

**CITY OF RHINELANDER COMMON COUNCIL
MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2011 - 5:00-7:40 P.M.**

City Hall Council Chambers
135 S. Stevens St., Rhinelander, WI

CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Rhinelander was called to order by Mayor Johns at 5:00 p.m. Proper notification was given to the press and the public.

ROLL CALL

The following Alderpersons were present: Belliveau, Freudenberg, Gleason (5:50 pm), Kelly, Paszak, Pelletier, Salzer and Young.

Others present: Mayor Dick Johns, Golf Course Superintendent Joe Andersen, City Administrator Bill Bell, Public Works Director Randy Knuth, Finance Director Julie Ostrander, Parks, Buildings & Grounds Director Gunder Paulsen, Police Chief Mike Steffes, Craig Strid and Fire Chief Terry Williams.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss/Approve Revision of Office Assistant Job Description

- (A) MOTION BY PASZAK, SECOND BY YOUNG, TO APPROVE REVISION OF OFFICE ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION. 7 AYE, 0 NAY, 1 ABSENT (GLEASON); MOTION CARRIED.

Discuss/Approve Cost Savings Measures Pertaining to the 2012 City Budget

- (B) The Council reviewed the list of cost savings ideas that came out of last fall's brainstorming sessions. After reviewing all items, the Council agreed that Administrator Bell should begin working on the following items, to bring more information to the next meeting:
- Employee incentive program.
 - RFP for vehicle maintenance.
 - RFP for janitorial work and/or plan for absorbing those duties with existing staff.
 - Automating City Hall with credit cards.
 - Information addressing the Mayor's request for numbers on union settlements and other costs that are already set for 2012 and subsequent years.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND FUTURE AGENDA REQUESTS

The second Special Council budget planning session is set for Monday, May 16, 2011, from 5:00-7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALD. PASZAK, SECOND BY ALD. KELLY, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 18, 2011 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING AT 7:40 P.M.

Approved by

Received by

(A) Discuss/Approve Revision of Office Assistant Job Description

City Administrator Bill Bell noted that this position was created last year, and is held by Jacquelyn Morrill. As part of the consolidation of the Animal Shelter with the Parks and Cemetery, we started splitting Morrill's time, mornings at City Hall and afternoons at the Animal Shelter. Bell stated that it's in the best interests of Animal Shelter operations to have a full-time employee there. He also noted that it was previously decided there's no need for a receptionist at City Hall. Effective in May, he would like to revise the job description to provide for Morrill to work full time at the Animal Shelter. He stated that continuity in the paperwork at the Shelter is a problem, and one person in that role during operating hours will streamline the process and make it much more efficient. If the Council is in favor of the concept, Bell will redraft the job description and meet with Local 178, then bring it back to Finance and Council for final approval.

Belliveau asked if there will be any additional cost to the City; Bell stated there will not, as Morrill is already a full time employee on the overall budget. Animal Shelter salaries will increase, but City Hall salaries will decrease by the same amount.

Paszak stated that Gunder Paulsen was added and now a second employee is being added; two people are being used to replace the one who retired. Pelletier noted that Morrill is already part time at the Animal Shelter, and part time at City Hall; we'll shift her full time to the Shelter, and reduce other staff hours at the Animal Shelter, so there's no increased hours or cost.

Belliveau noted that it's important to remember that Paulsen isn't assigned full time to the Animal Shelter; he also takes care of the Parks and the Cemetery, so he can't be at the Shelter all day, every day, as the previous director was.

Salzer asked what kind of work Morrill is doing at City Hall now. Mary Richardson stated that Morrill answers the phones and waits on the public; when she's not there, Richardson and Deputy Clerk Val Foley absorb those duties. She noted that this will impact her office, and with only two people, there will be times when the office has to close.

Belliveau stated that she's seen this kind of shuffling before, and doesn't want to see a request coming back in 6 months, asking for additional personnel in the City Clerk's office.

Freudenberg asked about the phone system. Bell stated that we will be switching the automated system to work more efficiently without a live receptionist, to direct callers to the correct department automatically, and minimize the phone traffic going into the Clerk's office.

