

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
May 20, 2024
City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Steve King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Laura Helle, Geoff Baker, Michael Postma, Joyce Poshusta, Jason Baskin, and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Parks and Recreation Director Jason Sehon, and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, KAUS Radio, Will Harmon from Thompson Sanitation

Mayor King opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Item No. 1 Transfer Station Lease

Director of Public Works Steven Lang gave an update on the transfer station. He stated the City of Austin owns the transfer station but Waste Management has been operating the transfer station up until this point. He stated Waste Management no longer wants to operate the transfer station once their lease expires. Our current lease agreement with Waste Management expires on June 30th, 2024.

Mr. Lang stated in order to make the ATS financially viable, the tipping fees and volume of waste need to generate enough revenue to cover:

- Staff and operations
- Utilities
- Transportation costs to Central Disposal Landfill, Lake Mills, IA
- Tipping fees at Central Disposal Landfill, Lake Mills, IA

Mr. Lang stated Thompson Sanitation is picking up about 60% of the trash in Austin. He stated the transfer station provides the citizens a place to dispose of their waste without having a private contractor involved. He noted 12% of the waste that comes to the transfer station is from the public.

Mr. Lang gave the following options for continued operation of the Austin Transfer Station:

- 1) Close the Austin Transfer Station.
- 2) City operate the Austin Transfer Station.
- 3) Mower County to take over operations of the Austin Transfer Station. Mr. Lang stated he has spoken with Mower County and they are not interested in this at this time.

- 4) Enter into a month-to-month agreement with WM to manage the Austin Transfer Station until a final decision can be made. This would likely involve the City paying WM in the range of \$25K-\$30K to continue operations on a monthly basis beginning in July 2024.
- 5) Continue to lease the facility for private operations. Mr. Lang stated Thompson Sanitation has given a proposal for a seven-year agreement. Revenue to the City would be about \$22,000 per year.

The City Council stated they are on board with creating a lease agreement with Thompson Sanitation for the operation of the transfer station.

Mr. Lang stated the only issues that Thompson Sanitation may face is obtaining trailers to haul the refuse. They are looking into this issue now. They would use roll-off trailers until they are able to secure the proper trailers for transport.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin to review and approve a lease agreement with Thompson Sanitation for the operation of the transfer station. Carried.

The item will be on the June 3, 2024 Council Agenda.

Item No. 2 Sound Wall Discussion

Director of Public Works Steven Lang requested Council input on the design of the sound wall that will be placed along I-90 from 4th Street NW to the Cedar River. Mr. Lang had two photos in his presentation and the majority of Council Members chose photo two as the design for the wall.

Council Member Postma asked if there was a cost difference and Mr. Lang stated that MnDOT did not indicate if there would be any difference in the cost.

- Photo one: Council Member Postma
- Photo two: Council Member Austin, Baker, Baskin, Fischer, Poshusta
- Neither: Council Member Helle

Mr. Lang will move forward with the suggestion and will bring any future information to the Council as he receives it.

Item No. 3 Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark gave an update on the Sicora employee survey and stated that there has been 75% participation thus far.

Open Discussion

None.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adjourning the meeting at 7:04 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brianne Wolf, City Clerk