

Hastings, Minnesota
City Council Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2020

The City Council of the City of Hastings, Minnesota met in a regular meeting on Monday, May 18, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

Mayor Fasbender explained why and referenced various city, state and federal declarations and guidelines that an in-person meeting was not practical or prudent due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Members Present: Mayor Fasbender, Councilmembers Balsanek, Braucks, Folch, Leifeld, Lund and Vaughan

Staff Present: City Administrator Dan Wietecha
City Attorney Dan Fluegel
Community Development Director John Hinzman
Finance Manager Melanie Lammers
Parks & Recreation Director Chris Jenkins
Public Works Director Nick Egger

Presentation: County Commissioner Mike Slavik

Commissioner Slavik gave an update on the number of COVID-19 cases in Dakota County, property taxes and disbursement to cities, several County construction bids coming in below estimate, County offices starting to make appointments, possible reimbursement from the State and Federal governments to help cover eligible expenses due to the COVID-19 Pandemic response.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Fasbender asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council on May 4, 2020.

Minutes were approved as presented.

Comments from the Audience

Mayor Fasbender stated comments received about items not on the agenda have been distributed to all Councilmembers and are acknowledged.

Council Items to be Considered

Councilmember Folch requested to discuss City communications and testing of first responders. These items were added to the agenda under Administration as #2 and #3, respectively.

Consent Agenda

Councilmember Vaughan requested #4 to be pulled from consent for discussion. It was moved to #4 under Administration.

1. Pay Bills as Audited
2. Approve Personnel Policy Update to Appendix I – Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy
3. Resolution: Acceptance and Appreciation for a donation to the Hastings Police Department K-9 Program from Steve and Carol Plan
4. Incentives for Solid Waste Collection

Councilmember Braucks motioned to approve as amended, seconded by Councilmember Vaughan.
Roll Call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Resolution No. 05-06-20: Award Contract for 2020 Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvements

Egger described the received bids and asked to approve the bid award to A-1 Excavating. He also discussed the timing of the project, several options for special assessments and the assessment abatement program.

Council thanked staff for presenting the various special assessment options. They discussed specifications of the special assessment options, a 10-year term versus a 15-year term, flexibility to allow the resident to pay off the assessment earlier than the full term, the number of properties affected by special assessments, options for lessening the impact of assessments, assessment abatement program, importance of infrastructure maintenance and this project in particular, and 2-3 months to complete the bonding process.

Councilmember Balsanek motioned to approve awarding the contract to A-1 Excavating and the 10-year pay back period, seconded by Councilmember Vaughan.

Councilmember Lund motioned to amend the original motion to include adopting special assessments in 2021 for a 10-year special assessment repayment schedule, seconded by Councilmember Balsanek.

Council discussed the pros and cons of pushing the assessment out to 2021.

Roll Call on the amendment: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Roll Call on the original motion as amended: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Resolution No. 05-07-20: Rejecting Bids for 2020 Mill & Overlay Program

Egger asked council to reject the received bids. The bids were in alignment with the budget but the primary funding source was the City levy and due to the current Pandemic situation, it may be prudent to wait until later this year or next year. Also, there are options to reduce the scope of the project and re-bid it later this year.

Council discussed the need to limit spending during this time of uncertainty, options to repackage state aid portion to re-bid out the smaller projects, importance of road maintenance and this project in particular, the local streets portion of the bid was approximately \$35K over budget, staff's recommendation if there was no pandemic and projections for revenue shortfalls being more likely next year than this year.

Councilmember Folch motioned to approve as presented. The motion was not seconded.

Councilmember Balsanek motioned to accept the lowest bid, seconded by Councilmember Vaughan.
Roll Call: Ayes 5; Nays 2 – Folch and Lund.

Resolution No. 05-08-20: Temporary Changes for Businesses Affected by COVID-19 Restrictions

Hinzman detailed the requested temporary changes to the downtown area from the Downtown Business Association (DBA) and the possibility of incorporating parklets.

Council discussed that City ordinance prohibits alcohol within the right-of-way, legal requirements for compact and contiguous locations to allow alcohol sales, other cities with parklets, aesthetics of parklets, construction of parklets, utilization of money approved by HEDRA if parklets were not approved, number of parking spots to be taken up if the sidewalk café were extended into the street, possibly creating a temporary open container zone in the downtown area, maintaining sidewalk or platform for pedestrians and options for non-downtown restaurants and businesses to expand outside.

Councilmember Balsanek motioned to approve as presented, seconded by Councilmember Braucks.

