

MINUTES

Lowell City Council

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 7:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Sandy Railey

Mayor Sandy Railey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Those attending were Councilmember Phil Bonham, Councilmember Ken Ervin, Councilmember Candy Funderburk, Councilmember Shane Robinson, Councilmember Thomas Gillespie, City Manager Kevin Krouse, City Attorney Jim Windham, City Clerk Beverly Harris, Police Chief Scott Bates, Development Services Administrator Scott Attaway, Parks and Recreation Director Cristy Cummings, Finance Officer Kevin Haney, and various citizens.

II. INVOCATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember Gillespie gave the invocation and led everyone in the pledge of allegiance.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING

Councilmember Funderburk made a motion to adopt the agenda, followed by a second from Councilmember Ervin. The vote was unanimous.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 10, 2019 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Ervin made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 10, 2019 meeting, followed by a second from Councilmember Gillespie. During the discussion a correction was requested.

Councilmember Ervin made a motion to approve the change discussed, followed by a second from Councilmember Gillespie. The vote was unanimous for the change.

Councilmember Ervin made a motion to approve the amended minutes from the December 10, 2019 meeting, followed by a second from Councilmember Gillespie. The vote was unanimous.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Presentation of Wastewater Treatment Plant Study

Maurice Walsh (Engineer with LaBella) presented the wastewater treatment plant feasibility study to Council. Mr. Walsh stated the purpose of the engineering report was to report findings and makes a recommended course of action to the City of Lowell. The plant was determined to reach the 80% NPDES permitting threshold by 2038. The recommended action is to continue operation of the Plant while making necessary repairs and asset replacements as identified in the City CIP, and begin replacing the Plant with a pump station by the year 2035. As flow demands at the Plant approach the 80% and 90% thresholds, the City should proceed as each threshold criteria indicates with plans, design, permits, construction of the necessary infrastructure, and transfer of wastewater flows from the Plant to the McAdenville pump station by the year 2038. Mr. Walsh also stated to maximize the service life of the Plant, it is essential that the City engage in the revenue increasing and expense decreasing programs described below:

- Complete the water meter replacement program currently being undertaken,
- Continue with a water meter testing program
- Implement the utility asset replacements within the time frame described in the CIP,
- Begin a water leak detection program.
- Update financial models as utility rate increases and water meter replacements take effect.
- Initiate an aggressive I&I reduction program for the sanitary sewer system. State grant funding is available for I&I studies and reduction programs.

B. Parking on Power Drive

Kevin Krouse stated at the November meeting, Council was presented with a proposal to consider no parking to a portion of River View Drive and Power Drive. After discussions with neighbors in the area staff recommends only placing no parking on Power Drive. Mr. Krouse stated it is currently no parking between 7am-4pm and this request would eliminate on street parking entirely. Additionally, he stated this change will promote a safer intersection for sight visibility.

Councilmember Ervin made a motion to eliminate on street parking on Power Drive, followed by a second from Councilmember Gillespie. The vote was unanimous. Kevin Krouse stated this change would be an amendment in the city's Code of Ordinance, Chapter 77, Schedule I.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Reduction of Construction Bond for River Falls Phase 3

Kevin Krouse stated as the city nears the end of the River Falls Phase 3 development it is time to reduce the construction bond that has been maintained while the developer installed the improvements to the city's satisfaction. Mr. Krouse stated most items have been completed and inspected and found to be satisfactory. He presented a letter from the city's engineer outlining

the breakdown of the bond amount and the remaining items to be bonded until completion which are the wet ponds and decorative streetlights. Staff recommends reducing the bond amount to \$65,000 to cover the stormwater retention areas and installation of 8 decorative streetlights.

Bonnie Fisher with LaBella presented Council with an overview of a preliminary plat and subdivision inspection checklist for River Falls. She stated weekly periodic inspections are being completed as needed. LaBella is partnering weekly with the City of Lowell during these inspections. She discussed items still needing to be completed.

Joe Talbert with LaBella is the inspector on-site. He discussed issues he's finding at the River Falls Phase 3 build-out.

Councilmember Ervin made a motion to reduce the construction bond for River Falls Phase 3 to \$65,000 to cover the stormwater retention areas and installation of 8 decorative streetlights, followed by a second from Councilmember Funderburk. The vote was unanimous.

B. Award Contract for Construction Inspection Related to CDBG Housing Grant

Kevin Krouse stated part of the CDBG housing grant, would be to select a group to perform the Housing Rehab inspections and write ups as required. Staff has solicited for RFP's and received three proposals: Marc Bolic \$85,000; City of Gastonia \$92,500; Centralina COG \$39,276.

