

**Orono City Council
Work Session
Monday, August 27, 2018
Council Chambers 5:00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Mayor Dennis Walsh, Council Members Richard F. Crosby II, Wendy Dankey, Aaron Printup and Victoria Seals. Representing staff were City Administrator Dustin Rief, Police Chief Correy Farniok, Finance Director Ron Olson, Director of Public Works/City Engineer Adam Edwards, Community Development Director Jeremy Barnhart, Accountant Maggie Ung, and City Clerk Anna Carlson.

GUESTS: Greg & Jewel Vitas

Meeting Start Time: 5:00 p.m.

1. Budget Discussion

Finance Director, Ron Olson presented the 2019 budget memorandum. Olson mentioned that city staff has made a number of changes since July under direction of the Council. In July, there was a large deficit in Revenues. Staff has looked into administrative charges to the Enterprise Funds, determined what the overhead costs were for those funds and how they would be recovered. This resulted with staff allocating the funds across the board rationally.

Olson noted that wages, zoning code official, and the one-time fee for rewriting the Zoning and Subdivision Code is reflected in the budget.

Council Member Victoria Seals asked if there is a way to write into the contracts or create a fund or merit pay schedule based on performance of employees that the City could use for unions.

Olson referred to a merit pay system and how it is a difficult system to use, especially how it could affect discrimination.

Seals is would like further information on a performance based system and would like to have the discussion about performance based raises. If employees are going above and beyond their job description they should be rewarded for it.

There was discussion of different ways to improve and look into a performance based raise system.

Olson requested guidance on the amount Council is comfortable with for a tax levy increase. Olson noted that in September, the preliminary levy needs to be adopted by law and once it is adopted there can be no increases made afterwards.

Mayor Dennis Walsh is comfortable with the tax levy and the direction the city is going.

Olson explained that the Insurance Fund began approximately 20 years ago, the City goes through the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust and it pays dividends as years pass by. Olson noted that money used to go into the General Fund. A previous Finance Director created the Insurance Fund to keep track of the dividends. As years have gone by the Insurance Fund has grown considerably.

City Administrator Dustin Rief noted that Council should consider putting a cap on the fund, by policy. Rief noted that by putting it in writing and by saying it in a public forum it will force future Councils to follow the plan.

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1. Budget Discussion – Continued

Walsh agreed that by having a policy addressing it that it would help prevent the fund from getting down too low.

Seals mentioned that she and Council Member Printup met with Rief regarding the Code Enforcement Official and would like more information before they would approve of this position being added. Seals has a hard time seeing the head count, and struggles with approving this without getting all the details and understanding what the City has and what it is currently working with. Seals mentioned that they would like to know why staff wants or needs the position.

Walsh mentioned that we need to see all the pieces prior to approving the decision to add more positions. Walsh noted that the Council wants to make sure we have enough people to do the job.

2. Stormwater Planning Discussion

Director of Public Works/ City Engineer Adam Edwards presented the Stormwater Planning item. Edwards discussed the current practice, current issues and the request of guidance on the decision of whether the City should take a broader approach.

Edwards explained that tonight he wanted to discuss two particular issues: County Side West and Orono Oaks Drive. Country Side West suffers nuisance flooding during intense rainfalls. It was studied in 2014 and the recommendation was to perform maintenance on structures and the channel that the structures feed. Then, to proceed with culvert replacements. Edwards noted that in 2018 that the pond pipe clogged and we did do an emergency maintenance to clear the clogged pipe.

Walsh asked what the immediate issue is.

Edwards explained that immediate issue is should the city take in work that is within our public right of way to upsize that culvert.

Rief introduced resident Greg Vitas in which he visited with and walked the culverts to get a better idea of the issue.

Resident Greg Vitas, thanked Rief and Printup for meeting with him and letting him speak today. He describes the issue relating to the drainage and how it is affecting and flooding his property. Vitas is concerned that this could become a serious issue. The water level in the pond is 8 feet above where it should be. Vitas mentioned that they have water flowing east to west on his property. Vitas noted that we are looking at water covering up to 30 to 40 feet of our yard and our sump pumps are working everyday all year.

Dustin mentioned that the question from staff is if this is the Home Owners Association's responsibility.

Walsh discussed that we all should take some responsibility for it and fix the culverts.

Resident Jewel Vitas noted that there is more water coming in from many different directions that has changed from previous years. Vitas feels that it is a mess, and nobody knows where it is going.

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2. Stormwater Planning Discussion – Continued

Vitas mentioned that when the city comes to mow, she has to go clean out the ditch so that the water can get to the culvert and they feel that the City's maintenance of that ditch has not been sufficient.

Walsh mentioned let's get back to the CIP. We would like to take care of a problem if it needs to be taken care of. If we have to pull a few dollars from the CIP to fix and take care of the problem than we should do that.

Rief mentioned that part of the problem with that ditch is due to the length and width of it in its current state.

Walsh would like to take care of it the first time and to get it done right. We do not want to have to revisit it again after the fact. Walsh noted if we are going to do it lets spend the money correctly the first time.

Edwards mentioned that we are looking for direction as to what the City stance is on the issue.

Council Member Richard F. Crosby noted that the biggest part of this is that the ponds and the drainage needs to be solved first before the problem can fully be fixed.

3. Orono Oaks Drive Discussion

Edwards presented Orono Oaks and the need for repair, bill and assess. The city maintains the easements on private roads. When it becomes an issue of Public Safety, the city needs to take over the maintenance and the road.

Rief mentioned that we have the following options: we could do all the repairs and assess the residents and it remains a private road; we could do all the repairs and assess the residents and make it a public road; or we could do the minimum amount of work needed to repair it.

Discussion followed and the group determined that a public hearing should be taking care of as soon as we can to take care of this issue.

Meeting End 6:14 p.m.

ATTEST:



Anna Carlson, City Clerk



Dennis Walsh, Mayor