

Council Questions/Comments and Staff Responses Report for March 25, 2013

as of March 25, 2013 at 11:41am

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Alderwoman: Jennifer McDade

Comment: I have no questions at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Alderman: Rob Fazzini

Item 6C: Approval of Resolution to Purchase 28,201 square feet of land from the Illinois Department of Transportation along Veterans Parkway at Hamilton Road in the amount of \$55,400

Question/Comment: What is the value of the Marti Rave Greenwood Avenue right of way lying to the west of Mr. Rave's property for which the City of Bloomington is paying \$56,400? How was the value determined? My question is related to the value of the Rave's property, not the value of the property purchased from IDOT?

Staff Response: The Rave property (204 Greenwood Ave) was appraised by IDOT in August of 2002, when it was owned by Kendra Coleman. The appraiser was Gary Larson. The City has a copy of the appraisal. The property was 46,696 sq. ft., which included a single family house. Fair market value was determined to be \$350,200.00 (\$7.50 per sq.ft.). As stated in the 2003 report, Marti Rave purchased the property within one year from the date of the Council report, at a price of \$9.00 per square foot. The price of the IDOT property is \$1,999 per square foot (\$56,400 divided by 28,201 sq. ft.).

Alderman: Rob Fazzini

Item 6D: Ratification of Contract with Lodge 1000 for the period of May 1, 2012 until April 30, 2014

Question/Comment: How many employees will receive the \$500 signing bonus? What is the total cost to the City of Bloomington?

Staff Response: There are 38 members in the Lodge 1000 bargaining unit. At \$500 per employee, the total onetime cost to the City is \$19,000.

Alderman: Rob Fazzini

Item 6G: Renewal of Towing Bid 10,000 GVW and Under to Joe's Towing & Recovery

Question/Comment: What was the annual referral fee the City of Bloomington earned in 2012 for tow referrals from the Police Department?

Staff Response: The City receives two types of revenue in regards to Tow Service. First, the City receives an annual payment of \$47,500 from the tow vendor. This payment is deposited into the City's General Fund: 10010010-57990. Secondly, when the Police Department seizes a vehicle due to specific infraction the owner of the vehicle is required to pay the Police Department a \$10 release fee that is deposited into the City's General Fund: 10015110-54460 (in FY 2012 the City collected \$9,640), in addition to the owner paying an ordinance fee (in FY 2012 the City collected \$280,700) before the vehicle can be released by the Police Department. In FY 2012, the City collected a total of \$337,840.

Alderwoman: Judy Stearns

Item 6G: Renewal of Towing Bid 10,000 GVW and Under to Joe's Towing & Recovery

Questions/Comment:

1. I have heard from individuals whose car was towed that the storage fees are exorbitant and that we in fact could have input into that. I have read the proposed contract, but I have not seen the fees that will be charged to the owner of the towed vehicle. Would you please review these

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charges and let me know if we have the option of negotiating a reasonable storage fees, and any other understanding about fees charged to individuals whose car was towed?

a. **Staff Response:** See attachment from Asst. Chief Wall and the Towing Fees Survey.

Note: Joe's storage fees are within the range of other towing companies.

2. I do not understand exactly how the towing is calculated nor do I understand how the storage is calculated (calendar day or 24 hour period), so I need clarification on all the charges. Further, with all due apologies, I am not comparing to other companies but only whether it is a reasonable charge. In addition, I need to know what the charge is for an individual to retrieve this personal property from the car.

a. **Staff Response:** See attachment from Asst. Chief Wall and Towing Fees Survey.

Alderwoman: Karen Schmidt

Item 6G: Renewal of Towing Bid 10,000 GVW and Under to Joe's Towing & Recovery

Question/Comment: Thank you Judy for raising these questions. I have the same question: how much control do we have over how much a tow company charges when the company is under contract with the city?

Staff Response: See attachment from Asst. Chief Wall and Towing Fees Survey.

Alderman: Jim Fruin

Item 6G: Renewal of Towing Bid 10,000 GVW and Under to Joe's Towing & Recovery

Question/Comment: I echo the concerns and Judy and Karen, and remember expressing a concern with a specific Towing situation of a couple of months ago, with storage charges over a weekend, when the yard was not even open to retrieve the car. I THINK the charges was about \$250. It was a nightmare for the individual (who I believe was from out of town). A bad deal.

