that tomorrow. Athletic Road is scheduled for paving at the same time as Lincoln. He provided an update related to water meter technology. Mowing has slowed so the temporary summer help is spraying gutter weeds and he continues to monitor dates when their temporary term is up.

**Finance:** Peterson provided an overview of a recently completed single federal audit. This was completed on money received for the WTP and Semcac Housing project. The City is a pass-through agency for the Semcac Housing project.

**Clerk/Administrator:** See update which is on file.

**Mathers:** Councilperson Mathers reported there has been a leadership change on the Friends of the Nature Center Board. Brian Lee is the new president for that organization. Mathers expressed a desire to clarify his role as liaison between Council and the Friends. He expressed when asked to render a decision he uses a litmus test whereby he questions, will it cost money, does it result in liability. It was the consensus of the Board that Councilperson Mathers has a sound understanding of his role as liaison.

Anna Frauenkron was pleased to report the recent H.O.G. Benefit Ride resulted in the group raising and donating approximately \$2,500 to the Houston Ambulance. The ride took place on Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjourn:** Motion by Schultz, seconded by Mathers to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.