(B) Discuss/Approve Cost Savings Measures Pertaining to the 2012 City Budget

The Council reviewed the list of cost savings ideas that came out of last fall's brainstorming sessions:

- *Mileage and encouraging rental car use.* The Mayor noted that if you're taking a one-day trip to Madison, your mileage would be \$200, while a rental care is \$40 plus gas. However, it gets less cost-effective the more days involved. Also, some Departments use City vehicles.
- *Central Purchasing with County.* Bell stated that we've had a lot of discussions as to how this would work.
- *Central Janitorial Supply.* This has already been implemented.
- *Central Linen Supply.* This has already been implemented.
- *Contract RFP for Vehicle Maintenance Contracts, City-Wide:* Bell would like to issue one RFP for maintenance and a separate one for oil changes. Paszak asked if it would it be possible for City mechanics to do the work;

Randy Knuth stated that they have in the past, but they don't have the equipment necessary to test all of the newer electronic equipment and systems.

- *Furlough Days.* The Mayor noted that this was discussed last year, and the consensus was that it doesn't work. Bell stated that he's totally against it, due to the need for our emergency service personnel to remain on duty, and also because if department heads come in to work on a furlough day, we will be required by law to pay them OT.
- *Cut travel and training.* Pelletier stated he's noticed this being cut over the past few years, and he thinks the department heads are doing a good job of keeping training in-house, or at least local. Salzer noted that training is how our employees become proficient in the services we provide; we just need to be judicious about how those funds are spent.
- *Parks/Golf Consolidation.* Bell noted that instead of Parks/Golf, we consolidated the Animal Shelter with the Parks Department.
- *Contract Janitorial Work at All Buildings.* Belliveau asked if this is something we'd issue RFPs for, or go directly to someone. Bell stated there are some options: one idea is having existing staff pick up these duties; another is utilizing Headwaters, or Forward Service. Craig Strid stated that if Victory Janitorial is being considered, we may want to talk to the School District regarding their performance.
- *Separate RFPs for City Legal and City Prosecution Duties.* Bell noted when this was first discussed last fall, he met with the City Attorney and learned that the going rate for court is less than what we're paying him, but the other legal work he does for us could be much higher. He feels it wouldn't hurt to do the RFPs.
- *Paperless City Hall.* Bell stated that he and the City Clerk have discussed this, and while it would be great, it's impossible to go completely paperless. We have been taking steps to reduce paper as much as possible and will continue to do so.
- *Increase Administrative Fees to the Enterprise Funds.* Bell stated that he's not in favor of this, mainly because an automatic inflationary increase is already built in each year. Young stated he doesn't want to get to where we're collecting more than is equitable with respect to the work we're doing.
- *Automated City Hall services, payments, etc.* Belliveau noted that we've brought this up in the past; everybody takes credit cards now, and we need to get some solid numbers on this. Kelly stated the credit card companies charge thousands in fees. Richardson stated there are processors that will charge the fees to the users, rather than to the City. Andersen noted that some companies charge a percentage, while others are a flat charge per transaction. He noted that in 2009, the Golf Course took in \$620,000, mainly in credit card sales, and paid only \$12,000 in fees. Kelly stated his concern is, if we do this and then find out it isn't cost effective, how could we get out of it. Bell will research this issue.
- *Contract Public Works services.* Pelletier stated that he doesn't see how that could work. He sees that these guys go above and beyond; if we have to call people when trees are blowing down or there's flooding, etc., we won't get that kind of service from a contractor. Salzer agreed that we wouldn't want to outsource the whole Department, but asked if there's anything they're doing that could be outsourced to save money. Pelletier

stated if we lay people off, then we won't have enough manpower to handle snow removal and other large jobs. Belliveau asked if we would be required to pay prevailing wage rates; Bell stated maybe.

Randy Knuth stated that when he started with the City, there were about 30 Public Works employees; we now have only 16. He noted that contractors aren't afraid to take shortcuts; if you don't have somebody supervising them, there's a good chance they'll shortchange us. Knuth stated that a couple of years ago, he talked to the Street Superintendent in Ashland; they had gone with a private contractor for plowing, but found it wasn't cost effective because so much damage was done to curbs, islands, etc.

