

City Council Proceedings

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State of Minnesota  
Counties of Scott & Le Sueur  
City of New Prague

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Special City Council Meeting  
Monday, December 7, 2020

*Conducted via GoToMeeting due to the COVID-19 Pandemic which is preventing attendance at the regular meeting location.*

Mayor Nickolay called the online meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. with the following members present: Nickolay, Bass, Ryan, Seiler, and Wolf.

Staff Present Online: Mike Johnson, Ken Ondich, Jim Gareis, Patty Solheid, Glen Sticha, and Barb Ulschmid

Motion by Nickolay, seconded by Wolf to approve the Agenda. By roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion carried (5-0)

Mayor Nickolay called the Truth and Taxation Public Hearing on the 2021 Budget and the 2020 Property Tax Levy, Payable 2021 to order at 6:02 p.m. There were no written comments from the public for the hearing. City Administrator Johnson was asked to provide a brief overview of the Staff's presentation on the 2021 General Fund, Debt Service and EDA Budgets and the Payable 2021 Property Tax Levy.

Johnson stated the City's proposed 2020 Property Tax Levy/Payable 2021 has been reduced since September 14, 2020 and is now up \$50,857 or 1.18% over the 2020 levy. The Pay 2021 Preliminary Levy has been reduced by \$119,160 or (2.7%) from the original levy of \$170,017 in September. The City's Proposed Property Tax revenue increase for 2021 of \$50,857 (1.18%), is lower than the City's average annual increase in the Property Tax revenue of 1.6% for the past 10 years (2011 to 2021). The 2021 Budget and Property Tax Levy will be considered and adopted at the December 21, 2020 Council meeting at 6:00 p.m.

City Administrator Johnson concluded his remarks at 6:16 p.m. Mayor Nickolay asked if anyone from the public had any comments on the Budget or the Property Tax Levy. There were none.

It was moved by Nickolay, seconded by Bass to close the Public Hearing at approximately 6:16 p.m. By roll call, all voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried, 5-0. No further discussion.

Utilities General Manager Bruce Reimers presented the proposed 2021 Water Fund Budget. Mr. Reimers reviewed the projected revenues, expenses, anticipated operating issues, key developments, staffing and capital projects. One of the main projects in 2021 are the new water mains and water services to residential and commercial businesses as a part of the Highway #19/Main Street Reconstruction Project (9 City Blocks). There is no proposed increase in water rates for 2021.

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Mr. Reimers also presented the proposed 2021 Electric Fund Budget. He reviewed the projected revenues, expenses, anticipated operating issues, key developments, staffing and capital projects. One of the main projects in 2021 is the new electrical street lighting as part of the Highway #19/Main Street Reconstruction Project. There are no proposed energy rate increases in the base rate and energy rates for 2021. There may be some minor class rate changes. Notable activities in 2020 included electric service to the Belzer Auto dealerships, Kwik Trip, Hy-Vee, Chart Inc., and 42 new residential services.

Planning/Community Development Director Ken Ondich presented an application requesting to rename a geographical feature in the Foundry Hill Park Woods Nature Exploration Area to the "Tietz Trail-Woods Nature Exploration Area". At the November 10, 2020 Park Board Meeting, the Board reviewed the application and the Park Naming policy and determined that the request would fall under the "Other Naming Alternatives" category as the request is being made to rename a geographical feature in the park and not the park itself. Per the City's adopted "Public Park and Facility Naming Policy", the Park Board is responsible for recommending the naming and renaming of park and recreational facilities subject to the approval of the City Council.

At the meeting, the Park Board determined that the renaming of the geographical feature is appropriate based on the land having been the former Tietz Farm property and the community services provided to the community by the namesakes Dan and Sharon Tietz. A sign at the entrance to the area would need to be updated with the new name which would cost \$150 and could be paid for from the 2020 Park Board Budget. The Park Board did not agree that the applicant's exact suggested name was appropriate and suggested to shorten the name to "Tietz Nature Exploration Area" and a motion was passed 5-0 with a recommendation to the City Council to rename the geographical area as such.

It was moved by Ryan, seconded by Seiler to approve *the RENAMING OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IN FOUNDRY HILL PARK TO "TIETZ NATURE EXPLORATION AREA" AND TO PAY FOR THE UPDATING OF THE SIGN AT THE PARK FROM THE 2020 PARK BOARD BUDGET.* By roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion carried (5-0).

