

**MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON DECEMBER 3, 2015 4:30 P.M.**

Mayor Paul Whitcomb called the meeting to order. Council members present were, Thom Walker and Dick Dobson. Staff present, Administrator Mark Karnowski, Finance Director Steve Jackson, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Todd Frederick, Fire Chief Jim Roxbury, Community Development Director Jolene Foss, Clerk Shawna Jenkins, Engineer Mike Nielson, and Attorney Damien Toven. Absent was Jules Zimmer and Victoria Hallin

Engineer Interviews

WSB Presentation

WSB has been the City's engineering firm since 2002. They propose that Jeff Row would be the City's primary Engineer, with Mike Nielson being a secondary and resource for Row. Andy Brotlzer would be a second set of eyes and a Client Liaison. Tim Korby with Donahue and Associates would be a Wastewater Specialist.

They have worked on some large projects while working with the City. They are not ignoring the fact that there have been some issues in some of the projects, but they did have some favorable outcomes and they have been working on improving on those areas. They pride themselves on having great communication with the residents. Brotlzer added that their municipal group has specialists in city engineering and 19 support staff. Princeton is close to the State Aid population requirement and they have a specialist that deals with state aid cities and their projects that would be a great asset when the city reaches that population.

Korby reported that Donahue specializes in wastewater and water, having worked for quite a few cities here in MN and several outside the state. He added that they also could assist in an energy audit, to see if energy usage could be cut in the plant. He stated he also has a lot of experience in grants. There will be excess funds available and he would like to assist in getting some funding for the city.

WSB Interview

Karnowski asked if Princeton is the only city assigned to Row, would they be the sole funding source for Mr. Row's salary. Nielson responded that Row will be working on other projects, but in a support capacity. Princeton will be his only city that he is working with as a primary engineer. Row also bills at a lower rate than Nielson does, so he suspects the billing may be slightly lower than it currently is.

Walker asked Row what he thought about Assessment Hearings. Row replied that he has gone through the process a few times. Nielson added that he has agreed to help on the first 2 assessment hearings that will be held in the spring.

Wangen asked Row what he felt is his single best technical skill or ability is. Row responded that he has a lot of experience in construction, which helps him be a better designer. You also have to have good balance to keep the contractor, City and residents all happy

Whitcomb asked why they feel WSB is the best firm. Brotlzer replied that from their perspective, they are very good at it at what they do, and currently do work for 35 cities. Their engineer focus group that meets quarterly, benefits them as well as their clients. They can tap into the expertise of each community, is a great resource, and allows potential issues to be seen prior to them occurring. Nielson added that throughout their history with the City, they have also looked for solutions that are not always standard.

Walker asked Korby a question in regard to a brewery he toured in Cold Spring and a pre-treatment that was development for them did not work. How would his firm handle that type of issue. Korby, responded that this is an instance that a wastewater and water specialist is a great benefit. He gave an example of a firm in Chatfield that his company worked with. They had a plan drawn up that would have cost 12 million dollars to implement. He convinced the City to allow them to look at it and they came up with a plan at a cost of \$6 million. Nielson added that he has spoken to Korby about the USDP flow and Korby feels they could be of assistance. The University of MN specialist suggested an anaerobic system, whereas USDP went with an Aerobic System.

Karnowski commented that the he has always wondered how an engineering firm can work for the city, but is also expected to bring money in for the firm. How does an engineering firm to look out for the firm's best interest and the City's best interest. Broltzer replied that the mantra they use is "leave the logo at the door". They work for a lot of cities and they want it to be long term relationships and partnerships. Doing what is best for the city, is also best for them. If they do something that ruins trust, it's not good business. As Row begins to work with the City, he will understand what the city's goals are, therefore being able to make informed decisions.

Nielson mentioned the Phosphorus Reduction and Streambank Stabilization that the City worked on to get those numbers down. Korby added that Princeton is the only one in the state that has gone that route and the whole state is watching how the program works out.

TKDA Presentation

Ron Quanbeck, Jim Studenski, Verne Jacobsen and Dennis Postler stated that TKDA is a full service engineering, architecture and planning firm with more than 100 years' experience. Most of their employees are in the same building, so it is very easy access to resources and specialists.

Postler explained they are a single source team with everything in house. Internal and external communication is very important, as well as long range vision. The City has a Comprehensive Plan that would be need to be done soon, and they would like to be in with the City for the long haul and they can provide a good value. If the city transitioned to their firm, they would be willing to attend some additional meetings and time getting up to speed on their dime. While they hope there would never be an issue, if there was he can make decisions so there would be no need to go to someone higher up.

TKDA Interview

Karnowski asked how TKDA could assure the City of Princeton would receive the correct amount of attention for its engineering needs, being they are a large firm with some larger clients. Quanbeck replied that Princeton would be Postler's primary client, therefore his priority.

