

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
City Hall Council Chambers
March 16, 2015

Council present: Aldermen Judy Stearns, Mboka Mwilambwe, Joni Painter, Jim Fruin, Diana Hauman, Kevin Lower, Scott Black, Karen Schmidt and David Sage, and Mayor Tari Renner.

Staff present: David Hales, City Manager and Renee Gooderham, Interim City Clerk.

Alderman Mwilambwe participated remotely via telephone.

Mayor Renner called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Renner opened the Public Comment section of the meeting. He added that there would not be a response from the Committee under the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Julian Sigler, 904 W. Grove St., addressed the Council. He believed the Solid Waste (SW) Program had a fee associated with same. He stated the SW fee approval would result in citizens stock piling items. This would require more code enforcement. SW should be moved from an Enterprise Fund to General Fund (GF).

Josh Schmidgall, 2212 Beacon Ct., addressed the Council. He believed that a Downtown strategy would be approved. He believed citizens were being forced to live in similar ways as Chicago, IL and St. Louis, MO.

Gary Lambert, 3018 E. Oakland Ave., addressed the Council. He believed purchasing software to report potholes was not required. He stated that road maintenance was not included in the budget.

MINUTES

Motion by Alderman Painter, seconded by Alderman Schmidt that the reading of the minutes of the Committee of the Whole of November 17, 2014 be dispensed with and the minutes approved as printed.

Motion carried, (viva voce).

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM – FEES AND SERVICES

Mayor Renner introduced the topic.

David Hales, City Manager, addressed the Council. He requested Council direction on SW changes and fee structure. He recommended the following: 1.) no charge for brush service

removal; 2.) bulk waste fee reduced to \$25 per bucket and 3.) transfer \$1.5 million from the GF to SW. Staff recommendations would avoid same. Mr. Hales explained that SW would have a \$1/2 million projected FY16 deficit. Staff would review efficiencies over the summer to address same. Possible efficiencies: frequency of brush and bulk waste pick up service or modifications to the three (3) crew model. Citizens would change habits with the \$25 fee. Mr. Hales noted labor costs and equipment maintenance associated with SW.

Alderman Fruin concurred with the not charging for brush pick up. He recommended the first (1st) SW bucket not have a fee associated with same. The second (2nd) bucket would be charged \$50. He believed staff should enforce refuse cart lid closure. The refuse fee should be \$25 monthly regardless of size.

Alderman Schmidt believed not charging for brush pick up was best. She questioned SW as an Enterprise Fund (EF). Citizens wanted SW simplified. She appreciated that SW crews would assist with efficiencies.

Alderman Painter believed \$50 for bulk waste would cause dumping in other areas. She stated that previous fee charges were up to crew discretion. Any fees associated with SW should be for everyone and fair. She appreciated removal of the brush pick up fee. She noted that SW assisted with snow removal and alley clean up.

Alderman Stearns appreciated comments from the SW crews and citizens. She believed SW was a core service. It was the heart of what a city does. She questioned EF as a proper place for SW. She questioned what made up a bucket load. She echoed Alderman Fruin's comments on BW. Enforcing dumping rules was impossible. Entertainment venues should be reprioritized.

Alderman Sage concurred with Mr. Hales' \$25 fee recommendation. Increased efficiencies was the priority. He suggested citizen's call for BW and brush pick up bi weekly.

Alderman Lower stated support for the SW crews. He believed current rules be enforced. He was not in favor of any changes. He believed that SW be subsidized through the GF and property tax. Reduction in pick up frequency could affect property values. He believed there were city services that were not core that could be reduced. The following departments were core to the city: Police, Fire, Public Works, and Water. Private tree removal could have a cost associated with same.

Alderman Black noted that a Ward meeting with Aldermen Sage and Schmidt was held on March 10, 2015. Citizens wanted to pay for services utilized. Apartment turnover and bulk from same should be addressed. He questioned what constituted a bucket load. He requested specific BW pick up scenarios. He echoed Alderman Stearns reference dumping enforcement. He suggested increased fines. SW should not be an EF. Raising property taxes should be reviewed. He requested feedback from BW crews.

