

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA QUESTIONS/COMMENTS AS OF October 23, 2011 at 9:30 PM
FOR THE OCTOBER 24, 2011 COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF RESPONSES**

Councilman: Purcell

Item 6D-Consent Agenda: "Purchase of a Ford F250 for the Parks Division"

Question/Comment: "Please describe how the Parks Department has used the 1996 GMC 2500 in their operations? How often is the truck used? Will the new truck be used in the same manner in the future?"

Staff Response: The 1996 GMC 2500 pickup truck is used to support the operations of the forestry crews within Park Maintenance. It is used to pull the water tank to water newly planted trees, flowers bed maintenance and flower pots in the downtown area. The truck is also used to pull the stump grinder for stump removals where trees have been removed. The new Ford F250 will be utilized in the same manner. The vehicle is used five days per week and forty hours per week.

Councilman: Mwilambwe

Item 6E- Consent Agenda: "Purchase of a Ford F 150 for the Water Department"

Questions/Comment: "Why did this come in so much lower than budgeted? Not micromanaging, simply trying to increase my understanding of how things work."

Staff Response: Staff is making every effort to lessen the items required on vehicles where possible. Vehicle budgets are set prior to working on specifications with each Department. As the Fleet Utilization Study moves forward, any gap between what has been needed in the past and what is specified in the future will be reduced.

Councilman: Purcell

Item 6E-Consent Agenda: "Purchase of a Ford F150 for the Water Department"

Question/Comment: "The purchase price of \$17,950 appears too high when compared with advertisements for similar new F150 trucks. Please comment?"

Staff Response: The Illinois Joint Purchasing Contract is a competitively bid process and is being used for the purchase of this vehicle. There are many different variations on each vehicle, so it is difficult to compare what a Vendor might put in the paper compared to the specified vehicle in our competitive bid.

Councilman: Purcell

Item 6G-Consent Agenda: "Change Order to the Contract with A & R Mechanical Contractors, Inc. for the Replacement of Damaged Lime Fill Lines at the Water Treatment Plant"

Question/Comment: "It seems like the work order includes too much labor to replace the damaged lime fill lines. How much labor is really necessary to complete this work? Is this an example of the Contractor bidding too low to complete the original project and then overcompensating for it by inflating the change order labor quote to make up for it?"

Staff Response: The amount of labor to complete this addition to the dust collector replacement project is an estimate provided by the Contractor installing the dust collector system. The City will only be charged for the labor necessary to complete this project. There will be a substantial amount of labor because this work will require a great deal of scaffolding installation and construction from the scaffolding as the lime fill lines run near ground level to the top of the lime storage bins. This is a vertical run of nearly 45 feet. As such, there will be a great deal of hosting, blocking and construction of heavy piping and fittings in areas well above ground level. The lime fill lines will be replaced on both lime storage bins since we have discovered problems with the lines into one of the bins. This is most definitely not a case of the Contractor bidding low and then trying to make up the difference through change orders. The lime fill lines were never considered to be a part of this project and were never

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included in the scope of the project. In the course of preparing for the installation of scaffolding for the dust collector system replacement, it was discovered that during a lime delivery, the lime fill lines had actual locations where the piping had worn out and dust was leaking from the pipes themselves. This was not discovered earlier because the entire lime storage room becomes dusty due to the failure of the dust collection equipment. The dust in the room during deliveries and the fact that the lines run nearly 45 feet vertically masked any problems with these lines. Since the Contractor who had been awarded the lime dust collection system replacement project based upon competitive bidding was already mobilized, was installing scaffolding for the dust collection system replacement work and could perform the additional work in a timely fashion, a quotation was requested from the firm. Using the competitively bid labor rates from their initial bid, with the City providing the materials to keep lower, A&R Mechanical, Inc., provided an estimate of the cost to complete the requested additional work. There simply is not enough time to take this additional work to competitive bidding.

Councilman: Fazzini

Item 6I and 6J-Consent Agenda: "Professional Services Contracts for the Bloomington Center for Performing Arts"

Question/Comment: "Why are there two identical requests to two separate companies for \$15,000 and \$40,000?"

