

**MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON  
JANUARY 3, 2013, 4:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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Mayor Jeremy Riddle called the meeting to order. Council members present were, Dick Dobson, Thom Walker, Paul Whitcomb and Victoria Hallin. Staff present was Administrator Mark Karnowski, Finance Director Steve Jackson, Community Development Director Carie Fuhrman, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Brian Payne, Fire Chief Jim Roxbury, Attorney Dick Schieffer and City Clerk Shawna Jenkins.

**Jim Sinkel Promotion**

Gerold stated that he is requesting approval to promote Jim Sinkel to full time as discussed at the Budget meeting. The other Part Time employee he was looking at moving to Full Time has yet to finish some licensing requirements.

DOBSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE PROMOTING JIM SINKEL FROM PART TIME TO FULL TIME EFFECTIVE JANUARY 7, 2013. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**2013 Council Priorities**

Karnowski said the following is a composite list of issues the Council may want to prioritize for 2013. Significant progress has been made regarding the 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue extension, civic center improvements and the Public Safety Building project – but they're still on the list. The Council can also add projects that are not already on the list. He asked the Council to take some time prior to the February Study session to rate each as Highest Priority, High Priority, Medium Priority, Low Priority and very low priority. At the February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting the Council can discuss the priorities and, hopefully, arrive at some consensus.

Several Council Members have turned in their worksheets already, so staff will review each and put together a list for an upcoming meeting. The new council member that is appointed will also be asked to fill out their priorities for 2013.

1. Extend 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. south to Industrial Park
2. Clear up "Through the Fence" (Kruse's bldg) problem at Airport
3. Update Emergency Warning System – Add new siren to west end of city.
4. Public Safety Building
5. Orderly Annexation Agreement w/Baldwin Twsp
6. Downtown Redevelopment
7. Clear Rum River for canoeing
8. Trail System development
9. Riverside Park Improvements
10. Remodel Civic Center
11. Inflow and Infiltration Study
12. 13<sup>th</sup> Ave/TH95 intersection
13. Extend sidewalk from downtown to Coborn's'
14. Extend bike path Northland Blvd south along Rum River Dr. to water plant.
15. 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge across Rum River.
16. Riverside Park Amphitheater
17. Co-locate City Hall w/PUC
  
18. Merge PUC & Public Works field staffs

19. Housing Study
20. Extend Rum River Dr. west past airport
21. Cross Wind Runway
22. Extension of Main Airport Runway
23. Study expansion of Industrial Park land
24. Strategic Community Marketing Plan (Tourists, business, Commercial & residential)
25. Market & sale of Aero Business Park
26. West Branch Street water looping (use TIF funds?)

### **Airport Re-Hab Pay Estimate #2**

Karnowski said this pay estimate for the Airport work this summer got lost in the shuffle. The City is responsible for 10% which is \$22,310.66 of this pay estimate #2.

HALLIN MOTIONED TO APPROVE AIRPORT RE-HAB PAY ESTIMATE #2 for \$22,310.66. WHITCOME SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

### **Employee Benefits**

Karnowski reported that city does not yet have the final signed contracts back, but next week is the first payroll for 2013 and it would work best if the Council approved the proposed union settlements for 2013 pending the return of the signed contracts.

Karnowski added that generally, in the past, the city has incurred an increase in cost as the cost of the city's health insurance benefit increased. Except for a few recent years, the city has absorbed most of that additional cost in addition to giving the employees a reasonable cost of living increase.

Karnowski stated that the health insurance increase was 19% for 2013. With that sizable increase, staff has been negotiating a total benefit increase rather than split the city's cost between insurance and wages.

He said the city's two unions have taken two different approaches to arriving at an agreement.

The **LELS** (Law Enforcement Labor Services) members in the Police Department have agreed to a 2% cost of living adjustment (COLA) to take effect on January 1, 2013, plus a 1.5% COLA increase that would be effective July 1, 2013. The city's contribution to health insurance would stay the same as it was in 2012. In addition, the 40 hour mandatory furlough is reduced to a 20 hour mandatory furlough. Further, LELS members would also be able to take a 20 hour unpaid furlough prior to the end of 2013. Depending on how many (if any) members take advantage of that provision, there could be cost savings to the city.

As noted above, the **AFSCME** (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) took a different approach. Rather than reduce the furlough time or have the city kick in additional money toward health insurance, the AFSCME union requested that the entire 4% increase be reflected as a wage increase. Those employees will then be responsible for paying the increase in the health insurance premium. It should be noted that

the city not only offered the same insurance program as last year but also offered a less expensive HSA package (with different benefits) as a second option to all employees.

In addition, the AFSCME Union would get the following other contract adjustments:

1. Clarifying language adjustment in the language covering AFSCME employees who are also firefighters on how their overtime wages will be calculated.
2. The contract now includes definitions for both work week and work day.
3. Clarifying language for employees scheduled to work weekends and/or holidays
4. A provision in the Funeral Leave section of the contract specifying that employees who attend the funeral for Grandparents-in-law will get 1 day of paid funeral leave.
5. Clarifying language that the city will pay the cost for required licenses and the necessary training required to obtain those licenses.
6. There are "re-openers" for both insurance and wages for 2014 and 2015.

The supervisory staff (not union) would get the same 4% COLA and be responsible for additional insurance costs.

Karnowski stated that staff is requesting that the Council approve the above changes contingent upon receipt of signed contracts from each union in addition to the supervisory adjustments as well.

Karnowski added that he has emails from both Unions stating they approve this verbiage, the contracts just need to be signed.

Hallin asked if the 4% increase is standard with other Cities and Unions. Karnowski replied that in the past the smaller increase was just for wages and the benefit increases were not included, so it is pretty standard if you take into consideration the health insurance. However, with the large increase in health insurance some employees will actually be taking home less money even with the 4% increase.

Karnowski added that a pay study was done a few years ago and when comparing cities of our size and in the same situation, Princeton had the lowest pay. Up until 5 years ago the City was trying to slowly increase those wages, but that ceased when the LGA was cut.

Whitcomb asked if the policy regarding the Supervisors Health Insurance benefits will be changed in the Personnel Policy as well. Karnowski replied that it will be amended to reflect the changes

WALKER MOTIONED TO APPROVE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND INCREASE OF 4% AS REQUESTED BY BOTH UNIONS. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

### **Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District**

Fuhrman said Sherburne County Soil and Water district has invited the City to join a Forestry Group to develop an Emerald Ash Border preparedness plan for each community.

Gerold said he is happy to let them take the lead on this. It is not an "if" it hits the community; it is a "when" so it will be beneficial if we are prepared.

Fuhrman verified that there is no cost to the City. They also said they would assist in inventorying the trees in the Mille Lacs section of the City as well as the areas in Sherburne. Gerold said he believes the last tree survey done was a couple years ago.

Hallin asked if volunteers are needed. Gerold said they usually go through groups like the Lion's Club when looking for volunteers.

HALLIN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO BE SIGNED WITH THE SHERBURNE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT. WHITCOMB SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**Mayor Jeremy Riddle Recognition**

Newly Elected Mayor Paul Whitcomb provided a certificate of appreciation to mayor Riddle and the Council thanked him for the 6 years of service to the City of Princeton.

Riddle stated he would like to stay on the Public Safety Building committee if the Council is okay with that.

The Council was in favor of Riddle staying on the Public Safety Building Committee.

**ADJOURN**

DOBSON MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:00. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawna Jenkins

ATTEST:

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Jeremy Riddle, Mayor