Mayor Renner suggested the \$25 fee and providing free stickers for certain times of the year.

Alderman Hauman stated that the city's purpose was to provide citizens with services they were unable to obtain on their own. She believed that refuse pick up assisted with maintaining a clean city. Dumping was a concern. She suggested a refuse fee increase. To move away from charging for SW bucket loads. The program should be simpler. The goal should be to close the deficit.

Alderman Mwilambwe stated his appreciation for the compromise to remove brush pick up charges. He noted that citizens go out of their way to not pay for additional refuse bags. Staff efficiency was the solution before fee increases.

Mayor Renner requested Council specifics and/or ideas emailed to Mr. Hales by Friday, March 20, 2015.

PUBLIC PROTECTION CLASSIFICATION

David Hales, City Manager, addressed the Council. He cited the milestone achieved. He noted the Fire and Water Department collaboration to increase the Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating.

Brian Mohr, Fire Chief, addressed the Council. He provided a brief history of ISO. ISO was widely used by insurance companies to reduce premiums. There was the potential of an eight percent (8%) reduction in same. ISO collected data analyzing same using the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule.

The highest rating was one (1); the City received a two (2) rating. The rating was achieved by working the Water Department and establishment of the fire hydrant testing program. Other factors involved were: building the all hazards training facility, development of the command training center, development of the probationary firefighter task manual and the fire priority dispatch system.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710, to maintain ISO rating #2 the following was required: 1.) continue to improve six (6) minute response times; 2.) supporting current Fire Department deployment model; 3.) maintaining minimum staffing requirements; 4.) maintaining current training hours and 5.) continued fire hydrant inspection program.

Alderman Sage acknowledged collaboration across departments.

Alderman Black noted the response time challenges for Fiscal Year 2016. He requested strategies and costs associated to increase ISO rating.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES

George Boyle, Corporation Counsel, addressed the Council. He provided Council copies of Public Act 098-1173, Transportation Network Providers Act. He explained that the State had passed same requiring Municipalities to allow Transportation Network Companies (TNC) to

operate beginning June 1, 2015. He was currently working with the City Clerk's office and Police Department to draft an ordinance.

The City and Town of Normal (TON) had an Intergovernmental Agreement allowing Taxi Cabs and Vehicle for Hire (VFH) companies to operate in both jurisdictions. The goal was to provide safe, reliable, affordable and accessible transportation. Responsibility/accountability of companies and drivers insures same. He explained the company and driver licensing process. He noted that there were fifty – six (56) vehicles which were inspected twice a year by a state approved mechanic and the Police Department. Insurance was required for same. Taxicab companies were required to operate seven (7) days a week, twenty – four (24) hours a day. Rates for same were fixed. Enforcement was through sanctions for noncompliance.

Alderman Sage left the dais at 6:41 p.m.

The TNC ordinance would be incorporated into Chapter 40 Taxicabs. TNC was defined as entity which operates using a digital network or software application to connect passengers to services. The Act states that a TNC does not own, control, operate, or manage the vehicles used by its drivers. Nor is same considered a taxicab company or VFH owner. A TNC driver was defined as an individual who operates a vehicle that is: 1) owned, leased, or otherwise authorized for use by the individual; 2.) not a taxicab or VFH and 3.) used to provide TNC services. Mr. Boyle explained that the Act requires TNC to maintain insurance should the driver not, drivers to submit an application relating driving history and criminal background, and drivers provide insurance to same. The Act does not monitor same was completed/maintained.

Alderman Sage returned at 6:42 p.m.

Mr. Boyle cited concerns that the City would be monitoring various business entities with various backgrounds. The goal was to ensure public safety. He explained that staff would use home rule authority to provide monitoring. Mr. Boyle acknowledged that Wayne Karplus, Deputy Corporation Counsel for the TON was attending tonight's meeting. He cited the following concerns: no consequences for companies and/or drivers who fail to follow the act, possible insurance gaps and current staffing resources.

