



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Held Wednesday, April 28, 1999, For the purpose of reviewing the Public Works section of the Proposed FY 2000 Budget.

The meeting began at 8:06 p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Alan Turnbull

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; David E. Moran, City Clerk; W Bowman Ferguson, Senior Management Analyst; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; Kenny Hall, Acting Director of Public Works; Michael Clem, Senior Administrative Assistant; Bill Phelan, City Horticulturist; Richard Mills, Parks Foreman; Victor Kirk, Specialty Operation Foreman; Gene Diest, Streets Foreman; James Keifline, Mechanic Supervisor; Antoinette Conrad, Secretary; Cindy Murray, Secretary; Tim Houchens, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor; Terry Padget, Building Maintenance Supervisor and Anne Marie Belton, Secretary

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Sheldon Goldberg and Drew Clark, News Review

The City Clerk announced that the Mayor and Mayor Pro-Tem were absent due to a family emergency and a business trip, respectively. Pursuant to Section Two of the Council's Standing Rules, the City Clerk called the meeting to order and called the roll.

It was determined that a quorum was present. Mr. Turnbull moved that Mr. Putens be elected temporary chairman to preside over the meeting. Mr. Roberts seconded. The motion passed.

Mr. Hall began by introducing his staff. He summarized the accomplishments for the year. He noted that the Fleetpro vehicle maintenance program and once-a-week refuse collection were working well. Mr. Hall noted that a playground equipment replacement program was underway and he was developing a tracking program to track building maintenance requests.

Mr. Putens thanked Public Works for all their accomplishments during the past year.

Mr. Roberts asked if the current wood chip program was up to standards. Mr. Hall responded that wood chips were being installed to a 12 inch depth. Mr. McLaughlin referenced the challenge of responding to constantly changing standards. Mr. Roberts asked about the equipment that had been removed. Mr. Mills responded that the slides that had been removed weren't compliant with the new standards. Mr. Mills recommended that the number one priority be playground surface.

Mr. Turnbull asked if wood chips harmed the trees. Mr. Phelan responded that in his opinion the chips would be good for the trees. Mr. Turnbull stressed that the playgrounds were an emotional issue and hoped the city was taking the minimum steps to keep kids safe and reduce the city's exposure to liability. He hoped public input on the playgrounds would be sought. Mr. McLaughlin stated his belief that the city was taking a minimally prudent approach to the maintenance.

Mr. Putens reported several calls and specifically one caller who requested an overall plan for playgrounds. It was noted that the city had 23 playgrounds and GHI had 8. Mr. Putens asked about the agreement between the city and GHI. Mr. McLaughlin stated that GHI cuts the grass in exchange for the city maintaining playground equipment.

Mr. Turnbull asked about the individual line items on page 86. Mr. Hall and Mr. McLaughlin explained the differences from year-to-year in the line items.

Council proceeded to review each section of the budget.

Maintenance of Multi-Purpose Equipment

Mr. Turnbull and Mr. Roberts asked about Fleetpro and its success. Mr. Hall noted general satisfaction with their service, but stated there had been some minor problems. He stated that the city was not paying Fleetpro for the poor service projects.

Mr. Putens asked about the rationale for using Fleetpro in the first place. Mr. Hall responded that it was intended to take the burden off of existing maintenance personnel. Mr. Putens requested a report so that Council could make a decision before adopting the budget.

Mr. Turnbull did not want to rush a staff report. He was willing to leave the money in the budget, but didn't want to be tied to the contract if it wasn't working.

Mr. Roberts expressed support for doing it with in-house city staff and expressed general dissatisfaction with outside services.

Street Maintenance

Mr. Putens and Mr. Turnbull expressed support for the development of street name sign program unique to Greenbelt and asked why it had languished. Mr. McLaughlin responded that previously this had been part of an overall city signage plan. Mr. McLaughlin believed this was an easier piece of the program to implement and wanted to move forward. Mr. Turnbull hoped that the city would work with private neighborhoods to coordinate the signs.

Mr. Putens complimented Mr. Phelan and the flowers throughout the city. Mr. Putens asked about the landscaping plan for Hanover & Mandan. Mr. Phelan responded that this would occur around the light poles.

