

City of Washington
Finance & Personnel Committee
REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM
Monday, January 19, 2021 – **Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Daniel Cobb at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Alderman Daniel Cobb, Alderman Lili Stevens, Mayor Gary Manier

Also Present: City Administrator Ray Forsythe, Alderman Yoder, Planning and Development Director Jon Oliphant, HR Specialist Alyssa Goodman, Finance Director Joanie Baxter, Treasurer Ellen Dingledine and John and Sharon Amdall.

AGENDA

1. Non-member Aldermen Wishing to be Heard on Non-Agenda Item: *None.*
2. Citizens Wishing to be Heard on Non-Agenda Item: *None*
3. *Alderman Stevens motioned to approve minutes from the December 21, 2020 meeting. Mayor Manier seconded the motion. The minutes as stated were unanimously approved.*

4. Business Items:

A. Budget Overview/Staffing -

Please see [Item A](#) for a complete description on various topics.

Tyler Software:

The FY 2020/2021 budget includes the TYLER software and related implementation costs. This has been a huge process for City Hall Staff and we are maneuvering through this change and the purchase of the software and implementation charges have been incurred. Staff would like to add a few more components to this comprehensive software in the upcoming budget year. This includes Service Requests, Business Licensing and possibly Project Accounting. It is anticipated that these packages, including implementation and training will be approximately \$50,000. This is an estimate and by the time the Legislative/Administrative budget is presented to the City Council work session a firm number will be obtained. There would be a one-time cost for hosting, implementation and training and then ongoing support and maintenance fees.

Comments:

If the Service Request component is moved over, would residents still be able to make requests on the website? Yes, it will stay on the website. There will simply be a link that connects to the Tyler software.

Voice Over IP:

The City's current phone system was purchased in 1999/2000 and has not been updated since that time. It is a land line system which currently connects City Hall and the Police Department but not the Public Works Facilities. Staff is working with IT360 to develop a Request for Proposals for a new internet-based system which will meet the needs of the City and connect all facilities. It will require all new equipment. VOIP offers substantial savings on monthly costs due to a significant reduction in land lines and the costs associated with this. Staff is still investigating this proposal and does not have a reliable budget estimate at this time. Feedback has been received from Morton and Normal, who have both gone through this process with costs ranging from \$25,000 - \$250,000. Staff would like to get feedback from the Committee on the desire to continue to move this initiative forward with a reliable estimate by the time the budget document

is presented at an upcoming work session. There would be a one-time cost for equipment and software and ongoing maintenance and fees for internet. This proposal should result in a reduced overall cost in future budgets

Comments:

Alderman Cobb fully supports this project as he has long thought the current system was antiquated.

City Code Recodification:

The City Code has been maintained by the Clerk and changes to the Code have been made and the online version and official Code of Ordinances maintained as Council action occurs. There are often State and Federal legislative actions that require code amendments on the local level as well as potential errors or missing amendments. There are several firms in Illinois that specialize in reviewing and updating Codes, identifying conflicting sections and are also knowledgeable of best practices. Staff is seeking direction from the Committee on including an estimated \$25,000 to allow for a Request for Proposals/Qualifications to seek a professional firm to perform this service for the City. There are options for a one-time service or an ongoing relationship where any future Council or legislative action is automatically updated by the company and provided to the City for an annual maintenance fee.

Comments:

Alderman Stevens supports moving forward with recodification if extra dollars are available.

Human Resource Activities:

Priority projects for the remainder of this fiscal year and into the next fiscal year include the continued review of all job descriptions as part of a classification study; a staffing study to evaluate and recommend any changes or recommendations to the City's employee distribution and makeup; a compensation study to evaluate the current pay plan and ranges and appropriate placement of employees into the ranges; and development of a comprehensive performance evaluation process. While existing staff can complete much of this work, Staff believes that we may need to look at 2 outside sources to validate and provide independent and unbiased feedback, data and recommendations. Staff is seeking feedback from the Finance & Personnel Committee on this initiative. A firm budget number will be developed to be included in the draft budget that will be presented at an upcoming meeting. A preliminary estimate is a maximum of \$25,000.

Comments:

None.

Website:

The City's website was updated several years ago and it was consistent at the time with those of other municipal websites throughout the country. Many technological and design improvements have been made in the industry and staff would like to seek direction and support for a website update. The website is a key tool used by staff, residents, visitors and private developers to gather information on the City of Washington and historical and legal information. A well-maintained and updated website is essential in providing transparency and meeting Open Meeting Act requirements for public meetings. Staff has received a preliminary proposal from the current website host and developer at a cost of \$10,500. Staff thinks that changes to this scope could be made and if direction from the Finance & Personnel Committee is received a more formal budget and schedule will be developed. This item could be undertaken this fiscal year with existing funds should the Committee wish Staff to pursue this option.

Comments:

Lili Stevens in 100% on board with any website updates. Others agree. Mayor said that we can always do a better job and keep updated with the times.

Residential Rehabilitation Grant Program:

Many cities offer grant assistance for the exterior rehabilitation of older homes. These typically involve the City providing financial support up to 50% of the cost with a minimum and maximum project cost. Such a program may be viable on the east and/or west sides of the city. The total cost would be dependent on how many homes it might assist but Staff would recommend allocating at least \$50,000 in initial funding if there was interest in a pilot program

Comments:

Ellen Dingledine asked if these types of grants are tied to income of resident?

Jon Oliphant responded that they do not necessarily need to be tied to income, but the City could make it a stipulation. Chairman Cobb stated he is in support but doesn't feel that monies should be taken out of general funds to begin this program.

