

Councilpersons:
First Ward: Gallenberger, Gibson
Second Ward: Schmidt, Hiers
Third Ward: Meurer, Bricher

Mayor: John Meisch
Clerk-Treas. Susan Schamaun
City Adm: David Schmidt
City Atty: Peter Ekstrand
Date: March 10, 2010

SPECIAL MEETING
at the Ambulance Barn
PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

The special meeting of the City Council of the City of Wabasha was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2010 and was called to order at 1:05 pm by Mayor John Meisch.

Roll call found all members present.

Mayor Meisch announced the special meeting was being held for City Council and City department heads to discuss cuts to the budget and the public would have an opportunity for comments and suggestions at the next Council meeting scheduled for March 16, 2010.

Council and staff were provided a spreadsheet showing cuts to the budget totaling \$146,086 per department which were provided by City Administrator, David Schmidt and department heads.

Mayor Meisch reported the first item listed was City Publicity for \$15,000 and the request was taken to the Port Authority for their consideration of payment. The Port Authority discussed payment of \$15,000 to the Wabasha Chamber of Commerce for City advertising costs and denied the request. He stated the Port Authority felt their responsibility was for economic development and didn't feel advertising was development and felt it was more promotional.

Mayor Meisch stated the Port Authority approved paying the City \$10,519 for a portion of Sue Schamaun, David Schmidt and Molly Patterson-Lundgren's salary for their work on Port Authority business.

Each department head verified the cuts outlined on the spreadsheet were reviewed and they were confident the cuts could be justified.

The following was discussed:

- Pool
 - Closing two weeks early - look into opening late also for a total of three weeks. Cost savings should be approximately \$5,000/week.
 - Determined staff would provide Council with the total number of users for the pool in 2009 vs. revenue received and the total cost of the pool.
- Park's part-time employees:
 - Cut 2 part-time employees
 - Mow less in non-essential parks
 - Looking at more volunteer help at the skating rink
- Summer Rec:
 - Raising fees
 - Cutting \$5,000 from part-time
- Warming House
 - Look into the cost of the phone and the possibility of eliminating the phone.
- Library:
 - Michele reported the Library Board has recommended they would close the library during furlough days whereby the part-time staff would lose hours on those days. They are also looking at closing on Fridays except during the Summer Library Reading Program weeks. They would also turn down the heat as well as modify the air-conditioning temperatures.

David Schmidt reported Ambulance Director, Darren Sheeley, stated the Ambulance department cuts as proposed could be worked into the budget.

City Administrator was directed to look into the DNR/Ike's Park contract in reference to boat launching.

- Jaycee Park and the possibility of additional campsites. It was determined David Schmidt would look into a plan for adding camping sites.
- RFP's for the following services was approved:
 - Audit
 - Legal
 - Snow Hauling
 - Rubbish
 - Engineering
 - Cell Phone
 - Shredding

Staffing for city administration was brought forward:

- City Administrator: Discussion included whether a full-time City Administrator is needed for a city the size of Wabasha and if the salary is suitable. Council determined a full-time position was needed and that the current salary falls within the median range for cities the size of Wabasha.

The Planning/Zoning departments and their duties were discussed. Planning was outlined as Planning Commission and HPC duties as well as all City planning projects and City grant applications. Zoning was outlined as building permits, Floodplain issues, RFP's for various projects, All Hazard Mitigation as well as doing all mapping including for the utilities department.

David Schmidt brought forward consideration of a Street Light Utility fee. He pointed out many other communities are utilizing this fee for revenue. Also, with the addition of the new jail and a new street, approximately \$5,000 was added to the City's street light billing. The number of taxable parcels in the City of Wabasha is 1,714 = \$28.00/12 months = \$2.33/month per taxable parcel for maintenance and recovery for street lights.

Snowplowing was discussed. It was stated that currently the City plows at 1.5 inches at a cost of approximately \$1,800 in salt and fuel and 48 person hours. It was determined to look at plowing at 3" instead of 1.5 inches and use sand which would save approximately \$2,000 which is what is left in the budget for this year. It was also determined the Snow Emergencies would continue to be called at 1.5 inches due to emergency vehicles. Plowing would be at the discretion of the Street Superintendent.

Councilperson Schmidt suggested holding one Council meeting per month with the option of holding a second meeting. He felt the first meeting of the month would be the mandatory meeting held. He also suggested Council cut their salary by 50%. All Councilpersons concurred.

Attorney Peter Ekstrand joined the meeting.

Mayor Meisch informed Attorney Peter Ekstrand Council had agreed to RFP for City services including legal.

Attorney Ekstrand stated the City is a Home Rule Charter City and the city has the right to hire the County for prosecutions. The City cannot contract with the County for civil issues as it would be a conflict of interest. Civil cases would have to be handled by a private attorney or city attorney. He recommended the City pay by retainer vs. by the hour for an attorney. He stated he felt his retainer for \$2,300 per month was a good deal but he did not know that his health care/dental portion was \$22,000 and he didn't know if having that paid was a good deal for the City. He also stated unless you hire someone local, the City will have an access problem and also stated the RFP should be very specific about what is covered i.e. phone, copies, civil law suits, appeals etc. and be specific about what is not covered.

Attorney Peter Ekstrand stated he could take 1 hour per month off his retainer if there is only one meeting per month which would be approximately \$150.00.

David Schmidt presented a second week of furlough by all City employees which would be an additional \$30,000.

City Hall hours were discussed due to furlough and lost hours. The following three options were presented.

- Proposal #1: Monday - Thursday 6 am - 4 pm with public hours at 9 am to 4 pm.
- Proposal #2: Monday - Thursday 7 am - 4 pm with public hours 10 am to 4 pm
Friday 7 am - 11 am with public hours on Friday 9 am - 11 am
- Proposal #3: Monday - Thursday 7 am - 4 pm with public hours at 9 am - 4 pm
Friday 7 am - 11 am with public hours on Friday 9 am - 11 am

After discussion, all Council members approved Proposal #2. Council concurred staff would benefit from having public and non-public hours.

Increase in campgrounds was discussed. It was stated rates were raised 5% for 2010 and after discussion it was determined to monitor the campground and slip rates for adjustment each year.

Charging a shelter fee at Beach Park was brought forward. David Schmidt stated the Park Board would be reviewing that at their meeting next week.

Charging a non-resident truck parking fee was discussed. It was determined this option should be reviewed.

Street project assessments were discussed. It was determined to look into a General Obligation Bond once a plan is in place. Attorney Peter Ekstrand stated the City always has the right to go back and assess projects.

David Schmidt stated at some point, all cities will have to have a Storm Water Utility plan and a fee will have to be charged. This is for future review.

Discussion went back to personnel. After discussion, the following was determined:

- 1) Eliminate Police Sergeant position whereby moving that officer back to patrol duty and laying off the junior officer effective July 1, 2010 at a cost savings of \$22,750.
- 2) Zoning Administrator's position amended to 36 hours per week effective April 1, 2010 with no furlough imposed.
- 3) Ambulance Director position amended to 36 hours per week effective April 1, 2010 with no furlough imposed.

Street Light Utility Fee was brought back for discussion and was accepted as a revenue source by the following vote:

Ayes: Hiers, Meurer, Gibson, Mayor Meisch

Nays: Gallenberger, Schmidt

Councilpersons Bricher and Gibson moved to adjourn at 5:30 pm. Motion adopted unanimously.

Susan Schamaun, City Clerk/Treasurer