



COMMITTEE WORK SESSION SEPTEMBER 6, 2011

Committee Members Present: Todd Bergstrom
Don Nicolard
Brenda Hlas
Bill Mowery-Excused
Ken Braman
Mike Zita
Scott Pelot

Also Present: Mayor David Koontz-Absent
Rick Ryland-Excused
John Moss
Karla Richards
Ann Campbell-Excused

The Committee Work Session convened on Tuesday, September 6, 2011 at 7:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of the Safety Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Scott Pelot, President of Council. Following a salute to the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance, there was a moment of silent reflection.

General Topics of Discussion:

Sewer Connection Fees-Wooster Road West

Mr. Bergstrom indicated he wanted this on the agenda to keep this discussion on fees moving along and that Mr. Braman had the initial idea of waiving the fees for connections in this area. Mr. Bergstrom indicated this is still a process in the works with Summit County and may be resolved within the next six (6) months or so. Mr. Bergstrom stated that to establish rates now would be premature, however one idea that he had could be to do something retroactive for those who would connect now. Mr. Pelot questioned what kind of a financial impact that would have? Mr. Moss briefly discussed the fact that any reimbursements would mean we would have to give back money that should have gone to Barberton and Summit County in addition to what should have come in to our city. These funds are needed to complete capital projects throughout the city. Mr. Moss stated that we do count on these tap in fees to finance the capital expansion. Mr. Bergstrom stated that until we have total control of our own system we cannot make any promises at this point, but we need to keep moving with our overall plan. Mr. Moss stated that once we get control of the process, we need to get a new study done in order to do a better calculation of the true costs. Mr. Nicolard discussed the fact that for the Columbia and Oak Street sewer project we waived our fees, and Barberton waived half of theirs and that you still have to put close to \$2,000.00 into an escrow account with Summit County.

Mr. Nicolard questioned if we wouldn't end up having to put that \$2,000.00 into escrow ourselves in order to be fair and equitable to all. Mr. Bergstrom stated we need to work hard on setting our own standards on our own system, and we really cannot do anything now until we do get our own system. Mr. Bergstrom stated the big-ticket item here is just how much is it going to cost us just to get started, and then there is the capital to think about. Mr. Moss stated one real advantage is stabilizing the cost by having your own local control. Mr. Pelot raised the idea of polling other communities to see what they are getting in tap in fees. Mr. Moss agreed this might be a good idea initially, you would be better served with a study in order to determine the true costs. Mr. Bergstrom stated he wanted to leave this on the next agenda, just title it Sewer Rates & Fees for continued discussions.

Comprehensive Study-Zoning Code

Mr. Braman turned this discussion over to Mr. Moss for the details. Mr. Moss indicated that we are looking to hire D. B. Hart to conduct a study with an overview of our existing code, which will include looking at other communities, interviews with members of Council, Administration. This will also focus on the issue we had recently with the zoning request that was vetoed by the Mayor. Mr. Moss indicated the estimated cost for the study was \$9,000.00 and would take about four (4) months to complete once started. Mrs. Hlas asked if we have the money budgeted for this expense, and Mr. Moss replied not for this year, however we can justify it for next year with the movement within funds. Mrs. Elaine Tompkins, a Norton resident, asked who called for this study, and about the frequency of amending the zoning codes? Mrs. Hlas stated it is recommended that the zoning code be done every five (5) years. Mr. Pelot stated that he recalls asking to have the code looked at when that rezoning issue on Gardner Blvd., came up for discussion. There was discussion as to whether or not legislation was necessary and Mr. Moss indicated he did not think it was. Mr. Braman stated that he would leave it on Matters Referred for now and the end result is that the Planning Commission would have the final review and say on it.