In addition, the Mayor is interested in looking into this as positive option of rehabbing properties as opposed to fining residents.

Alderman Stevens reminded the group that 108 residents from the Community Feedback Survey showed support of this program; therefore, she is also in support.

Additional Business Marketing:

The current budget includes \$10,000 to use towards marketing, which is in progress with Business Builders Marketing and is focused on digital advertising for Facebook and Google. It is intended to be compatible with print and broadcast advertising undertaken by the Chamber. Digital marketing offers a lot of flexibility with a solid return on investment for a relatively small expense. In addition to continuing to incorporate digital marketing long-term, further funding could be utilized to produce videos on a variety of levels that could be placed on the City's website and other sites. A preliminary estimate is \$20,000 to complete a series of videos in addition to continuing with the digital marketing.

Comments:

Mayor stated that we need to spend whatever we can to promote the city.

Alderman Stevens is all for marketing, as long as the City is wise in its use of marketing funds. She knows we are a member, but has yet to see anything from Washington pop out from Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Citywide Wayfinding Signage:

This would be intended to have a unified and unique branding of signage to direct visitors to a variety of landmarks or facilities within the city. The desire at this point would be to delay the consideration of funding for this until after the comprehensive plan is complete in early 2021. The cost is TBD depending on the number, size, and content of any signs.

Comments:

Adlerman Cobb says to move forward with putting together our standard that will look good in our community and then we can discuss cost. Mayor reminds everyone that IDOT has restrictions and various approvals. Too many signs can be disadvantageous and we need to be careful to note what signs we already have in place.

Zinser Place Reconstruction:

The TIF district, which is currently set to expire at the end of 2021, covers about 210' of the east end of Zinser. The TIF account has previously had funds budgeted for the reconstruction of the brick street and associated water and sanitary sewer repairs. With the recent completion of the W. Holland project, staff has a template for the possible reconstruction of the other brick streets in the city. This also provides a better handle on the anticipated cost. It is estimated that \$300,000 would be sufficient for this project, including the completion of engineering. Direction is requested on whether to proceed with this project given the upcoming sunset of the TIF district and no assurance that a second extension would be granted by the State legislature. An option could be to complete the design engineering in 2021 and to then hold off on the construction until/if the life of the TIF district is extended.

Comments:

Alderman Stevens was a tour guide at the Zinser House and is a longtime Historical Society Member. She doesn't think that there is a reason to redo the brick on the street. Mayor thinks it is probably time to redo the street in the conventional way and Alderman Cobb agrees. Spending dollars on the brick is not an ideal situation.

Staffing:

Please see [Item A](#) for a complete description on staffing reorganization.

Comments:

It was noted by Ellen Dingledine that once positions are raised to a 32-hour work week standard, in this case the Accounting Assistant and HR Manager roles, the City provides access to health insurance coverage, which is over and about their hourly rate.

Job descriptions will be provided in February. Ray Forsythe appreciates the support.

B. FINANCIALS -

Overview of May 2020 – December 2020.

Documents: [Item B](#).

Comments:

As a follow-up, Ray explained that we continue to monitor revenue and expenses. As some point, the City needs to decide what is done with the CARES reimbursement funds.

C. SQUARE TIF DISTRICT EXTENSION UPDATE –

Documents: [Item C](#).

The Downtown Square TIF district was originally established in 1986. It extends to the TP&W Railroad viaduct to the west, Zinser Place to the north, one-half block east of High Street to the east, and Burton Street to the south. TIF districts in Illinois have an original 23- year establishment. They can be extended another 12 years after receiving support from the impacted taxing bodies and State legislative approval. Following that, a redevelopment plan must be created or amended that generally addresses the procedures, projects, and funds that are needed to carry out the goals over the next 12 years.

Staff has reached out to each of the taxing bodies to gauge their interest in participating in a second extension of the TIF district. At this point, both the Library and Park District have formally offered their support. Each, to some degree, have said that they are somewhat concerned about a continued reduction in property tax revenue that they receive but understand the desire to have an important tool in place to keep an older downtown relevant.

Staff seeks feedback on the possible reduction of the existing TIF district boundaries. Should there be interest in that, staff will communicate that with each of the taxing bodies so they know what the geography could be should there be approval of the extension.

Comments:

When the school and park districts and other taxing bodies set their levy amount, is the TIF district amount reduced? Yes, they get the levy that was established, but the number received from the county has a reduction from the TIF district in it.

The school's aide formula also takes into consideration the TIF. Estimated at about 25%. The City can get more information on this and there are many factors included in this and the impact.

All were in agreement that reducing TIF district makes sense.

Councilman Cobb reiterated that we have had a lot of great feedback from the businesses

around the Square that utilize TIF funds. Once money runs out, the number of projects is reduced since funds are not available.

5. Other Business:

- a. Tyler – Are residents bills available for viewing on the new Tyler system?

Yes, residents need an account to access the online portal to view bills, pay bill and see their billing history. If they need any help, residents can call City Hall.

- b. **Code Red** – Has this system been used? It is used for water main breaks. Ideally, Ray stated, we don't want to use it, since it is only used in times of emergency. Is this redundant to our e-notify system? It may be. Maureen is looking into a website redesign to analyze use of Code Red versus eNotify.

- c. **Vacations** – Please email Ray any feedback for vacations.

6. Executive Session:

- a. "The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body..." (5ILCS 120/2(2)(C)(1))
Motion by Mayor Manier, seconded by Alderman Stevens.

7. Adjournment - Meeting

Motion approved by Manier, seconded by Stevens. Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.