Paszak stated that he thinks Public Works is doing a heck of a job, but he would like to see overtime cut in all departments. Knuth noted that his overtime is usually accrued during the winter due to snow and ice; in summer, he has paving crews who come in early to work downtown and in other heavy traffic areas. He stated that you really can't get away with no overtime. Knuth noted that if the crew comes in at 3:00 a.m., he sends them home at noon; he keeps the overtime to an absolute minimum.

Paulsen noted that Public Works has been very generous to the Parks Department, helping out with projects and providing mechanics; this is not only a savings to the Parks Department, but it's a great convenience and things get done timely, as they're very accommodating. The Mayor stated that the cooperation among departments has been very good and they all need to be complimented for that.

- Freudenberg asked about the possibility of issuing payroll stubs via email, rather than hard copies. Julie Ostrander stated that our current software doesn't support it, but the scheduled upgrades might allow this.
- The Mayor stated that for the next meeting, he'd like to see the numbers on what the union settlements will cost us for 2012 and 2013. He also noted that fuel budgets will have to be increased.
- *Increase \$240/mo payment in lieu of health insurance to encourage getting off our plan.* Pelletier stated that he has discussed this with Julie Ostrander. Terry Williams stated that he has employees whose spouses have policies similar to ours in terms of benefits, and they choose to go on their spouses' plans to get the \$240/month; it costs about \$19,000 for a family policy, so this definitely saves us money. Freudenberg asked what the H.S.A. cost us. Bell noted that it depends on the number of single and family policies; however, we were looking at a 16% increase to our health insurance; by going with a high deductible plan, even with the H.S.A., we reduced that significantly. Freudenberg asked about the employee contribution to insurance premiums, stating that 20% is the norm. Bell disagreed, stating that in the public sector, 10% is average, which is where we're at.
- *Maintain parttime staff under 599 hours/year.* Belliveau feels this needs to be reiterated with the time coming for hiring of seasonal staff. Bell advised that we just went through the advertising and hiring for seasonal positions, and this was discussed with each department head.
- *Storm Water Utility.* The Planning Commission has begun working on this.
- *HVAC/Energy Efficiency Check.* Bell stated that we've done this for City Hall, but it needs to be done at our other buildings.
- *Auto sensors for fans/lights.* Bell noted that as part of the City Hall renovations, we'll be installing auto sensors in the upstairs restroom for lights and fan; this has already been done in the main floor restrooms. He stated that we really want to look at our garage lighting.

- *Bargain with unions for lower H.S.A. contributions/health insurance.* This was already discussed as part of a previous item.
- *Discontinue WiFi in City Parks.* Bell noted that we have a contract with Frontier, and are locked in until November.
- *Cut employee memberships in civic community organizations.* Bell feels it's important for City officials to be involved in community organizations. He noted that previously, he, Mike Steffes and Terry Williams were all members of Rotary. Williams has withdrawn his membership. When Bell's term is up, he'll be looking at joining a different organization. Steffes will stay in Rotary. Belliveau stated that was her concern; if we're paying for multiple memberships, she'd like them to be spread around.
- *Employee ideas incentive cost savings proposals.* Bell is working on the employee recognition and rewards program previously brought forward by Alex Young.
- *Schedule all committee meetings during operating hours before 4:30 p.m.* Belliveau stated that we need to have meetings at times when citizens and constituents can attend, which means evening meetings. Bell noted this was on the list to save money on secretarial overtime, which we've accomplished by having the City Clerk's office take all minutes.
- *Have City Clerk do all minutes city wide.* This has been implemented.
- *Cut Clerk's office assistant position to 20 hrs/wk or eliminate completely.* As discussed earlier tonight, this position is being changed to full time at the Animal Shelter.
- *Cut down garbage service.* Knuth stated that we pay a very low monthly fee, but that doesn't mean we can't eliminate it from our budget and contract for the public at the cheapest rate. He has some numbers, and can bring this to a future meeting. Salzer stated there's a lot to keep in mind, such as aesthetics, property values, and health and safety issues. He noted that we don't necessarily need to consider this as a way to cut costs; we can also look at it to see if our residents getting the best bang for their buck.
- *Establish municipal court.* Bell noted that we looked at this last fall, and the numbers didn't work. Steffes stated that he has a meeting on May 10th with Eagle River, Minocqua and Crandon to see if there's something we can do collaboratively.
- *Reduction of City Hall operating hours.* This was discussed last fall, and the consensus was not to pursue it.
- *Better utilization of room tax funds.* Bell noted that we previously discussed the use of room tax funds to offset expenses in the parks. Belliveau noted we talked about covering more operations, and less advertising. Joe Andersen stated that we've somewhat done that; Golf Course advertising was cut by 25%, and is now \$9,000 from room tax instead of \$12,000. Pelletier noted that room tax numbers were up for the last 12 months. Paulsen stated that we used to get quite a bit done with room tax funds; for instance, the Pioneer Park museum was funded almost completely with room tax, and now, quite a bit of money from the Parks budget goes into the museum.