Staff recommended selected Centralina COG to do the work. Staff also contacted COG to discuss the scope since the cost was much lower than the other two.

Councilmember Gillespie made the motion to award the contract for construction inspection for the CDBG housing grant to Centralina COG for \$39,276, followed by a second from Councilmember Ervin. The vote was unanimous.

C. General Fund Budget Ordinance Amendment for Police Cars

Kevin Krouse stated the budget amendment presented was to cover the purchase of a new police car to replace a car that was wrecked. He stated the city collected insurance from the accident and this amendment is to account for the insurance proceeds and allocate the remaining funds to pay for the vehicle. The new vehicle arrived early January 2020.

Councilmember Ervin made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #1 Budget Ordinance FY 19-20 of \$24,661 in General Fund resulting in an increase of that amount in Public Safety, followed by a second from Councilmember Gillespie. The vote was unanimous.

D. General Fund Budget Ordinance Amendment for Radar Sign

Kevin Krouse stated the budget amendment presented was to cover the purchase of the speed radar signs that were approved by City Council.

Councilmember Ervin made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #2 Budget Ordinance FY 19-20 of \$12,015 in General Fund resulting in an increase of that amount in Public Safety, followed by a second from Councilmember Gillespie. The vote was unanimous.

E. Request to reduce Speed Limits on Streets Approaching Downtown

Scott Attaway stated the Planning Department and Police Department worked together to make recommendations on starting the 20mph approaches into downtown further back to allow more time for drivers to reach the safer speed of 20mph as they drive through downtown. Several recommended areas were presented to Council.

Councilmember Funderburk made a motion to approve the reduction of speeds approaching downtown from 35 mph to 20 mph and for staff to present the recommendations to NCDOT for further review, followed by a second from Councilmember Ervin. The vote was unanimous.

F. Non-Residential Fire Inspections Update

Kevin Krouse stated the city is required to provide fire inspections for non-residential dwellings in town per G.S. §160A-411 through 413. Mr. Krouse stated Gaston County has been performing these inspections for the city in the past and this year the city was presented with a huge increase for this service by the county for approximately 259 dwellings. He stated staff's recommendation was to hire a private inspector at a reduced rate for each inspection, evaluate the accuracy of the 259 dwellings needing to be inspected and the frequency of inspections, and possibly look into having the Lowell VFD perform these inspections in-house in the future.

Council directed staff to start discussions with the private inspector and obtain contract information in writing for their review at the next meeting. Also, for the 259 businesses to be vetted in the process. Council would also like to see a possible fee structure for these services provided by the city in the future.

VIII. CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Jim Windham had nothing new to report.

IX. STAFF AND COMMITTEE REPORT

Scott Attaway stated the Planning Board will begin updating the Lowell UDO soon. He also gave updates on Classic VW, Toyota, and KIA dealerships. He stated over 400 pounds of trash was removed during the Litter Clean Up near Poston Park on Birch St. Other items he covered were Leadership Gaston, River Sweep project, Historical Flats Sign, and a Stormwater Workshop Feb 26.

The Lowell VFD representative stated they responded to 541 calls in 2019 and the members completed a total of 2728 hours of training in 2019. Also, their response rate from dispatch to arrival was 4.58 minutes.

X. CITY MANAGER REPORT

Kevin Krouse updated Council on the following items:

- Council planning retreat Feb 28th
- Water loss average is 16% since July 1, 2019
- Water meter project – Installation starting within 1-2 months
- Community Center engineering report to come
- City Audit
- MLK Unit Awards
- Montcross Chamber 60th annual meeting celebration

XI. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilmember Ervin thanked the staff for their hard work and reminded everyone about an upcoming Gaston MPO meeting he will be attending.

Councilmember Robinson inquired about an increase on the financial report.

Councilmember Funderburk asked for an update on Magnolia Place development and stated she liked the new radar signs.

Councilmember Gillespie inquired about water run-off in town.

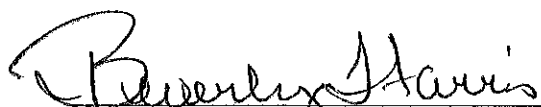
Mayor Railey thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

XII. ADJOURN

Councilmember Funderburk made a motion to adjourn the meeting, followed by a second from Councilmember Ervin. The vote was unanimous. The meeting ended at 9:10 pm.



Mayor, Sandy Railey



City Clerk, Beverly Harris