

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
June 3, 2024
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Assistant City Engineer Mitch Wenum, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Park and Rec Director Jason Sehon, City Attorney Craig Byram, Human Resources Director Tricia Wiechmann, and City Clerk Brianne Wolf

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, Will Harmon from Thompson Sanitation Inc.

Mayor Steve King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He then introduced Honorary Council Member Isaac Oboya.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Postma, approving the agenda. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fisher, approving Council minutes from May 20, 2024. Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving the consent agenda as follows:

Licenses:

Exempt Gambling: Mower County Veterans Council on July 3 & 4, 2024

Mobile Business: Sunny's Ice Cream, 1013 5th Avenue NE

Mobile Business: La Michoacana Minnesota Inc, Waseca, MN

Mobile Business: Mami Churros & Creamery, Albert Lea, MN

Right of Way: Universal Service's LLC, Woodbury, MN

Temporary Liquor: Gravity Storm Brewery Cooperative on July 3 & 4, 2024

Temporary Liquor: Austin Community Education Fund on July 9, 2024

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of Bills
- b. Credit Card Report

Event Applications:

Freedom Festival on July 3 & 4, 2024

Algorithm 4th Annual Bike Show on June 16, 2024

Carried.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Public Works Director Steven Lang discussed changes to the lease agreement with Thompson Sanitation for the operation of the Austin Transfer Station. He stated there were changes to the terms. There will be the initial one-year term and then it would proceed into three two-year terms. A baseline on the tonnage rate has been set at 1,300 tons per month.

The City is responsible for maintenance and repair. Mr. Lang stated that if the scale were to go down or equipment were to go down for more than three business days, the monthly lease would be adjusted accordingly.

Council Member Baker would like to see the language toned down to excessive down time.

Mr. Lang stated public hours have increased. He stated Exhibits A & B only had rate changes. Exhibits C through F were from the previous contract with Waste Management and brought over into the Thompson Sanitation Lease Agreement.

Council Member Postma wanted to know how much time had to be given if Thompson Sanitation wanted to cancel their contract. Mr. Lang stated it would be six months.

Council Member Baskin wanted to know how much time it takes the City to get the scales or equipment repaired if it goes down. Mr. Lang stated it takes a contractor approximately one day to two days to fix it.

Council Member Baker stated there is no language about hazardous materials and accepting paint. He would like that clarified in the lease agreement.

The Council approves the lease agreement with the changes requested.

Moved by Council Member Postma seconded by Council Member Baker to adopt a resolution approving a lease agreement with Thompson Sanitation Inc. to include the changes requested by Council. Carried 7-0.

Park and Rec Director Jason Sehon stated there are approximately 2,000 ash trees on City maintained property. They are in the process of treating approximately 500 ash trees. They need to figure out how to remove 1,500 ash trees. He stated the parks crew can remove approximately 800 trees over a four-year period. He is being conservative with this number. Mr. Sehon would

like to propose that the Park and Recreation Department contract to have an additional 175 ash trees removed annually over a three-to-four-year period.

Mr. Sehon would like to get bids on this project. He is estimating this might cost over a million dollars over the four-year period.

Council Member Baker asked what the average cost is for City staff to remove an ash tree.

Mr. Sehon stated for the City, on average, to remove a tree it costs approximately \$1,000-\$1,200.

Council Member Baskin would like more information about the total costs for removal, the long-term costs, and a cost benefits analysis.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert stated the predecessor was also looking to hire additional staff to assist with tree trimming. He recommended seeing where the bids come in and to get a more accurate analysis of costs.

Moved by Council Member Baker seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a request to obtain bids for tree trimming. Carried

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Baskin, accepting donations to the City of Austin. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Postma, to grant the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 506 12th Street NE, Brito De Rouge Property. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baker, to grant the Planning and Zoning Department the power to contract for the removal of junk and/or illegally stored vehicles at 1306 11th Street NW, Hastings Property. Carried.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Representative Patricia Mueller gave a report on the legislative session.

City Administrator Craig Clark stated 4th Avenue Fest is on June 5th from 4pm to 8pm, and invited all to attend. He noted this is the first meeting without Jason Grant from KAUS. He stated this is a loss for our community and in keeping people informed about what is going on in our local government. We will miss him being here.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Helle invited everyone to attend 4th Avenue Fest at Mill Pond. She thanked Steven Lang and the Public Works Department on the quick work on making the best possible outcome happen with the transfer station.

Council Member Postma stated that KAUS is no longer doing any local coverage and we only have the Austin Daily Herald covering our local news so he is encouraging people to subscribe to help keep the Austin Daily Herald and local news around.

Council Member Baker stated that after spending some time with Sicora this last week, he would like to see Mr. Clark and his staff define what success looks like. He would like to know how do we measure success. He also stated we have six months until benefits renewal is up and he would like administration to start to look at what the strategies are and how we can do a better job of communication.

Council Member-at-Large Austin stated that filing for office closes tomorrow at 5:00 p.m. if you are interested in running.

Council Member Baskin congratulated all the recent graduates. He echoed the sentiment for KAUS. He expressed his condolences to the Minneapolis police officer that lost his life this past weekend.

Council Member Fischer stated if you are out and about and see a bad ash tree to report it to the Park and Rec. Department.

Council Member Poshusta welcomed Isaac, the Honorary Council Member and echoed the sentiment of losing Jason from KAUS.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adjourning the meeting to June 17, 2024. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:25 p.m.

Approved: June 17, 2024

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____