

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING, MAY 24, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Mike Kuhle with the following Council Members present: Larry Janssen, Alan Oberloh, Chad Cummings, Amy Ernst, Mike Harmon.

Staff present: Steve Robinson, City Administrator; Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director; Brian Kolander, Finance Director; Mindy Eggers, Assistant City Clerk.

Others present: John Landgaard; Justine Wettschreck, KWOA; Karl Evers-Hallstrom, Daily Globe.

Mayor Mike Kuhle welcomed Middle School teacher Miss Kelly Moon and student Cha Tu. Miss Moon explained that they were there to promote Oromo Community Awareness. Cha Tu explained that Minnesota has the largest Oromo Community because they migrate to our state because of the killing of innocent people in Ethiopia. Miss Moon stated that they are looking for council support of House Resolution #128 and encourage people to contact Congressman Tim Walz. Mayor and Council thanked them for coming and commended their efforts in promoting community awareness for the Oromo Community.

**DISCUSSION OF POLICY POSITION REGARDING FUNDING OF QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVEMENTS**

Steve Robinson, City Administrator stated that a lot of discussion has been held over the last few months addressing the City's role in Quality of Life Projects. Mr. Robinson explained that staff has put together some different funding scenarios that could possibly be used for various projects as Council would like to prioritize projects to drive community growth in Worthington. The funding options are: extension of the current local option sales tax, new local option sales tax beginning in the summer of 2019, general obligation bonds, and internally from city departments.

Council Member Alan Oberloh stated that if the city receives the extension on the local option sales tax he would recommend finishing the projects that still need to be done at the Memorial Auditorium. Mr. Robinson explained that the sales tax extension will generate an additional \$1.3 million. \$1.2 million is designated to pay off the internal loan used to fund the soccer project and \$100,000 has been dedicated to the new seating at the Memorial Auditorium. Mr. Robinson also noted that the construction costs for the Event Center and Memorial Auditorium projects were approximately \$400,000 under budget. Council can decide how they wish to designate those surplus funds. Staff's recommendation is to place those funds into reserve accounts for each of the facilities.

Council Member Chad Cummings stated that he would like to see the focus on promoting community growth that would include a housing development that would allow for no up front costs to the developer. Mr. Cummings noted that one of the biggest problems that he hears is when larger employers try to recruit new executive employees there is a specific need for a certain level of housing. Mr. Cummings said he recognizes that in the past private developers have stepped up to the plate to develop different areas but at this time feels the city should take the lead since we

haven't had anyone come forward. Mr. Cummings said anytime you can add more amenities it is helpful in retaining people in our community. Council Member Oberloh stated that previous councils purchased land for business development because there were private developers that had stepped forward to develop residential areas.

Mayor Kuhle agreed and noted there is a lot of merit in a housing development and there would be opportunity on the west side of the city and the extension of Cecilee Street.

Mr. Robinson stated that he would like staff to have permission to take a look at the list of projects that could be done if the extension for the local option sales tax is approved. Council agreed to have staff move forward with the list of amenities along with compiling information on a potential housing development.

Council Member Oberloh said he was approached by Dale Ryen about exploring the option to have the Boy Scouts take over the 130 acres at Prairie View instead of having them build another large building in Chautauqua Park. The Prairie View property could possibly be dedicated to them and in the case that they would disband the property could come back to the City. Council agreed that this may be something to explore. Todd Wietzema explained that right now the City grooms trails in the winter for cross country skiing and people use it for hiking trails as well so he would like to keep the property to offer these options to our community. Council agreed to have staff pursue this as a possibility.

#### **DISCUSSION OF SUPPORT OF THE COUNTY/SCHOOL DISTRICT CONCEPTUAL LIBRARY AND LEARNING CENTER PROJECT**

Steve Robinson, City Administrator explained he would like Council to have an open discussion on the concept of the County/School District conceptual library and learning center project at the former Campbell Soup property. Mr. Robinson explained that the three entities started discussions last fall regarding the site, to see if there would be a possibility of solving the needs of each entity. Mr. Robinson stated that there would need to be a study conducted to see if the location is feasible along with the existing building.

John Landgaard, Superintendent, District 518 said that he would like to have the City participate in the project and that the collaboration among the three entities would be a good opportunity to drive economic growth and provide many services under one roof. Mr. Landgaard stated that Tom Johnson, County Administrator is waiting on four entities to provide preliminary studies on the feasibility of the property for the project.

Mr. Landgaard explained his vision would be that the Library, Community Education and the Integration Collaborative would be housed in the building but also mentioned that the Chamber of Commerce/CVB would be a good fit as well, making the location a Welcome Center for

Worthington. He noted at this point he doesn't know what the City's role would be at this time but in the future the County and School District would request participation from the City.

Council Member Oberloh agreed that having the Chamber of Commerce/CVB in the building would be beneficial making it the front door of the community. Mr. Oberloh said that in talking to a Councilman from Cuero, Texas their Chamber of Commerce is located in space owned by their City and the Chamber pays no rent. They use their Chamber of Commerce as the front door to the City.

Council members agreed that the City would support a study on the feasibility of the project at 1/3 of the cost

### **TECHNOLOGY AUDIT**

Steve Robinson, City Administrator explained Council Member Ernst has recommended that the City have a technology audit done to make sure that the city is utilizing its technology to its full potential. Ms. Ernst explained that an audit could determine if we have adequate staffing, complete infrastructure and could aid in coming up with a plan and a possible collaboration between entities. Council Member Ernst explained that the School District had a technology audit done by the Southwest South Central Service Coop out of Marshall and the cost was approximately \$3,200. Ms. Ernst suggested a non-biased third party to conduct the audit. Council agreed to authorize Council Member Ernst and Mr. Robinson to contact the Service Coop and proceed with a technology audit.

### **FENCING AT BUSS SOCCER FIELDS**

Mayor Kuhle explained that with the amount of investment that has been put into the new soccer fields he would like the City to consider a fencing project to protect the area along with allowing organizers to charge for events at the field.

Mayor Kuhle stated he has nine committed partners at the proposed cost of \$2,500 over a five-year time period which is \$22,500.00. He explained that fourteen sponsors would be needed to reach the project estimate. Mr. Robinson stated that the costs estimate that he received would cost between \$26,400-\$33,000.

Council Member Oberloh stated that he was not sold on a fence considering the amount of garbage that could accumulate along the fence. Council Member Ernst stated she thinks it is a good idea as other fields in town have a fence around them which protects them.

Todd Wietzema, Public Works Director stated that from a Public Works Department standpoint a fence brings a lot of added maintenance to keep it looking nice while he agrees with keeping the fields protected, he also wants to make sure that staff can keep it maintained.

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Council agreed that staff recommend where the fencing should be placed and proceed with obtaining bids.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The motion was made by Council Member Oberloh, seconded by Council Member Cummings and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Mindy L. Eggers, MCMC  
Assistant City Clerk