



City of Muscatine

MINUTES

Saturday, February 10, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bark called the City Council meeting for February 10, 2024 to order at 08:00 AM.

2. ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Present: Brockert, Lewis, Conard, Gordon, Conard, and Osborn.
Councilmembers Absent: Lampe.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Iowa Legislatures
 - Community Development
 - Housing
 - Airport/Airport Subsidy
 - Transit
 - Parking
 - Refuse Collection
 - Landfill
 - Transfer Station
 - WPCP
 - Storm Water

Iowa Legislatures:

Representative Mark Cisneros was present to answer questions from City Council regarding legislative items.

Councilmember Brockert had questions regarding a new library bill that was being considered. Mr. Cisneros stated this is due to recent inappropriate actions in public libraries.

Councilmember Brockert also had questions about the tax rollback and how it is causing cities to struggle financially. Mr. Cisneros stated that Representative Kauffman was working on the tax issues and possibility of elimination of Iowa State Taxes.

Councilmember Brockert had questions regarding the state getting medicaid payments to providers in a timely manner and what legislation is doing to address mental health issues.

Mr. Cisneros stated they are conducting research on available spaces for mental

health and are proposing allowing private ambulance transports for mental health patients. He stated they are also looking into mental health telehealth appointments to reduce transporting of the patients more than necessary to save cost.

Councilmember Brockert asked about nursing home inspections and the issues that are arising in nursing homes.

Mr. Cisneros stated they plan to hire more nursing home inspectors and offer help to facilities to get them into compliance. He stated there is also talk regarding allowing families to install cameras in patient rooms at nursing homes.

Councilmember Gordon and Councilmember Osborne stated they are opposed to the proposed Library bill.

Councilmember Lewis had questions regarding access to mental health care and the lack of providers. She stated there needs to be some assistance and incentive to encourage citizens to go into those fields. Ms. Lewis stated she did not approve of having mental health counselors on calls with police officers. She feels that this puts the counselor and officer at a greater risk.

There was discussion regarding requirement of all EMS stations to have paramedics, the low rate of doctors due to the burden of regulations that must be addressed prior to seeing and helping the patient, and putting social workers in Public Safety Offices.

Mayor Bark stated that with the growth limitations and rollback there needs to be incentives to promote growth within small towns.

Community Development

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Community Development Budget.

Community Development Director Jodi Royal-Goodwin addressed council regarding their decision to discuss separating the Community Development Department from the Housing Department. Ms. Royal-Goodwin shared information on why the two departments should be left together as many of the parts of the departments are intertwined together. Ms. Royal Goodwin shared information on things that the departments have accomplished since she has take over both departments to include the wearing of body cameras by the inspectors, update to inspection processes and the use of a grant writer for applying for grants.

Councilmember Brockert stated the council recommendation did not come from Ms. Royal-Goodwins lack of ability but that they don't want her to get burned out working both departments. Ms. Royal-Goodwin stated she is working on succession training of others in the office.

Councilmembers had questions regarding the effects of not managing Hershey Manor will have on the Departments. Ms. Royal-Goodwin stated it would not affect her much but it would others in the department.

Councilmember Gordon stated the request to separate the departments was not geared toward Ms. Royal-Goodwin but more to address customer service complaints.

Councilmember Lewis called a point of order stating the discussion regarding policies needed to be discussed at a future in depth and that the council needed to stick with budget items as listed on agenda.

Muscatine Legal Services (Outside Agency)

Attorney Jean Pfieffer and Daniel Hardin were present to share with City Council a request to help with funding of Muscatine Legal Services. Mr. Hardin stated they were asking for \$200 per Order of Protection issued to a city of Muscatine Resident to help cover cos.

Mr. Hardin stated that without Muscatine Legal Services our residents would have to use Iowa Legal Aid that covers seven counties in Iowa.

Councilmember Jindrich had questions regarding how much support is giving by Muscatine County. Mr. Hardin stated they get \$45,000 from the county and that the county has offered to match up to \$20,000 for new funding.

Councilmembers stated they would want reports sent monthly or quarterly of how the dollars were spent.

Ms. Webb stated it would have to be proposed as an amount not to exceed, it could not be set as a per incident amount.

Transit

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Transit Budget. Amy Fortenbacher, stated acquiring vehicles is still an issue and stated there is an opportunity to purchase two buses that were ordered by another company that is not going to use them. Ms Fortenbacher stated they are looking ways to fund the new buses including grant options.

Ms. Fortenbacher stated the WashBay Project is moving along and should be constructed in the spring and be operational in the fall of 2024.

Council had questions regarding free bus passes issued that were addressed by Ms. Fortenbacher. She stated the City does not give out free passes however some organizations will buy passes and pass them out to their clients.

Councilmember Jindrich had questions regarding the Route Tracking Software that were addressed by Ms. Fortenbacher. She stated the software would allow residents to use an app to see where the buses were at and would also keep track of information required by the FTA eliminating the paper processes.

Councilmember Jindrich stated he did not feel it was necessary to have software to direct drivers of the routes for passenger pickup.

Councilmember Gordon had questions regarding the condition of the bus shelters and how they are maintained.

Ms. Fortenbacher stated they are checked regularly for damages and they are deep cleaned by building and grounds a couple of times per year.

Councilmember Conard had questions about the feasibility of leasing buses if needed. Ms. Fortenbacher stated they had not done that in the past but it could be looked into.

Public Works Director Brian Stineman stated they had a third party inspector coming to inspect the buses to ensure they are safe for use.

Airport

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed budget for the Airport.