- *Create street light utility.* Bell stated that although he hasn't looked into this yet, he knows that Rice Lake has a street light utility. He would rather concentrate on the storm water utility at this time.
- *Increase fee structure.* Young noted that we've already done this. Williams stated that he will be asking to increase the fees we charge for inspections in the townships. He noted that there are townships we do that are very large and far flung, and with increased fuel costs, we need to look at this or we may reach the point where we can't afford it.
- *Employee suggestion boxes around City (with name required).* Bell stated this is a good idea. Young noted that it can be tied in with the employee recognition and rewards program.
- *Contract payroll services.* Bell stated that when we looked at this, we learned we'd still have to do a lot of the leg work in-house, so this wasn't a cost-effective option. He noted that instead, we created the part-time Payroll Specialist position.
- *Establish a shooting range with Oneida County.* Steffes stated that we haven't done anything because there has also been discussion of selling the property. He noted that we currently pay \$35 per officer, per year; if we close the range for just ourselves for a full day, it's \$300. Bell noted that when we first talked about this, it wasn't so much to cut costs as it was to generate revenue.
- *Sell 40-acre property on South 17.* This property may be needed.
- *Streamline committees.* Freudenberg noted that we've already done some of this; for instance, PPP used to have two meetings per month, and now has only one. Young noted that all of our meetings run pretty long, and questioned whether we would really be willing to double up. Belliveau stated that was one of the concerns; everyone knows when you're here for 3 hours or so, you stop being able to absorb. Bell noted that one possibility would be combining Water/Wastewater with Public Works.
- *RFP audit.* This has already been done.
- *RFP IT services.* This has been done.
- *More efficient/greener practices.* Belliveau stated that she would like to see recycling bins in the Council Chambers and other areas.
- *Ordinance for idling limit of City vehicles.* Bell stated that he's not sure this would be practical, noting that we can't have police officers taking time to scrape their windows before responding to a call. Gleason stated that starting and stopping when it's cold outside is not good for the vehicle.
- *RFP for internet services.* Bell and Young will work on this.
- *RFP for cell phone services.* Bell and Young will work on this.
- *Reevaluate job duties for function/ability.* Bell stated that this is ongoing, and as we replace people, we're updating job descriptions.

- *Research web hosting services.* Bell will look at this.
- *Cut cost of elections.* Richardson stated this is practically impossible, as the State continues to implement new requirements. She noted that the poll workers have asked that a pay increase be considered.
- *Cut Mayor's insurance by half.* The current Mayor doesn't need the City's health insurance, so he is receiving the \$240/month payment in lieu of insurance.
- *Not replacing the Water/Wastewater Superintendent upon retirement.* Bell noted that we've already hired a new Superintendent; however, we will look at this when preparing for Randy Knuth's retirement, as the new Water/Wastewater Superintendent is a civil engineer.
- *Evaluate/eliminate Animal Shelter upon Karen Hess' retirement.* Bell stated that the Animal Shelter is a work in progress with the new advisory committee. Paulsen stated that he's come to see that the Animal Shelter is a necessary entity, and he doesn't see how it could ever be eliminated. Paszak stated we need to look at this because the City takes care of 100% of the County, but the County is paying nothing. Bell stated that the Mayor has been working on this, and with the advisory committee, this will continue to be evaluated.
- *Public safety fees based on square footage.* Williams stated that some communities do this only for new construction, and earmark the funds for public safety equipment. This will be researched further.

The Council agreed that Administrator Bell should begin working on the following items, to bring more information to the next meeting:

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