Councilmember Lund motioned to amend the original motion to add the allowance for expansion of sidewalk cafés to contiguous areas without separation by the sidewalk, seconded by Councilmember Balsanek. Roll call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Roll Call on the original motion as amended: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Hastings Family Aquatic Center 2020 Season Cancellation

Jenkins explained the decision to cancel the 2020 season at the Hastings Family Aquatic Center with particular concerns about maintaining employee and customer safety, disinfection of locker rooms and facilities, and financial difficulty posed by social distancing requirements.

Council discussed the difficulty of the decision.

Councilmember Leifeld motioned to approve as presented, seconded by Councilmember Vaughan.

Council discussed what may happen in future years if the COVID-19 virus was still prevalent; however, it was unknown what may happen next year and it would be handled then.

Roll call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

City of Hastings Playgrounds

Jenkins updated the Council of the City's playground closures and how other cities are dealing with playgrounds.

Council discussed the impact playground closure had on children, signage about social distancing and hygiene, option of removing fencing and that youth athletics organization place porta potties in the parks.

Councilmember Vaughan motioned to remove the fencing from the playground and to keep signage of social distancing and hygiene posted, seconded by Councilmember Folch. Roll call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

Froth & Cork On-Sale 3.2% Malt Liquor and Wine Licenses

Wietecha summarized the history of Froth & Cork's Wine and On-Sale 3.2% Liquor Licenses. He also explained that Council approved a prorated refund on May 4, 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and applied the refund towards the 2020-2021 license renewal at Mr. Biermaier's request. Mr. Biermaier had requested a full refund of the license fee.

Council discussed the uniqueness of the situation to be closed the day after opening, crediting the refund to the license renewal and possibly changing the ordinance to allow for pro-rated licenses based on when the business opens.

Councilmember Balsanek motioned to approve a full refund of Froth & Cork's Wine and On-Sale 3.2% Liquor Licenses and to apply the refund to the 2020-2021 license renewal fee, seconded by Councilmember Leifeld. Roll call: Ayes 7; Nays 0.

City Communications

Councilmember Folch questioned how the City may fill the void created by the closing of the Hastings Star Gazette newspaper and lamented that the Communications Coordinator was leaving her position with the City.

Council discussed importance of news for the community, difference between news agency and City and referring the concern to the Administration Committee.

Testing of First Responders

Folch said that she would support the City purchasing COVID-19 tests in order to have all first responders tested.

Council discussed best practices for testing, appreciation of first responders and the lack of available laboratory testing if the City were to purchase and administer tests to the City's first responders and Council's role in administering COVID-19 tests.

Incentives for Solid Waste Collection

Vaughan asked that this topic be discussed at a City Council workshop because he had some questions and concerns.

Council discussed benefits to City and County, higher tipping fees for City residents, the process of disseminating information and approval between the Committee, Council and staff, contacting the County, roles of staff and elected officials and possible conflict of interest.

Councilmember Leifeld motioned to approve the City Administrator to continue discussing the incentives for solid waste collection with County, seconded by Councilmember Balsanek. Roll call: Ayes - Leifeld; Nays - Balsanek, Braucks, Lund, Vaughan and Fasbender; Abstain – Folch. Motion failed.

Councilmember Lund motioned to schedule a City Council workshop to discuss incentives for solid waste collection, seconded by Councilmember Vaughan. Roll call: Ayes 6; Nays 0; Abstain - Folch.

Mayor Fasbender and Councilmembers made the following announcements:

- Our traditional Hastings' Memorial Day Events sponsored by the VFW and American Legion have been cancelled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, flags will still be placed in our local cemeteries and at Roadside Park in honor of our fallen Veterans. Additionally, Lyle Russell VFW Post 1210's Rifle Squad will fire in honor of this significant day at 11:00 AM on Monday, May 25, in the parking lot outside the Post 1210 at 275 W 33rd Street next to the Karate Studio in the Crossroads Shopping Center.
- City offices will be closed Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day.
- I'd also like to recognize and thank our employees in several City departments. Last week (May 10-16) was Police Week. This week (May 17-23) is both EMS Week and Public Works Week, and May is Building Safety Month. These employees provide some of our essential services and help ensure the safety of our community. Under the current pandemic, they adapted and changed operations to make sure we continue to provide optimal service. Thank you.
- Councilmember Balsanek will attend the DCC 911 meeting on Thursday, May 21.
- Heritage Preservation Commission will meet on Tuesday, May 19th at 7:00 p.m.
- Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, May 26th at 7:00 p.m.
- Councilmember Balsanek will be attending the Dakota County Communications Center Board of Directors meeting on May 21 at 8:00 a.m.

Councilmember Balsanek motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Braucks. Roll Call: Ayes 7; Nays 0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:40p.m.

Mary Fasbender, Mayor

Julie Flaten, City Clerk

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