Whitcomb asked how TKDA gives back to the Cities and Communities that they work for. Do they go above and beyond at all, would they will be available to help on some additional project, or donate some of their time. Quanbeck said they like to get involved with the Chamber of Commerce, and do some in office collections for various charities

Whitcomb asked if they would be up to speed on the current projects if the City were to change to their firm on January 1st. Quanbeck said they are very familiar with the PUC as they have worked with them before. For the City projects, he would want to sit down with staff to determine what should be addressed early on.

Wangen asked what they felt is their single best technical skill or ability. Quanbeck replied that he likes looking at projects and solving an issue, which is why he became an engineer. He added that as a child, he spent a lot of time watching a street and sewer project going in. Postler added that Quanbeck is known as their utility expert, so if anyone in their firm has a utility issue they are stuck on, they go to him. Jacobsen added that he enjoys that aspect as well.

Dobson commented that the City and PUC is structured differently than most Cities.

Karnowski stated that one of the current issues is that the city is looking to lease some space at the FAA building to the DNR. Another engineering firm quoted about \$400,000 to put in a parking area that the DNR would require. His experience with engineering firms is sometimes it is better to use a Design Build option on some projects. He asked what they felt about that option. Quanbeck responded that it depends on the scope of the project. If it is a fairly easy and simple project, some basic specifications should be all that is needed. If it is a matter of paving a simple parking lot, that is easy enough for a contractor to do.

The Council let TKDA that a decision would not be made tonight as the Council is short 2 members. It would be put on the December 10th Agenda.

Resolution 15-74 certifying past-due City Invoices to the County

Karnowski reported that the City has a few past due invoices for grass cutting and trimming that have not been paid. Like the past due utilities, this will allow the amounts to be collected with the next year's property taxes.

DOBSON MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 15-74 CERTIFYING PAST-DUE CITY INVOICES TO THE COUNTY TO BE COLLECTED ON 2016 PROPERTY TAXES. WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Public Works Staffing Issue

Gerold advised that one of the Public Works employees is taking a medical leave for an as yet undetermined time for some elective surgery. Staff has concerns that, with winter time snow plowing issues, that we could be short-handed.

In order to address that concern, staff is recommending that the City Council authorize the creation of a new GMI position which would give the Public Works Department some flexibility in being able to address our staffing needs – especially for snow plowing.

If the Council concurs with the staff recommendation, then a motion to approve the hiring of an additional GMI employee would be in order.

Dobson asked if Public Works were already short staff. Gerold replied that in a snow event they are short. Currently they will use Tom from the PUC and Klinghagen from the WWTP to assist.

DOBSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE HIRING OF AN ADDITIONAL GMI EMPLOYEE.
WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION.

Walker questioned if there is room in the budget for an additional staff member. Jackson replied that it depends on the timing, but if the current employee is out for some time it would likely allow the position to extend longer. He said there has also been discussion about possibly needing to increase the staff at the WWTP with the additional USDP flows, so that is an option as well. There are a lot of floating items in the budget and which can handle it as of now, and adjustments could be made through the year if needed.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Cemetery Stone Discussion

Karnowski reported that staff has done some research into how other cities handle cement work for stone settings. Of the 3 cities that responded to the question emailed to the Clerk / Administrators Listserve, none of them do the cement work in their cemeteries. If a stone needs to be lifted or repaired, the family must hire that work out. Sara at Williams Dingmann also stated that Oak Knoll is the only cemetery that she is aware of around here that does their own cement work.

In contacting a few monument providers, staff also discovered the current cement foundation prices are quite low.

Public Works is in favor allowing the Monument companies to provide all cement work (as long as they are licensed and bonded). Eliminating most of the Cement work would also free up some time that they could spend on ground maintenance.

During the Council's Study Session when this was previously brought up, future care of the stones was brought up as being a potential issue if the City discontinued doing this work. In reviewing the Cemetery rules and regulations, it states in 9.1 under Perpetual Care:

“General Care assumed by the City shall in no case mean the maintenance, repair, or replacement of any marker or memorial placed or erected upon lots, nor the doing of special, unusual work in the cemetery”

Staff is aware that many families are not happy with the current stone/cement settings of just twice a year, so they may be happy to be able to allow their Monument Companies to do the stone setting and have it in much sooner.

Staff is proposing a “locating fee” so we can make sure the stones are located correctly. The fee discussed for this was \$25, and we would only require 3 working days’ notice to get a

grave marked.

If the Council is in favor of the City no longer doing the cement work, the necessary changes to the Cemetery Rules and Regulations have been drafted.

Karnowski said studies are showing that in the future, a large percentages of burials will be cremation. Jenkins added that staff has set aside an additional area of the cemetery that will only be used for cremation. Gerold said there is room to add on to the cemetery if needed, but he feels leaving that area open could be beneficial in the future.

WHITCOMB MOVED TO APPROVE CEMETERY RULES AND REGULATION AMENDMENTS AS PROPOSED. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DOBSON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:35PM. WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawna Jenkins
City Clerk
ATTEST:

Paul Whitcomb, Mayor