Staff Response: The reason for two separate agenda items for the two different upcoming BCPA performances is strictly a timing issue. One Council backup report was submitted in advance for one performance. A subsequent performance contract needing approval in a timely manner was submitted by the performing agency, just prior to the Council Agenda deadline. Staff decided it was more efficient to add the second item instead of combing the new item with the older item. These are two separate contracts with two different entities.

Councilman: Anderson

Item 6I-Consent Agenda: "Professional Services Contracts for the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts"

Question/Comment: "How will we address the budget shortfall and the way we evaluate a successful performance?"

Staff Response: The BCPA subsidy level was the topic of a Work Session on October 10, 2011. No specific recommendations were given during this discussion. Staff will work on a report that will give recommendations for the FY2013 Budget to address the deficit.

Councilman: Anderson

Item 6J-Consent Agenda: "Professional Services Contracts for the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts"

Question/Comment: "How will we address the budget shortfall and the way we evaluate a successful performance?"

Staff Response: Same response as above.

Councilman: Mwilambwe

Item 6L-Consent Agenda: "Ordinance Amending Section 2 of the Bloomington City Code, Regarding the Number of Firefighter Candidates to be interviewed in Establishing an Eligibility List"

Question/Comment: "Are there reasons for doing this other than the obvious time savings?"

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Staff Response: There are no other reasons. The Citizen's Board has to individually review each candidate as mandated by State Law.

Councilman: Mwilambwe

Item 6M- Consent Agenda: "Client Agreement with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois"

Question/Comment: "Where does our Wellness Plan fit into this? Was it ever a consideration?"

Staff Response: The \$400.00 deductible plans are Wellness Plans. Both the PPO and HMO plans offered by the City include a wellness component. This was incorporated into the plans when the higher deductible plan was created. Classified employees were moved to the \$400.00 deductible, Wellness Plans in January of 2009. Staff has been negotiating to increase to the \$400.00 deductible, Wellness Plans. See attached table which represents the status of those negotiations.

Councilman: Fazzini

Item 6M-Consent Agenda: "Client Agreement with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois"

Question/Comment: "Is the 75% to 25% split for payment by city versus employees anticipated to continue, or is change to 50% anticipated sometime in the near future to more closely resemble the private sector?"

Staff Response: The City has worked within a strategic plan of phasing in changes to the health insurance plans. Initially, the City implemented/negotiated an employee contribution for health insurance premiums where it was previously non-existent for single coverage. The current strategy is to move all employee groups to the 75/25 split and then to the higher deductible/wellness plans. HR will be assessing the City's plans and developing a recommendation for next steps. HR has not been successful in capturing data from local private sector employers for the employer/employee ratio. Data obtained from the City's comparable municipal employer/employee communities indicates the City is leading on the employer/employee ratio for premiums. Additionally, the employer/employee ratio for dental and vision is a 50/50 split. Again Retirees would pay the full premium.

Councilman: Anderson

Item 6M-Consent Agenda: "Client Agreement with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois"

Question/Comment: "Just a note of reference. My premium increased by \$220 a month for family coverage by my Employer"

Staff Response: Staff is not sure what percentage the \$220 a month increase for family coverage represents. The percentage increases for the City's plans are projected to be at or below national averages.

Councilwoman: Stearns

Item 6M – Consent Agenda: "Client Agreement with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois"

Question/Comment: "When is the last time these services were put out for bid? Would it be possible to solicit bids on any part of these?"

Staff Response: The stop loss was bid last year and this year as reference in the council memo. The City's broker, Phil Sauder, does comparative shopping for the best benefit for the City's plans. This has included accessing the Health Alliance Plan through the McLean County Chamber of Commerce. We are restricted by union contracts in our ability to replace the Blue Cross Blue Shield plan with a comparable provider network.

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Councilman: Anderson

Item 60-Consent Agenda: "Authorization to Seek Requests for Proposals (RFP) from Electric Energy Brokers for a Possible Energy Aggregation Program"

Question/Comment: "I am not sure the direction as a City we should take on this proposal. Should a Committee of citizens be formed prior to the RFP or will the RFP identify and clarify the responsibility of the City and Broker?"

Staff Response: Given Council's direction, these items could be included in the RFP.

Councilman: Sage

Item 8A-Regular Agenda: "Pay Day Loans"

Question/Comment: "What is the nature of this Agenda Item? The time limit suggests this is simply a status update following the Court decision?"