Public Works Director Brian Stineman stated the the management of the Airport Commission was transferred in July from the Community Development Director to the Public Works Director.

Mr. Stineman states the staff at the Airport does a great job of self sustaining operations.

Mr. Stineman stated that Bolten & Menk are designing the updated lighting and fuel projects and that the Police Department is working on a proposed shooting/training facility to be located on the airport property.

There were questions from City Council regarding the shooting range affecting the solar field and hangar expansion that were addressed by Mr. Stineman.

Council asked when was the last renewal for the airport farmland that was addressed by Ms. Lueck by stating it is a yearly contract.

Parking

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed budget for the Parking Dept.

Ms. Lueck stated the meter attendants have started wearing body cams which has created a reduction in customer complaints.

Mayor Bark stated that parking meters are unwelcoming to guest and the ones we currently have are falling apart and not working. He stated he would like to get rid of meters and make two hour parking in all of downtown.

Ms. Lueck stated without the meters the City would not be able to fund the parking enforcement.

There was discussion regarding the possibility of a new metering system for the downtown area that would include the use of credit cards/cash and or a phone app.

Ms. Lueck stated there is funding available for meter upgrades but more study and evaluation would need to be done prior to upgrading.

Refuse Collection

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Refuse Collection budget.

Ms. Lueck Lueck shared the current rates and the proposed rate increases in refuse collection.

Public Works Director Stineman stated keeping the trucks running and in good condition is the most critical issue for this department. He states these trucks get put through the ringer on their day to day routes. He states getting new trucks is also an issue as there is a two year lead time for getting trucks delivered.

Solid Waste Manager Dave Popp stated the goal is to keep all of the same model of trucks for the ease of maintenance repairs and storing of parts.

Mr. Popp stated recycling has been tough with the contracted services and they have been meeting to develop ways of improving this service.

Mr. Popp stated the change from yard waste bags to snickered bags has been implemented and seems to be going well, as well as the new bulky waste pick up.

There was discussion regarding the clean up at the Compost site and the availability of free compost and fire wood for residents.

There was discussion regarding the proposed software purchase that would work with the garbage trucks to track trash pick up as well as take pictures of locations where cans were not out when trucks came. Councilmember Jindrich stated he does not support this purchase. Mr. Popp stated they are working on a grant that would cover some of the funding and there would be a cost savings in discontinuing the current software being used.

Nancy Lueck reviewed the Refuse Collection Fund Statement.

Transfer Station

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Transfer Station budget.

Public Works Director Brian Stineman and Solid Waste Manager Dave Popp were present to share accomplishments and future plans and to answer any questions from City Council.

Landfill

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Landfill Budget.

Public Works Director Brian Stineman and Solid Waste Manager Dave Popp were present to share accomplishments and future plans and to answer any questions from City Council.

Water Pollution Control Plant

Finance Director Nancy Lueck gave an overview of the proposed Water Pollution Control Plant Budget.

WPCP Director Jon Koch shared information regarding the three section of this department including Water Resource and Recovery Facility, Organic Recycling Center and Stormwater.

Mr. Koch stated a new maintenance manager was hired and that he is a licensed electrician which is a huge asset to the department.
Nancy Lueck reviewed the Water Pollution Control Plan Fund Statement.

Housing

Community Development Director, Jodi Royal-Goodwin, gave an overview of the different housing programs being managed by the Housing Dept. Ms. Royal-Goodwin stated as of July 1, 2024 the housing department would no longer be managing Hershey Manor.

There were questions from City Council regarding a waiting list for Section 8. Housing Programs Supervisor Melissa Rinnert stated there is always a waiting list for Section 8. She stated that HUD allows for 380 vouchers.

Ms. Royal Goodwin stated the housing counseling program continues monthly classes and recently added a spanish class.

City Council had questions regarding how the Hershey turnover would affect the residents.

Mr. Royal-Goodwin stated that would depend on the new management.

There was discussion regarding maintenance issues at the housing sites to include elevator replacement at Clark House, replacement of heating units and settling of buildings at Sunset.

Finance Director Nancy Lueck reviewed the fund balances for all housing programs to include Family Self Sufficiency, Public Housing, Voucher Program, Family Self Sufficiency, Home Ownership Program and the remaining funds in the suspended after school program. Ms. Lueck states the remaining funds in the afterschool program can be allocated to another housing program.

Ms. Lueck gave a review of the fund balance of a new program for Lead Hazard Reduction. This program uses HUD settlement funds to match a grant received for this program. Ms. Lueck stated that property owners will not be required to cost share but landlords will have to pay a portion of the lead reduction process.

City Administrator Webb stated that was the end of the General Fund and asked that council let her know what items they would like discussed in more detail prior to final decisions on the budget.

Councilmember Osborne proposed cutting an additional \$75,000 from the City budget in order to not have to raise taxes. Ms. Webb stated she could look at recommendations and bring back to the next budget session. She stated all departments had submitted a 1-3-5 % reduction plan in their budget documents.

Councilmember Lewis asked that Ms. Webb come back with a \$75,000 reduction as she does not want to raise taxes. Ms. Webb stated she will look at reductions in accordance with what City Councils goals were.

Ms. Webb stated she would recommend not funding any additional sources not

already funded by the City to start with and Councilmember Gordon stated that would mean not funding Legal Services.

Councilmember Gordon suggested cuts to the asset management program for Public Works.

Councilmember Osborne stated outside agency contracts should remain flat at this time.

Councilmember Lewis stated she would like to have a review of all outside agencies individually and discuss in further detail.

Councilmember Osborne motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:30

4. ADJOURNMENT