East Central Library discussion

Karnowski reported that the primary topic for this month’s Study Session is a discussion with representatives from the East Central Regional Library Executive Director Carla Lydon and the ECRL’s Assistant Director Rachel Howell.

Princeton has an ongoing agreement with the ECRL for the operation of the Princeton Library. Generally speaking, the agreement (the latest 1995 version is attached) provides that the city will provide the building, utilities, internal and external maintenance, and insurance and the ECRL provides the staffing, the books and materials, a catalogue of all materials available through the ECRL system of 14 Libraries (Aitkin, Cambridge, Chisago Lakes Area, Hinckley, McGregor, Milaca, Mille Lacs Lake, Mora, North Branch, Pine City, Princeton, Rush City, Sandstone, and Wyoming).

Carla Lydon advised that they have not reviewed the Library hours for more than 10 years. They have not reviewed hours of the library for more than 10 years. They have looked at numbers of visits, the hours of those visits and staff needs.

While the ECRL Board has not approved the changes yet, the following changes are proposed to the Princeton location. The large cut in hours for the proposed Friday hours may change if the County contributes more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Current Hours</th>
<th>Proposed hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>10:30am – 5pm</td>
<td>10am – 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>12pm – 8pm</td>
<td>12pm – 7pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>10:30am – 5pm</td>
<td>10am – 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>12pm – 8pm</td>
<td>12pm – 7pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>10:30am – 5pm</td>
<td>10am – 2pm*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>9am – 2pm</td>
<td>9am – 1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>closed</td>
<td>closed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Walker asked how busy it is from 10:30 to 11. Steve Karlson confirmed that many times there are people waiting for the library to open at 10:30. They did hear public response from their visitors are that people want them to be open earlier.

Edmonds said he read that the Mille Lacs Lake Library was going to be closed. Lydon stated that there was a miscommunication and that was reported in error. That branch is still needed, and they would not want to close a library as they would lose some of their state funding.
Edmonds asked if the local “Friends of the Library” group can increase their funding. Lydon said they have actually had to decrease the amount. They do go to the Townships to ask for some funding assistance, and they are seeing very help from those Townships.

Walker asked what the average was per staff hour. Lydon responded that it is $19.37 per hour average with benefits included.

Lydon said the plan is to re-evaluate this every 3 years. She expects the ECRL Board may likely vote for this in November, but it could be December. They plan to make the changes in March after some public hearings are held.

The ECRL Board really appreciates the city’s support.

**Ratification consideration of AFSCME and LELS 3yr contracts**

Karnowski advised that he and Finance Director Jackson met with both the AFSCME Union and LELS Union representatives several times in the past months and have tentatively agreed to new contracts – subject to City Council Approval.

The details of the proposed contract changes are as follows:

Both the LELS and AFSCME unions agree to the following:

1. **Contract Length:** The proposed contract is a 3-year contract (covering 2018, 2019 and 2020).

2. **Health Insurance.** For at least the last dozen years, the city’s medical insurance carrier has been Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Historically the annual rate increases have been manageable and, in some cases, a reduction in rates. As previously advised, the BC/BS rates for 2018 were proposed to increase about 49% which both the city and union(s) agreed was unpalatable. The city then went out and got quotes from other insurance providers and presented our findings to the city staff and unions. The employee’s preference was for the Public Employee’s Insurance Program (PEIP) whose rates were not only reasonable but, historically, change very little from year to year. Previously, the city’s monthly contribution toward the medical insurance premiums (Standard or HSA) were $578 toward single coverage and $970.50 toward family coverage. The new AFSCME contract proposes changing the city’s contribution to $618 for single coverage and $1,050 for family coverage.

3. **Wages:** The city recently did a wage analysis comparing the city employee wages with other similarly sized cities – most of which are contesting with the metro area for employees. Those cities compared were Becker, Chisago City, Circle Pines, Dayton, Elk–New Market, Lindstrom, North Oaks, Oak Park Heights, Rockford and Wayzata. Our study indicated that the wages we pay our employees are about 10% below the average of those other cities. Accordingly, the plan was to bring our wages up by 10% (not including any COLA) over a 5 year period using a 2% increase for each of the next five years. The tentatively agreed-to contract implements the “catch up” wage program over 4 years rather than 5 with a 2½% in-
crease per year (rather than the proposed 2%) for the next 3 years plus a 2% COLA for each of the three years of the proposed new contracts.

The LELS Union and city also tentatively agreed to this one additional item:

4. Last year’s contract included additional pay for certain police training positions. One of positions that was mistakenly overlooked was the officer that does the First Responder Training. The Council is reminded that by having an officer on staff who’s taken the ‘train the trainer’ course saves the city money because we then don’t have to hire a separate individual to come in and do the requisite training nor do we have to pay to send the officers to a course in another location. So the following language was added to this contract:

   First Responder Instructor: an additional $.50 per hour while teaching plus an additional $.50 per hour for two hours of prep time.