Accept Amounts & Rates from Summit County

Mrs. Hlas stated this is something we do every year at this time and this is due at the County in October. Mrs. Tompkins questioned the figures on the mills and Mr. Moss replied the County certifies the mills from what was submitted, although he has not had time to double check their figures. Mrs. Tompkins asked if Mr. Moss felt the recent devaluation of property values would have an impact with the levy this fall? Mr. Moss stated that would not be a reason to be voting against it. Mr. Moss briefly discussed the valuations of property and how that affects the mills. Ms. Charlotte Whipkey questioned if we would be paying less if the home values are down, and also questioned when newer homes just being built aren't they being assessed in the year they are built? Ms. Whipkey suggested contacting the Board of Elections now and canceling the levy issues because you don't want to lose money and right now you just don't know because it could be up or down, it might be better to just wait. Mr. Moss replied that was not a good idea because we cannot continue to provide the same services, if these levies do not pass in November there will be cuts in services, personnel, etc.

Mrs. Hlas moved to place this on Councils next agenda, waiving the second and third readings, seconded by Mr. Nicolard.

Roll Call: Yeas: Hlas, Nicolard, Bergstrom, Braman, Zita, Pelot
Nays: None

Motion passed 6-0.

Sale of Municipal Property

Mr. Zita stated that the property deed has been received and we no longer have a need for it and want to put this up for a public bid process. Mr. Moss stated this would be an advertised sealed bid that would have to come back to Council for final approval. Mr. Bergstrom asked which two parcels these are because he had difficulty pulling them on the County's GIS mapping? Mr. Moss indicated it is one parcel that does not show up on the GIS and it actually mirrors the property that was the former adult video store, but is closer to the highway. Mr. Bergstrom questioned the original intended use of this parcel and if the Economic Development Committee should look at the use further? Mr. Nicolard stated that the longer the City holds it the longer we will not be collecting any taxes on it. Mrs. Hlas stated this is an investment and if we paid \$90,000.00 for it and we sell for more than what we paid for it, then we made some profit on it. If the bids come back too low, then we do not have to accept that bid. Mr. Bergstrom stated his concern was we bought it with intention to use it, and he is not sure we exhausted every effort to utilize it. Mr. Nicolard noted that when this goes out for bid, that's when we will know if any other businesses are interested in it. Ms. Whipkey provided Council with a handout of the past discussions and history on this parcel (see attached). Ms. Whipkey there are still cars parked on this parcel and you have a way to recoup your losses, you could be charging rent for it. Mr. Pelot explained that we had no control over that parcel until about two (2) weeks ago. Ms. Whipkey discussed the request for emergency language and the fact you have only owned it for two (2) weeks, what's the emergency here? Mr. Dale Nelson, a Norton resident also expressed his concerns with emergency language when we haven't even owned it for less than a month? Mr. Nelson stated that there is something stinky here in the woodpile and that someone in Administration is getting a kickback here from Fred Martin. Mrs. Hlas stated this is just good business to let a good arrangement to allow them to use the property until they build a new building. Mrs. Hlas stated that she did check and Fred Martin does have liability insurance coverage to protect them. Mr. Moss discussed the comment made by Mr. Nelson about someone getting kickbacks. This suggestion is a serious statement and if he truly believes that then he should be reporting this to the Ohio Secretary of State and ask for an investigation, not to just stand here in a public meeting at the podium and make such an accusation. Mr. Zita moved to place this on Councils next agenda with emergency language for a first reading only, seconded by Mrs. Hlas.

Roll Call: Yeas: Zita, Hlas, Nicolard, Braman, Pelot
Nays: Bergstrom

Motion passed 5-1.

