

MINUTES
CITY OF THORP REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2009 AT 7:00PM

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. In attendance were Mayor Wnek; Alderpersons Geissler, Skibbie, Abramczak, Stroinski, and Teclaw; DPW McCredden; Police Chief Verges; and City Administrator Reeg.
2. Question and answer session with Senator Pat Kreitlow
A few questions and comments were fielded relating to recent changes to TIF laws, levy limits, potential cuts to shared revenue, and new ash removal regulations. No action taken.
3. Comments and suggestions from pre-registered citizens
Diane Lesniewski (200 N. Boardman St., Thorp) appeared before the board to ask about sidewalk replacement in conjunction with the pending Boardman St. and utility reconstruction. McCredden noted that sidewalks would only be affected as needed for service connections to individual properties, and that the homeowners would not be required to pay for the sidewalk renovations. This would also be a good opportunity for homeowners to work individually with the ultimately selected contractor if they would like their services replaced at their own expense. No action taken.
4. Consent Agenda—The City Council, with a single vote and without debate, may act upon the following items. Any council member wishing to debate an individual item may request that it be considered separately
 - a. Approval of minutes from February 9, 2009 Regular City Council meeting
M/M/S (Stroinski, Teclaw) to approve. Carried unanimously.
5. Discussion and possible action relating to monthly reports:
 - a. (Police Department) Monthly activity summary
Council members requested clarification as to if current city ordinances established speed limits for snowmobiles city wide or only on designated trails. Reeg would review the ordinance and report back. M/M/S (Teclaw, Abramczak) to approve. Carried unanimously.
 - b. (Public Works/Utilities) Monthly activity summary
A question was raised regarding sales of salt/sand mixtures. The county can no longer sell to private parties, so the city has received requests for purchase. Reeg and McCredden would research the topic and report back. M/M/S (Abramczak, Stroinski) to approve. Carried unanimously.
 - c. (Administration) Administrator's Report, Financial Report, Vouchers, Payroll Register & Journal Entries
M/M/S (Geissler, Skibbie) to approve. Carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

6. Consider bids and possible allocation of reserve funds for purchase of dump truck and accessories
McCredden presented the results of the bids received for new dump truck and accessories. The combination deemed most advantageous by McCredden consisted of the least expensive truck from Midstate Truck Service at \$67,000; combined with the least expensive equipment package that matched existing equipment at \$40,988. This equipment was \$2790 more than the least expensive equipment that met baseline requirements. This combination totaled \$107,988. However, after determining little resale value for the old equipment, McCredden had inquired as to the cost savings in reusing the old plow blade and a few parts. Universal Truck had estimated the savings at approximately \$10,000. M/M/S (Stroinski, Abramczak) to approve the allocation of funds from the reserve for the Midstate Truck Service truck, and the Universal Truck equipment utilizing the old plow blade in an amount not to exceed \$100,000. Carried unanimously.
7. Discussion and possible action relating to street signs for truck routes
In researching other sign issues, McCredden had run across a problem with recent action directing truck routes to be marked with differently colored street signs. A pending DOT regulation would require all street signs to be green & white in a few years. While existing signs would be grandfathered in, repairs or replacements would need to be green & white, which would render the color-scheme useless. The Planning Commission recommended marking the routes with yellow street-sign posts. M/M/S (Stroinski, Geissler) to mark truck routes with yellow posts rather than different colored signs. Carried unanimously. Alderperson Skibbie inquired about adding a truck emblem or something similar to the signs themselves as well. Reeg and McCredden would research the topic and report back.

8. Consider bidding of sewer facility upgrade project and N. Boardman Street/Utility project
Reeg and McCredde had been working with Randy Sanford of SEH on both the sewer interceptor project and the Boardman Street project. While the projects were ready to bid, the constantly changing federal stimulus package and the states redistribution of Wisconsin's share were making the timing questionable. By historical practice, bidding the projects early and together would yield the best prices. However, if delayed, potential grant money could theoretically offset a good portion of the sewer interceptor project. Reeg and McCredde requested permission from the City Council to bid the projects, in conjunction with SEH and the Mayor, at the time they deemed most advantageous to the city. M/M/S (Skibbie, Stroinski) to allow the bidding as requested without further council action at the time and in the manner deemed most advantageous to the city. Carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