Staff Response: Staff will be providing an update.

Councilman: Sage

Item 8B-Regular Agenda: "Ryan Scritchlow requesting the Rezoning from R-1C Single Family Residential District to B-2 General Business District for the property located at 1906 S. Morris Avenue"

Question/Comment: "Perhaps I missed an email, but this appears to be the same proposal as last time. As I know Councilman Anderson was keenly interested in this, I'll wait for and appreciate any updated information he has to share."

Staff Response: It is Staff's understanding that this item may be tabled tonight in order to schedule a meeting with the neighbors to further discuss this petition. Councilman Anderson will be working with Staff to schedule a time and date for the meeting. Attached is a letter that the City Manager received from the Petitioner's Attorney, Frank Miles.

Councilman: Purcell

Item 8C-Regular Agenda: "Bloomington Public Library"

Question/Comment: "The budget message states that "every morning 10 to 15 people wait for the Library to open its doors." I have heard comments that many of these people are homeless and come to the library to play computer games for several hours? Is there any truth to this statement?"

Staff Response: The short answer is no, there is no truth to this statement. Computer time is limited to 90 minutes per day to give fair access to all. To use the computers, the patron must register with their library card. To obtain a library card, you must prove residency in Bloomington. Staff filters our computers for inappropriate sites, but otherwise do not restrict what the customers view during their 90 minutes. Staff would tell you that most users are checking email, surfing the Internet, looking for a job, doing homework, or conducting business of some kind. Teens are allowed to play games in the Teen Zone; adults are not. As to the homeless, this is a public building and all are welcome. We do have a policy that specifies the expectations for users of the library (see attached) and our security guards see that it is followed.

Councilman: Sage

Item 8C-Regular Agenda: "Bloomington Public Library"

Question/Comment: "The Library comments seem to suggest the Board has already determined that an east-side branch will be built. This seems premature given the ongoing conversations between the Board and the Aldermen Sub-Committee."

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Staff Response: The Library Board feels that an eastside branch is needed. Staff agrees that the decision as to whether or not it will be built is premature. The Library Board is discussing a needs and services assessment study currently. Staff will be trying to find another meeting date in the near future for the sub-committee.

Councilman: Fazzini

Item 8D-Regular Agenda: "An Ordinance Providing for Demolition Permit Schedules and Remedies"

Question/Comment: "Will any extension of an agreed upon deadline require City Council approval?"

Staff Response: No, Staff does have the flexibility to allow extension for unforeseen circumstances in many sections of our City Code.

Councilman: Anderson

Item 8D-Regular Agenda: "An Ordinance Providing for Demolition Permit Schedules and Remedies"

Question/Comment: "I had also recommended to the City Manager that the Ordinance include final grade requirements and seeding if no new construction starts within 6 months. This will reduce erosion (IEPA) and improve curb appearance. Property would then be managed under existence property ordinance."

Staff Response: There are applicable City Codes on the books that will address these questions.

Councilman: Fazzini

Item 8E-Regular Agenda: "Introduction to Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems"

Question/Comment: "One of the financial impact statements says that fire suppression systems may decrease insurance expenses, which is a direct contradiction to what the home builders claim will actually occur with insurance premiums anticipated to increase. This should be clarified prior to the meeting."

Staff Response: Insurance companies are protective about how they structure their fees for insurance policies and every insurer differs on their treatment of the inclusion of fire sprinklers. While big reductions are not expected there should be some reduction. Every effort will be made to provide documentation as to industry standards prior to final action on this topic.

Councilman: Sage

Item 8E-Regular Agenda: "Introduction to Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems"

Question/Comment: "Is it correct that a 2012 State update has been released? Would it be more prudent to consider this new version?"

Staff Response: When the State of Illinois adopted the Illinois Residential Building Code Act it was written in such a way that could include the latest edition of the International Code Council's (ICC) International Residential Code (IRC). The 2012 edition of the codes were recently released by the ICC. However, there is pending legislation that would change the Building Code Act to a code specific. Staff is not sure where this may go. Since the 2012 editions are so new, there has been little time to evaluate them for changes and Staff is hesitant to push back the adoption of the current editions after the amount of work put in to bring us to date. Adoption of the 2009 editions will also put the City on an even playing field with the Town of Normal.

Prepared by:
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