Alderman Lower left the dais at 6:48 p.m.

Staff was working to ensure public safety, affordability reliability and fairness to operating taxicab and VFH companies. Staff would continue to work with the TON, reach out to taxicab and VFH companies. He requested Council direction and type of regulation. The plan was to present an ordinance on the April 13, 2015 Council meeting. He noted that this was uncharted territory.

Mayor Renner believed TNC was the future. Current transportation providers would converge with TNC.

Alderman Black questioned not having a TNC ordinance. Mr. Boyle believed in the absence of ordinance state law was the defacto.

Alderman Black questioned TNC drivers operating. Mayor Renner stated that the Act takes effect June 1, 2015. Drivers operating as a TNC were doing so illegally.

Mayor Renner requested Council specifics/ideas emailed to Mr. Boyle by Friday, March 20, 2015.

FORMATION OF DOWNTOWN SIGNAGE

Alderman Fruin left the dais at 6:57 p.m.

David Hales, City Manager, addressed the Council. He requested conceptual consent from Council for the formation of the Downtown Signage Committee (DTC). A Resolution would be brought before Council at future meeting. Same would provide DTC direction and length.

Jim Karch, Public Works Director, addressed the Council. He read the city's Vision Statement. The DTC would focus on assisting visitors find their way to various places in the downtown. DTC would determine location of signs, design/style and costs/funding.

Alderman Hauman suggested not limiting signs to the Downtown area. Mr. Karch noted that same could be researched. Mr. Hales explained that signage on the Interstate would require working with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Bloomington Normal Visitors and Convention Center.

Alderman Sage questioned costs. Mr. Karch noted that in November 2103 the Downtown Strategy listed signage as a recommendation. City staff could make the signs to reduce costs.

Alderman Schmidt recognized the Downtown Business Association's assistance with same. Mr. Karch stated same was a key stakeholder.

Alderman Stearns questioned DTC member selection. Mr. Hales stated that the Mayor would appointment same, which would be incorporated into the Resolution.

MY BLOOMINGTON REQUEST MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Scott Sprouls, Information Services Director, addressed the Council. He explained that My Bloomington was a mobile application. Same was integrated with Munis. A pilot program was underway in the Public Works Department.

Mayor Renner and Alderman Stearns left the dais at 7:07 p.m.

Craig McBeath, Webmaster, addressed the Council. He explained that the application would create a knowledge base allowing citizens to upload pictures. After submittal the work flow process would begin. Citizens were able to look up the status of their request. The software system tracks duplicate requests, notifies citizens on status and delegates workflow and staff tasks. The program was currently in the Beta testing period.

Mayor Renner returned at 7:11 p.m.

Alderman Stearns returned at 7:12 p.m.

Mr. McBeath noted that the program allowed citizens to be a part of the conversation and kept same informed on polices. Reporting issues currently being accepted were: potholes, garbage issues, street light outage and clogged inlets. The program offers instant translation utilizing Google Translate. There was a data analytics feature providing custom reporting tools, resident engagement levels or staff response time. Aldermen would have the ability to access items within the Wards. ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute) integration allows GIS mapping system. Service requests would be viewed in real time. Same allowed work order requests for bulk waste pick up.

Swiping up on the application will provide widgets. These link to the city's website, calendar, news, nearby requests and contact information. Widgets can be customized. Service requests were categorized.

Alderman Painter questioned using the software for snow plowing. Mr. McBeath explained My Bloomington was a service request application.

Alderman Sage questioned cost benefits on personnel time versus traditional report requests. Mr. McBeath stated that reports were customized. Calculated costs could be used.

Alderman Schmidt believed the application empowered citizens. She noted the ability to address resource needs and balance of same.

Alderman Mwilambwe cited concerns with requests being received faster than the ability to handle same. Mr. McBeath noted that current requests were received via telephone or email. The application provided customers a tracking mechanism.

Motion by Alderman Schmidt, seconded by Alderman Painter to adjourn. Time: 7:28 p.m.

Motion carried, (viva voce).

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Gooderham
Interim City Clerk