9. Consider Resolution 2009-03-1 "Resolution Requesting Extension of 35MPH Speed Limit on CTH M to Southern City Limit Boundary at Hixwood Rd."
The Planning Commission had recommended not moving forward with this request at this time. The consensus had been that it was being done too quickly after recent speed limit change request denials. Accordingly, Reeg had not included the resolution for consideration at this time, but noted that if the council felt strongly enough on the matter, that they could certainly supercede the Planning Commission's recommendation and request the resolution be brought forward for consideration next month. The general consensus was that this was a safety concern in the particular area, and that the resolution should be brought forward next month.
10. Consider Resolution 2009-03-2 "Preliminary Resolution Declaring Intent to Special Assess a Portion of the Cost of Water and Sewer Main Installation on a Portion of North Boardman Street"
M/M/S (Stroinski, Geissler) to adopt the resolution. Carried unanimously.
11. Discussion and possible action relating to Neighborhood Electric Vehicle purchase
Reeg noted that the city had been spending a good deal of time addressing energy conservation and efficiency improvements, had adopted the 25x25 Energy Independence Goals, and had passed a Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV) Ordinance. The next step in this progression was to begin to consider the purchase of an NEV for municipal use. Reeg and McCredde had attended an NEV seminar, and had even test-driven an NEV. McCredde was skeptical before the seminar, but afterwards felt an NEV would be a perfect primary vehicle for the Public Works Department. Reeg presented a projected cost savings analysis based on varying costs of gasoline versus electricity. The NEV was projected to save between \$500 and \$3000 per year on fuel depending upon fuel prices and miles driven. It also is estimated to produce at least 30% fewer carbon emission (for electricity production off site) for the equivalent miles driven in an internal-combustion engine vehicle. The batteries would need to be replaced every 5-6 years at a cost of \$500-\$1000, at which point the vehicle would be almost as good as new. Reeg did acknowledge that the approximately \$19,000 price tag for the Columbia Par Car Mega Van (all parts are produced and the vehicle assembled in WI) was significant. He did mention that this was not a golf cart and was not a toy. It was a fully functioning vehicle whose price tag was not significantly different than a brand new Ford Ranger for example, but would take some getting used-to. He did not expect any immediate action, but wanted the council to at least begin preliminary debate on the topic. Alderperson Teclaw felt the city could not afford another toy. Alderperson Geissler noted that gasoline prices wouldn't stay near \$2.00/gallon forever and that this decision should be a no-brainer. Alderpersons Skibbie and Abramczak were interested and excited, but wanted the opportunity to get citizen feedback. M/M/S (Teclaw, Skibbie) to table the matter until the next council meeting. The motion carried with 4 ayes and Alderperson Geissler voting no. Reeg noted he would inquire on the possibility of a demo NEV being brought to Thorp for closer inspection by the council.
12. Discussion and possible action relating to possible donation of fencing at Northside Park
Reeg has been approached by a member of the Lion's Club regarding a possible donation of fencing along the north and east sides of Northside Park. He noted that the Park & Recreation Board had unanimously voted against accepting the donation, feeling that the fencing may make the park feel uninviting and that the resources could be better directed towards other park projects. The loss of actual parking area due to state highway setback requirements was also raised by the council. M/M/S (Teclaw, Stroinski) to thank the Lion's but to not accept the donation. Carried unanimously.
13. Discussion and possible relating to changing policies for dealing with delinquencies to the city
Reeg noted that the amount of delinquencies to the city that we're being placed on the tax roll each year was increasing annually. He noted that pending disconnections and the publication of delinquencies in the newspaper both were effective collection techniques—though not popular and definitely controversial. He wondered if the council wanted to look at changing policies on utility disconnections and/or publications. The general consensus was to do whatever it took to combat delinquencies and that draft policy changes should be brought back for review. No action taken.

14. Discussion and possible action relating to potential modification to employee travel policy
Reeg noted that two changes to the employee travel policy might be needed now that the city had a vehicle regularly available for employee travel and the city was trying to reduce travel reimbursement expenses. The first issue was whether the city should or should not allow non-employees to travel in city-owned vehicles, and if so, what the permission and/or notification process should entail. The second issue was reducing the mileage reimbursement rate for an employee who chooses to operate their personal vehicle for reasons of personal convenience when a city-owned vehicle is available. If no city-owned vehicle were available, then the full IRS reimbursement rate would still apply. Some debate over non-employee riders ensued. General consensus was that it would be a rare occurrence and since it was not an overbearing risk for the city (and promoted cooperation and collaboration with other entities) it could be allowed with prior notification. It was agreed by general consensus to pay 50% of the IRS mileage reimbursement rate when an employee uses a personal vehicle when a city-owned vehicle is available. Reeg was asked to bring draft policies back for later review. No action taken.

CLOSED SESSION

15. Consider moving into closed session per Wis. Stats. 19.85(1)(c) & (e) to discuss the following:
a. Potential development in TID #4
b. Possible donation of property to the city
M/M/S (Skibbie, Abramczak) to move into closed session. Carried unanimously.
16. Reconvene into open session for any action required as the result of closed session
M/M/S (Teclaw, Stroinski) to reconvene into open session. Carried unanimously.
M/M/S (Geissler, Stroinski) to authorize Reeg to solicit RFP's for storm-water engineering in the West-Side Industrial Park. Carried unanimously.
17. Reports from Department Heads, Mayor, Council, Committees, and discussion of future agenda items
Mayor Wnek reported on his recent tour of the Stanley Prison with UCCC. No action taken.
18. Adjournment
M/M/S (Teclaw, Abramczak) to adjourn at 10:08pm. Carried unanimously.

Date of Publication

Richard J. Wnek
Mayor

Randall D. Reeg
Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer