

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 02, 2011
City Hall – Council Chambers

Chairperson Scott McMeans called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM

Present: Alderpersons, Scott McMeans, Christopher T. Able, Alex Olson and Collin Braunel.

Absent: Matt Kadow

Also Present: Mayor Justin Nickels, Acting Finance Director/Treasurer Tony Scherer, Alderpersons James Brey, Jill Hennessy, and Dave Soeldner, Police Chief Tony Dick, Deputy Police Chief Bridget Brennan, City Planner David Less, Fire Chief Bill Manis, Deputy Fire Chief Todd Blaser, City Clerk and Deputy Treasurer Jennifer Hudon, Director of Building Inspection/Facilities Manager Jim Muenzenmeyer, Director of Public Works/Parks & Recreation and City Engineer Valerie Mellon, Director of the Rahr-West Museum Greg Vadney, DPW Business Manager Mike Huck, various city employees and members of the public.

Discussion and Possible Action on 2012 City Budget

The Mayor started by requesting the Committee allow for the hiring of a financial advisor to develop a 3-5 year financial plan to guide the City through its financial difficulties. The Mayor recommended Robert W. Baird as they were already familiar with our situation, reducing the time it would take a firm to get up to speed. The fee for their services was to be \$4,000.

Alderman McMeans stated that the Committee had earlier given permission for the Finance Office to hire temporary or limited engagement assistance as needed.

Alderson Brey asked if Brian Ruechel would be used on the project by Baird. The Mayor stated that Brad Viegut would be the lead person for Baird and it wasn't determined who would be a part of his staff. Brey suggested that Brian Ruechel not be allowed to work on the project.

The Committee requested further information regarding the scope of work and what the City could expect to obtain from a contract with such a low cost.

Motion by Alderson McMeans, second by Alderson Olson to allow the hiring of Baird with the stipulation that Brian Ruechel not be allowed to participate in the process. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Alderson Olson requested that the Audit Management Letters for the last 10 years be provided to the Committee.

Motion by Alderperson McMeans, second by Alderperson Able to instruct the Mayor to present an annual 3-5 year financial plan to the council with the Executive Budget. A discussion regarding the Council and/or Committee's authority and oversight of the Mayor followed. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Motion by Alderperson McMeans, second by Alderperson Olson to instruct the Mayor to present an annual 3-5 strategic plan to the Committee of the Whole. Discussion followed. The plan was to include and incorporate personnel, capital and buildings into one comprehensive road map with long term goals. Alderperson Hennessy pointed out the lack of success with the Strategic Planning Committee. Alders Brey and Soeldner thought the idea has good intentions, but from their experience very little comes from such a report. Motion passed unanimously (4-0). The discussion now goes to the Committee of the Whole.

Public Input

Alderperson McMeans called for Public Input. There was no response.

Discussion and Possible Action on 2012 City Budget

Alderman Scott McMeans resumed the 2012 Budget discussions by providing a hand out containing health insurance information. Alder McMeans explained and summarized the information for the Committee. Discussion followed. Committee members stated that they would like to see some additional information regarding employee premiums and possibility of including the Police and Fire Departments in the proposal.

Alderperson Olson then discussed his concerns regarding the reduction in employee hours from 40 to 36 hours. Mr. Olson stated that most of the country is based around a 40 hour work week. He expressed his concern over the reduction in hours being a disadvantage to the City in future employment activities. It was stated that the 2012 Budget reduction due to this action was equal to \$350,000 or \$87,500 per hour reduced.

The Committee then turned the discussion to garbage hauling tipping fees. The Committee discussed the pros and cons to taxpayers and garbage haulers. Mike Huck reported that removing the payment of fees from the budget would result in an increase of \$3.75 per quarter to residents.

Motion by Alderperson McMeans, second by Alderperson Olson to draft the language required to incorporate the tipping fees into the refuse haulers licensing agreements and move to the Committee of the Whole for Approval. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

The next item discussed by the Committee was the funding of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) and Mainly Manitowoc. It was mentioned that the date to discontinue support of the EDC for 2012 had passed, but the subject should be revisited for the 2013 Budget. The discussion concerning the funding of Mainly Manitowoc generally centered on the funding options and alternative available.

Closing the Park & Recreation Building (Armory) was discussed next. The alders discussed the charges for the activities hosted in the building and the expenses to operate the building. Director of Building Inspection and Facilities Manager Jim Muenzenmeyer stated that the building was in need of major repairs to the roof, floor, heating unit as well as a number of ADA issues in order to bring it up to code and maintain its current usefulness. Alderpersons Olson and Hennessey both agreed that the decision needs to be made to invest the money to recondition the building or close it down.

Other topics discussed by the Committee included the sale of City property and/or other assets and a health insurance incentive plan for employees with other insurance avenues to opt out of the City plan.

Motion by Alderperson Olson, second by Alderperson Able to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson McMeans declared the meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Alderperson Scott McMeans
Chairperson
Finance Committee

By: Anthony J. Scherer
Interim Finance Director

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