Basketball Courts

Mr. Zita again discussed the reasoning for having the courts closer to City hall to keep separated from the younger children playing in the playgrounds near the gazebo. Mr. Moss indicated the bids were broken down into three (3) segments, the base or concrete work, the courts, and then equipment. Mr. Moss stated that because it is above the Board of Control limit of \$25,000.00 it needed to come to Council for authorization to accept the bid recommended by Administration. Mr. Moss indicated the bids were between \$32,000.00 and \$39,000.00 and most likely would be awarded to the lowest bidder. Mr. Zita moved to place this on Councils next agenda with emergency language for a first reading, seconded by Mrs. Hlas. Mr. Zita stated he would like to have this project completed before fall is over. Mr. Moss discussed the orientation of the courts, which are planned to be east to west because it would take less fill for the base and would save on cost. Mr. Pelot asked if parking would be permitted on the courts as previously mentioned, and Mr. Moss replied no because that base will only be four (4) inches thick and parking on it could make it crack.

Roll Call: Yeas: Zita, Hlas, Bergstrom, Nicolard, Braman, Pelot
Nays: None

Motion passed 6-0.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Mr. Nicolard asked about the status of the Joint Dispatch Center still sitting on Matters Referred. Mr. Moss indicated we are currently under an MOU-Memorandum of Understanding between both communities and are working toward getting that resolved. We are not advocating terminating this at this time. Mr. Zita discussed the new 25 MPH speed limit signs and that he has discussed have more signs out there with Mr. Ryland and would have more to report on this next week. There were questions as to how many tickets have been issued since the change in speed limit. Mr. Nicolard replied he spoke with Chief Hete last week and was told there were four (4). The lowest speed limit out of those ticketed was 49 MPH in a 25-MPH range. Mrs. Hlas stated she knows that people are complaining about this but if you drive around in other communities they all have it at 25 MPH in their center of town, it's not new, it's just new to Norton. Mr. Moss reported about the upcoming ODOT project on St. Rt. 21 and St. Rt. 585. It is on schedule and that ramp will be closed for seven (7) days but no date has been set at this time. A detour route will be set up well in advance and we will have about a two (2) week notice prior to that. There will be a press release issued for the papers, city web site and the ODOT site in the near future.

Public Comment-Agenda and Non Agenda Items:

Mrs. Tompkins discussed the \$19,000.00 item to Johnson Scales listed in the end of month check register, and questioned if this was a full payment or for a partial payment? Mr. Moss replied it is full payment, we decided to go with the lesser expensive model than what was originally planned. It's now in our possession and it's portable and can be placed under every wheel. Mr. Moss indicated that we really need a place to put this, get it set up and then call vehicles out over to it and inspect them. Mrs. Tompkins stated that last February she had asked for a total expense listing for the new fire station and has only received a partial listing. Mrs. Tompkins stated that before anyone on Council makes decisions on expenses, you all need to have the complete totals. Mrs. Tompkins stated that the comments made last week by Mr. Karant about the MAD were very interesting. We are paying on both services from Summit County and MAD. Ms. Whipkey discussed the new speed limit signs and questioned when do you get to resume back to 35-MPH, you should have signs posting this, its too confusing. Mr. Moss explained that the State has specific regulations and rules, which state that you are required to post the reduction of a speed, not when its resumed. Mr. Moss stated that you must remain at that 25-MPH speed until you see a new sign with a higher speed indicated. Ms. Whipkey liked the Council Presidents idea to poll other communities about their sewer fees, it might show us other ideas on how to collect those fees that what is currently being done.

Topics for the next Work Session:

Sanitary Sewer Fees. Mr. Bergstrom asked the Chair of the Economic Development Committee for discussion on the future pump stations in the area of St. Rt. 21 and the east side of St. Rt. 261. Mr. Bergstrom indicated he wanted to keep the property owners informed of our plans and what is to come in future development in that area. Mr. Moss indicated that we have three (3) property owners with a lot of land in this area which we have been discussing this with them. They are all aware of our plans and their initial feedback was that they would like to see some type a strip mall plaza with a combination of office space in the front and warehouse units available in the back.

Adjourn

There being no other business to come before the Committee Work Session, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Scott Pelot, President of Council

****NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM****

All Committee Meetings will be held at the Norton Safety Administration Building, unless otherwise noted.