City Administrator Mike Johnson requested to renew the copier lease for 4 Ricoh copy machines with Metro Sales Inc. which expires at year-end. The 4 copiers are in the Planning/Building Inspection/Administration Departments, Utility Billing and the Police Department. City Administrator Johnson shared that these 4 machines are still working well and he doesn't see a reason to get new machines at this time. The current lease (originally 5 years in

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length) is due to expire at year-end is proposed to be extended for an additional 3 years (December 2020 to December 2023).

The proposed copier lease with US Bank will decrease from \$960.59 to \$591.00/month, or an annualized savings reduction of \$4,435.08. However, if we factor in the maintenance cost for black & white copies and color copies at our current copy rates, the estimated annual savings only becomes about \$2,500 per year. By renewing the three-year lease in December, there will be a savings of \$369.59 on the monthly equipment rental rate for the month of December.

It was moved by Seiler, seconded by Nickolay to approve *the 3-YEAR LEASE CONTINUATION (DECEMBER 2020 TO DECEMBER 2023) OF 4 COPIER MACHINES INCLUDING AN EQUIPMENT LEASE AGREEMENT, STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADDENDUM WITH US BANK, MACHINE SALES ORDER & SECURITY AGREEMENT AND GUARANTEED PROTECTION PLAN WITH METRO SALES INC.* By roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion carried (5-0).

City Administrator Johnson shared that on November 23,2020 he received a letter from Public Works Director Glen Sticha on his intent to retire effective February 25, 2021. Mr. Sticha has been employed with the City of New Prague since July 27, 1980, or for 40+ years and has been the Public Works Director since April 1, 2013. Mr. Johnson stated this could have a "multi-employee impact". Would likely hire for this position as an internal promotion and as a result of this promotion, another position would need to be backfilled. Two of the three could be internal promotions and the third opening would likely need to be advertised externally. All of which would likely need to come back to the Council for approval. City Administrator Johnson, the Council and Staff thanked Mr. Sticha for his 40+ years of dedication, service and time spent working for the City of New Prague. Mr. Sticha shared how his position evolved through the years, the addition of technology and how the city has grown and changed and that he is ready for this next stage in his life. Mr. Johnson wished Mr. Sticha the best in his retirement and how much he will be missed.

Emergency Management Director (EMD) Jim Gareis provided the Council with a COVID-19 update. Numbers in each county continue to rise, some of the highest numbers yet. Schools are distant learning. City staff are working on teams and will probably do so for at least the next 5 weeks (through the holidays and maybe opening up mid-January). City Staff continue to be symptom-free. Everyone in town is doing their part to stay safe. The Chamber's Santa parade is scheduled for this Friday and the route through town allows for plenty of room to social distance. CDC guidelines have shortened the quarantine period from 14 days to 10 days if you have no symptoms. However, encouraged to take the full 14 days if possible.

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After discussion, it was moved by Nickolay, seconded by Seiler to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:

- A. November 16, 2020 Special City Council Meeting Minutes
  - B. Claims for Payment
- By roll call vote, all voted in favor. Motion carried (5-0).

Miscellaneous Items:

Ken Ondich - Mentioned the zip line has been installed in Memorial Park and is ready to be used.

Bruce Wolf - Congratulated Bruce Reimers on being the newly elected VP on the SMMPA Board. Suggested having access to a shared drive to access financial statements, organizational charts, city policies, and meeting packets not already available on the City website and unique to the Councilmembers and Staff managing it. Other councilmembers found this to be of value also and shared what the information they would like to see within this shared drive. Bruce to discuss more with Ken Ondich in getting this set up.

Maggie Bass - Thanked the Council for allowing the renaming of the geographical area within Foundry Hill Park to Tietz Nature Exploration Area. It will mean a lot to the Tietz family.

Mayor Nickolay - Congratulated Glen Sticha on his upcoming retirement.

There being no additional business, motion by Nickolay, seconded by Seiler to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:41 p.m. All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried (5-0).

ATTEST:

  
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Michael J. Johnson  
City Administrator

  
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Charles L. Nickolay  
Mayor