Mayor Paul Whitcomb called the meeting to order. Council members present was Thom Walker, Jack Edmonds, Jules Zimmer, and Jeff Reynolds. Staff present, Administrator Robert Barbian, Finance Director Steve Jackson, Police Chief Todd Frederick, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Clerk Shawna Jenkins, Liquor store manager Nancy Campbell, Wastewater Plant Manager Chris Klinghagen and Fire Chief Ron Lawrence.

Fire Department Grass 6 Replacement

Lawrence advised that part of the apparatus replacement program that was designed three years ago, the grass 6 is in need of replacement. This is a 1991 Ford F-250 with over 50,000 miles. This truck is 27 years old.

The truck usually remains in Blue Hill Township at one of the officer’s homes for a quick response in the southwest portion of the coverage area. It has been beneficial for getting to medicals, grass fires and other calls quickly.

Last year they did a tune up on the motor which helped but now the motor is in need of a major tune up. The floor boards are rusting through. The steering is loose and almost considered dangerous to drive. He said he has elected not to fix any issues on it right now until a discussion with council has been achieved. They do have some options for replacement. The DNR has some slightly used trucks, and they would like permission to spend up to $10,000, although it likely would not be that much.

Walker questioned the average age of the trucks that are for sale. Jerry Rud responded that most are in the 2008-2013 range, and come from a variety of Federal Agencies. The nicer ones usually come from the Department of Health, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Lawrence added that most of the used trucks can probably be bought for about $3000-4000, but they are located around the country so many times they would need to be shipped here, adding a bit to the cost.

Walker asked if it would be better to purchase the truck new so it would last a long time and we would not have to worry about fixing another person’s problems. Rud stated if they went to a One Ton truck, they would be looking at approximately $33,000. Then if you are going new, you might as well put in the new lighting, then decals, etc. it would end up being in the low $40,000 range. Walker stated that downtime on a rig is really not what you want, so a good reliable truck is important. Lawrence thinks there is about $180,000 in the Equipment fund, but he has some of that earmarked for grants they have applied for.

Rud said these used vehicles usually don’t stick around long, so they need to jump on a good one quickly. Being it is only Federal Agencies that can buy from the site, they also have to go through the MN DNR for the purchase.

Barbian suggested trying to get one of the trucks from a Health Services division, and from down south where they don’t use salt on the roads.
ZIMMER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF A TRUCK FOR UP TO $10,000 AND THE APPROVAL TO DISPOSITION THE OLD ONE. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Fire Department Computer and Server Replacement

Lawrence reported that as part of the CIP for this year, it was approved to purchase new computers for the fire department. The purchase will include 5 new computers, a new server, and a new laptop for the training room to be shared by fire and police. The price comes in just under the approved amount for CIP.

They currently have 8 computers, but the captains have agreed to share.

WALKER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE THE 5 NEW COMPUTERS AND SERVER FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND A NEW LAPTOP FOR THE TRAINING ROOM TO BE SHARED BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND POLICE DEPARTMENT. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Aero Business Park Land Pricing

Barbian asked the council for input on the land pricing for the Aero Business Park.

In reviewing various materials, agreements and after a variety of discussions it is not clear what the City Council wishes to sell lots at the Aero Business Park for. The following is what has been concluded:

The City has an Exclusive Listing contract with Coldwell Banker Commercial Real Estate on all sales.
  • The terms call for a $5,000.00 payment for all sales.
  • The contract is a year expiring on June 26, 2018.

The City Council wishes to get the assessed amount for past public improvements on each lot sale. This amount is as follows:
  Lot 1: $29,146  Lot 2 thru 4: $14,820  Lot 5: $14,867.
  Lot 6: $14,929.  Lot 7: $14,924.

In addition, the City’s intent has been stated in Resolution 17-18 adopted April 7, 2017
  • The City intends to obtain a minimum value of $400,000 per 1 acre lot.
  • The City intends to obtain employment of at least 2 FT employees per acre lot.

The amounts listed above do not include the City capital investment for the land purchase. The purchase price is not available at this time, although approximately 350,000.

Barbian said he is asking for what the sales price should be, and if any considerations are to be given when potential purchasers which to proceed. There are a variety of methods to establish a pricing which offers opportunities to recoup amounts listed above.
Walker said the Eda has talked about this land extensively.

Barbian commented that a TIF district may be another good way to recoup some of these funds.

Walker stated that the EDA has had these lots for sale for a while, with no interest so they decided to list them with a Real Estate company. He doesn’t feel a TIF is something the EDA would be interested in. But, if someone is interested in buying a lot, they don’t want to turn anyone away. He does not know what the political ramifications would be to setting up a TIF.

Walker said they have tried to get away from TIF’s over the past 15 years. Barbian replied that it was just an idea so the city could recoup some of the money spent on those lots, as a TIF collects and School and City portion of the taxes. Some of those funds could be used for improvements to the downtown façade, or towards the roundabout.

Council was in agreement to sell them for the cost of the assessments.

Community Solar Project – Princeton Utilities

Wangen advised that she presented a proposal to Barbian and Jackson a couple weeks ago. SMPA is looking to set up a solar garden here in Princeton, but would like 25% of the panels subscribed to before building.

Barbian commented that if the rates stayed the same, there would be a slight loss after the 10 years. However, it is likely that the rate would increase at some point, so you could break even or maybe make a little. This is more to promote that the city is environmentally friendly.

Wangen stated that the PUC has subscribed to a few panels, and if the city wishes to as well, she will begin to talk to residents and businesses about the program.

Whitcomb said when he spoke to people about it, they were only seeing that it would be a slight loss. The other question people had was if they got a benefit when the subscription time was up. Wangen replied that they would need to renew a subscription to continue to receive that monthly credit.

Walker commented he would like to look at the program a bit more, and does not want to make a decision tonight.

Barbian said it was discussed that if the City and PUC both purchased some panels, it would be something that would show support to the businesses and residents.

Wangen added that she isn’t pressuring anyone, but just letting people know it is available. They currently have about 10% of the panels subscribed to.

Barbian asked if the council would like it on an upcoming council agenda. Walker suggested having it done for Earth Day, as that would be a very good tie in and press release.
ZIMMER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE STUDY SESSION AT 5:19PM. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully Submitted,

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Shawna Jenkins
City Clerk

ATTEST:

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Paul Whitcomb, Mayor