Mr. Turnbull expressed concern about trash collecting in Greenbrook Lake. He suggested that the source might be street trash that is washed into the lake during storms and that the city deal with the source. Mr. Phelan stated that he was looking into a trash catch at both of the lakes. Mr. Putens asked that the trash be periodically removed from the lakes.

Mr. McLaughlin raised two issues. First, was complaints about sidewalk grinding. Mr. McLaughlin distributed a memo showing that it was a quicker, more cost effective method to repair sidewalks. Second, Mr. McLaughlin referenced complaints about new sidewalks not matching the color of existing walks.

Mr. Roberts requested that the city repair sidewalks and then replace them as soon as possible. Mr. Deist noted that the majority of sidewalk damage occurs due to tree roots. Mr. Phelan suggested community education about the grinding program. Mr. Turnbull referenced sidewalk grinding he had seen that was smoother in the District.

Mr. McLaughlin reported on a program to jointly purchase a new street sweeper with College Park and Berwyn Heights. Mr. Roberts expressed reluctance to support a sweeper purchase and indicated a need for really good operators. He favored contracting with a company to sweep Greenbelt streets.

Mr. Turnbull expressed support for sweeping streets on a frequent, regular basis. He expressed concern about the logistics of the joint approach. Mr. Roberts agreed that the streets needed to be cleaned and wanted proof that buying a sweeper was a good way to go. Mr. Turnbull asked if the city had considered owning the machine and contracting out the service to others. Staff responded no. Mr. Roberts believed sweepers required a high level of maintenance and that the city would need another mechanic.

Waste Collection & Disposal, & Recycling

Mr. McLaughlin reported that the city's recycling rate (percentage of the waste stream being recycled) had been increasing. Mr. Putens asked about the decreased election survey scores. Mr. McLaughlin responded that he was anxious to see the 1999 scores. He noted data entry might be a problem.

Mr. Putens asked if the landfill disposal rebate might go up. Mr. McLaughlin believed that it would not. Mr. Clem noted that the recycling markets were flat and value of recyclables was not likely to increase.

In response to a question from Mr. Roberts, Mr. Clem stated that the city's recalls were not going to landfills. Mr. Putens suggested an education video on buying recyclables. Council wanted to add use of recycled materials as an MBO.

City Cemetery

Mr. Moran noted that only 2 unsold plots remained in the cemetery. He noted his intention to present options to Council, including: expansion, no-build and structures.

Roosevelt Center

Mr. Diest responded that Maryland Paving was coming Monday to begin concrete work. It was hoped concrete work would be completed by the end of May. Mr. Hall stated that this was a large undertaking for Public Works. Council thanked Public Works for their efforts.

Parks

Mr. McLaughlin reviewed the MBO's. Mr. Turnbull requested an estimate of funds currently being used for trail maintenance.

Intra-City Transit Service

Mr. Turnbull indicated a desire to monitor ridership as the County system comes on-line. In response to a question from Mr. Roberts about the Greenbelt Connection, Mr. Hall stated the service was widely used and patrons usually need to request service in advance.

Municipal Building

Mr. McLaughlin noted that salaries had been reduced as a result of the IGS study recommendation that the cleaning position be shared with other facilities.

Public Safety

Mr. Turnbull asked why there were missing crosswalks in some locations and requested a report. Mr. McLaughlin indicated that decisions about crosswalks are case-by-case and requested that Mr. Turnbull provide a list of specific locations.

Replacement Fund

No comments.

Unmet Needs

Council reviewed the unmet needs list and Mr. Hall explained each item. Mr. Putens expressed a desire to add the materials storage area and the traveling irrigation head. Mr. Putens expressed support for the building maintenance crew member. Mr. Hall noted a proposal to increase a half-time staffer to full-time to maintain the Community Center.

Mr. Hall requested consideration of the bond referendum for the public works addition. Council expressed a desire to proceed with a work session. Mr. Roberts believed that the city may be able to finance the project without a bond referendum. Mr. McLaughlin expressed a desire to wait until there were clear design proposals and cost estimates.

The meeting ended at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David E. Moran, CMC
City Clerk