The AFSCME Union and city tentatively also agreed to these four additional items:

5. Comp Time Accumulation: The last contract had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) allowing an AFSCME employee to accumulate up to 80 hours of comp time (the current contract allows a maximum of 40 hours). The proposed contract moves that provision into the body of the proposed contract.

6. Comp Time Cash-out: The proposed contract includes a provision allowing an AFSCME employee to cash out up to twenty (20) hours of accumulated comp time on December 1st of each year.

7. Vacations and Weekend Scheduling: The current contract allows AFSCME employees to, by seniority, to request vacation time by April 1st of each year. The weekend schedule is put together before the 1st of the year. So sometimes it’s difficult for an employee to find someone to trade with if they’re scheduled to work a weekend that they would like to take for vacation. So the new contract requires that request for vacation have to be submitted to the Department Head no earlier than December 1 and no later than December 15 previous to the scheduling year. That should reduce the conflicts between vacations and weekend duty.

8. Clothing Allowance: The current contract provides $100 every two years for an employee to purchase a winter jacket or insulated coveralls. The proposed new language would allow that $100 to be spent on any clothing directly related to the work done by the employee and to be only worn by the employee while on city duty.

Jackson advised that the funding for all of the above changes were anticipated and are covered in the city’s proposed levy and budget for 2018. Traditionally, the Council has also extended the wage and insurance increases to those employees (mostly supervisors) whose conditions of employment are not covered by union contracts.

Accordingly, staff recommends that the Council adopt the following motion:
"I move that the City Council agree to the terms and conditions of both the AFSCME and LELS union’s proposed 3-year contracts as outlined in the above memo and, further, extend the same wage and insurance adjustments to the city of Princeton’s non-union employees.”

Edmonds asked if we do the 4 year catchup, can that be looked at again in 3 years. Karnowski stated that technically it could, but the unions seem to be fine with the 4 year agreement.

Walker stated it is interesting the cities that were used, and asked why Zimmerman and Cambridge were not used, but Wayzata, and Circle Pines were. Karnowski said he and Jackson actually picked the cities to use. They used cities that had similar populations and distance to the Twin Cities.

Karnowski stated that they had looked into companies that do these studies and they were quoted at about $30,000. Instead, Jenkins, Jackson and himself gathered the information.

Edmonds said they had doing this type of study when he was on the County Board and he was surprised at how expensive it was.

Zimmer added said staff did look as far east as Lindstrom, Chisago City, and southwest to Rockford.

Edmonds asked about insurance, as he imagines that we were not the only ones hit with a huge increase. Karnowski stated the city was in with a large group, and this year they decided to merge all the groups together. The City’s good experience benefitted others, while we saw a huge increase. He questioned why they did not do the increase over a few years. They responded they just decided to do it all at once.

Zimmer asked if the non-union positions were included in the study as well. Karnowski said all the positions were included in the comparison.

ZIMMER MOTIONED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL AGREE TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF BOTH THE AFSCME AND LELS UNION’S PROPOSED 3-YEAR CONTRACTS AS OUTLINED IN THE ABOVE MEMO AND, FURTHER, EXTEND THE SAME WAGE AND INSURANCE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CITY OF PRINCETON’S NON-UNION EMPLOYEES. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

November Council Meeting

Karnowski stated that as it does every year, the Council’s second meeting falls on Thanksgiving Day, it’s traditional that the November meetings are moved. If the Council wishes to keep the same November meeting schedule as in past years, the November meetings would be as follows:

Thursday, November 2nd: Study Session

Thursday, November 9th: Regular meeting
Tuesday, November 21st: Regular meeting

If the Council wishes to adopt that meeting schedule, a motion to that effect would be in order.

WALKER MOTIONED TO APPROVE CHANGING THE SECOND REGULAR MEETING IN NOVEMBER PERMANENTLY TO THE TUESDAY PRIOR DUE TO THANKSGIVING. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Santa Lucia Subordination Agreement

Foss advised that Santa Lucia’s had received a commercial rehabilitation program deferred loan for $21,406. They are looking for a subordination agreement from the City on the loan.

WALKER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE SUBORDINATION AGREEMENT. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Karnowski stated that Bob Barbian is here. He is excited to be starting soon and will be meeting Foss tomorrow to go over the current Planning and EDA projects.

ZIMMER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE STUDY SESSION AT 5:19PM. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully Submitted,

________________________________________
Shawna Jenkins
City Clerk

ATTEST:

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Paul Whitcomb, Mayor