

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

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

Joel Strottrup Proclamation

Karnowski advised that Joel Strottrup is retiring from the Princeton Union Eagle. Strottrup has been writing about the City since 1977. He has been recognized by his colleagues as an exceptional newspaperman and has been honored by winning numerous awards by the Minnesota Newspaper Association.

The Council proclaims Friday, June 12, 2015 as Joel Strottrup Day.

Christmas Decorations Discussion – Karen Michels (PACC)

Karnowski advised that the Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce’s Executive Director, Karen Michels, has asked for some time to discuss the need to replace the city’s aging Christmas Decorations that adorn the streetlights during the holiday season.

Apparently the PUC has agreed to donate \$2,500 annually to help fund a program to replace the decorations over a period of years.

Steve Jackson has advised that there is currently is \$20,000 in the Community Beautification Committee (CBC) fund to pay for both flowers and decorations like this. Jackson further advises that the CBC is consulted before money from that fund is expended. The three most active members of the CBC are Ann Bien, Maureen Gould and Sam Reynolds.

Jackson had noted that he would be hesitant to spend too much of that balance because some of that fund was used last year for the prairie grass/flower change downtown. He said he recalled there was discussion of doing more of that once it was determined that people liked it.

Jackson stated that the City has been transferring \$2,500 from the Liquor store each year to keep that source of funding available.

Jackson suggested, if the Council wants to increase the \$2,500 annual transfer to cover a contribution for the Christmas decorations or designate a portion or all of it for a period of years to restore the decorations that might be a reasonable approach.

Another option would be to match the PUC and also challenge the Chamber Members to participate.

Karen Michels spoke about the decorations that are in poor condition and some appeared to have even caught on fire at some point. There are currently approximately 25 that need to be immediately replaced. Temple Display has several of the same decorations that the City currently use, but in LED. The plan is to first replace the 25, then each year change out as many as funds allow. Eventually they would like to add more, such as on 21st Ave.

The Chamber is setting aside \$1500 per year for the next 5 years, and the PUC is budgeting \$2500 per year.

WALKER MOVED TO APPROVE \$2500 FROM THE COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE FUND YEARLY FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS TO REPLACE THE HOLIDAY DECORATIONS. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Co-location discussion with School District

Karnowski reported that the Princeton School and the city have been discussing the possibility of the District's purchase of the old Police Department building as part of their efforts to provide the necessary space for their proposed Early Childhood Education program.

District Superintendent Julia Espy and he have been talking informally about the District's space needs and how the old Police Department may fit in.

As part of those conversations, he said they talked about the possibility of moving the School District Administration staff into the City Hall building to clear some space in the main building for other space needs.

He added that he thinks the size building we have is a little oversized for the 6 full-time city employees and building inspector. Sadly the existing floor plan does not take full advantage of the space.

The School District received a state grant for their Early Childhood initiative. A portion of that grant may be able to be used to move walls around at City Hall to accommodate the District Administration Staff if it freed up space in their current building.

They would like to get the City Council's feedback on the general concept. If the Council is open to the concept, a more detailed discussion will, obviously, follow.

Ryan Hoffman (the District's consultant) has provided an initial sketch of a remodeling option. The initial issues he said has is that the City would lose office space for our building inspector, Karen's office space was reduced and there appears to be a lack of handy storage (some storage can be in the basement, but some records need to be more readily accessible).

There was a lot of discussion about possible options and some minor changes to the preliminary sketch that was brought to the meeting.

Karnowski stated that the City would need to determine what a fair rental fee would be according to the market to be fiscally responsible with the resident's tax money. Also, the City's Auditors would need to see an appropriate amount in accordance to what space is usually leased for.

Walker said he likes the idea, but feels the Council needs to talk to City Staff about how they feel about this plan.

Karnowski said they will discuss it at the next staff meeting.

Karnowski, Walker and Mayor Whitcomb will meet with the School District on Thursday, June 18th at 4pm to further discuss the option.

Discussion with Dove, Fretland, et al Legal Services

Karnowski reported that the city received 7 proposals for attorney services in response to our RFP.

Those responding, their office location(s) and whether their application was for Civil, Criminal or both were: (in alphabetical order):

- A. Dove, Fretland & Van Valkenburg, Princeton and St. Louis Park MN (the city's current attorney firm) – both Civil and Criminal
- B. Flaherty & Hood, St. Paul MN (the CGMC's law firm) – Civil only
- C. Jan Jude Law, Milaca MN (former Mille Lacs County Attorney) – both Civil and Criminal
- D. Kennedy & Graven, Mpls. MN – Civil only
- E. Kirchoff Law, Foley MN – Civil only
- F. Ratwick, Roszak & Maloney, Mpls. MN – Civil only
- G. Rupp, Anderson, Squires & Waldspurgen, Mpls. MN – Civil only

Karnowski stated, he, Mayor Whitcomb and Police Chief Frederick combed through the applications and found that hiring one firm for civil and a separate firm for criminal would be the most expensive way to go. While cost is not the overriding factor, it's obviously very important.

There were only two firms that offered both civil and criminal services. Of the two, the proposal from Dove, Fretland, et al not only was the least expensive but also appeared to provide the most wide ranging service and experience.

The city's current criminal attorney, Damien Toven, has represented the city for the past 9 years.

On the civil side, the firm is offering the services of Kelli Bourgeois, who has only been practicing law for about 1½ years but has almost 17 years of experience in municipal government working for both the City of Becker and the City of Columbia Heights. Ms. Bourgeois municipal experience is in the areas of Human Resources, Community Development and City Planning.

Dove, Fretland's proposal is to continue to provide the services covered by our current retainer for the same price as they have since 2008 (\$1,600/mo. For Civil and \$3,300/mo for criminal). They propose to increase their fee for work outside the retainer agreement by \$5/hr. (from \$135/hr. to \$140/hr.).

Because the civil attorney they propose we use has significantly less experience than Dick Schieffer, he said he proposed that we have a 'trial period' of 3 months where we would be charged only 80% of the civil retainer. If, after those 90 days, the city is content with the firm's service, the civil retainer fee would go to \$1,600/mo.

Accordingly, the recommendation from those who reviewed all the proposals is to enter into a contact with Dove, Fretland, et al. But, obviously, it's up to the Council.

Kelly Bourgeois introduced herself and spoke about her law and municipal experience. She currently works for another city during the day, so she stated she would be available via email throughout the day, and she can return phone calls during her break times. She will

also be able to attend meetings if necessary, but Damian Toven would likely continue to attend most of the meetings as he has been.

WALKER MOVED TO AWARD THE BID TO DOVE, FRET LAND FOR CRIMINAL AND CIVIC TO BE BILLED AT 80% FOR 3 MONTHS. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Civic Center Open House

Karnowski reported that Mayor Whitcomb has suggested that the city organize a joint open house for the remodeled Civic Center along with the American Legion.

He said he contacted Commander Jerry Whitcomb and the date agreed upon for that event was Saturday, August 15th.

If the Council is okay with that date, staff suggests it would be helpful to have one or two Council members to help work out the details.

Hallin and Whitcomb will help work out the details on a Civic Center Open house.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawna Jenkins
City Clerk

ATTEST:

Paul Whitcomb, Mayor