Staff Response: See attachment from Asst. Chief Wall and Towing Fees Survey.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Alderman: Jamie Mathy

Item 7A: Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year FY 2014 Recommended Budget

Questions/Comments: As I'm continuing my study of the budget, I have some questions about employees, positions and compensation packages. Rather than ask a bunch of inane questions, I am hoping you could provide me with a few pieces of information:"

1. A detailed organization chart of City Staff, from the Mayor down. I would like am interested in everything down to 1 layer below what is considered administration. If we have contract employees filling in places on the org chart, I would like to see that also. The bottom layer probably just says something like "#25 public work staff" or something like that.
 - a. **Staff Response:** Staff is working on a response and will distribute it as soon as possible to the City Council.
2. A spreadsheet of the same with compensation, years of service, and estimated pension benefits (including what % of the employee pays into their pension). I think this is the list Judy and I asked for at the budget session and is all public information.
 - a. **Staff Response:** Staff is working on a response and will distribute it as soon as possible to the City Council.
3. Also, I am still waiting for that information on borrowing money that I asked for last week.

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- a. **Staff Response:** City Manager and Finance Director is working on a response and will distribute it to the City Council at the meeting tonight.

Alderwoman: Judy Stearns

Item 7A: Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year FY 2014 Recommended Budget

Questions/Comments:

1. If we look at all the bills paid to consultants last year, Sikich, Farnsworth, Lane Wittman Hydro, and Pritchard and Osborne and any I am not aware of, what is the total amount billed and paid or outstanding with the City?
 - a. **Staff Response:** Staff is working on a response and will email it to the City Council as soon as possible.
2. How many studies have we done on Solid Waste? How many different studies have we completed on Managed Competition?
 - a. **Staff Response:** Staff is working on a Solid Waste Study that is being done internally. Three (3) interim reports have been distributed to the City Council and a final report will be distributed in late April or early May.
3. If Sikich is retained to do management studies, should they also be performing the City's Audit? How many positions have been added to the Administration Budget or to Economic Development for last year and this year? I do not support new administrative positions added to the budget such as communications manager or public affairs officer. I do support public safety hires.
 - a. **Staff Response:** Staff is working on responses and will distribute it to the City Council as soon as possible.
4. Looking at the large deficit in the storm water fund, \$814,768.00, what is our plan to approach a solution—will this put pressure on the general fund?
 - a. **Staff Response:** Staff is working on responses and will distribute it to the City Council as soon as possible.
5. Based on the proposed budget, how will our debt ratio change from that of last year and the year before that?
 - a. **Staff Response:** Staff is working on responses and will distribute it to the City Council as soon as possible.
6. Please confirm my impression that if Eagle View Park is funded, the money will come from the Reserve Fund?
 - a. **Staff Response:** As presented at the Saturday Budget Work Session, the City Manager recommended that the funding come from "Fund Balance".
7. I have analyzed the last 4 budgets and in an attempt to look at apples to apples and correct for all of the things we have taken out of the general fund, I believe the general fund of 2009 total of \$76,646,272 would now be \$87,578,031. This adds in capital equipment, capital improvement and ERI payments as well as the solid waste subsidies. In considering staff needs, I understand and wish to confirm that the city has hired several full time interns to do studies and perform administrative duties. I understand they are paid \$15.00 per hour plus receive an \$800.00 housing allowance per month. Please explain how many of these interns we have and what their duties are. Thank you.

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- a. **Staff Response:** There are six (6) Graduate Management Interns and one (1) Stevenson Center Graduate Intern. The Graduate Management Interns and Stevenson Center Graduate Intern are assigned throughout City departments to work on higher level Action Agenda Items and have assisted the departments with various other needs. None of the interns receive benefits and the internship last from 9 to 12 months.

Alderman: Rob Fazzini

Item 7A: Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year FY 2014 Recommended Budget

Questions/Comments: Prior to voting on the budget, I would like to have a better idea regarding the \$1,050,000 being budgeted for three new Street Lights at current Intersections. We should know how many Streets Lights at current Intersections were installed each of the past five years and how many are planned for each of the next five years. It would be valuable to know how many are in the queue at this time to be installed. If public safety is the main reason for the three planned for 2013, or is the adverse effect on business of not having the Street Lights at the intersections the main reason? If it is safety, then we need to consider the safety issue related to proposed Eagle View Park compared to the proposed new Street Lights.

Staff Response: Staff is working on responses and will distribute it to the City Council as soon as possible.

Prepared by: Barbara J. Adkins, Deputy City Manager