

Observer: Betty Hayford

Council members present: All. Several came late. Bobby Burns attended remotely without a video connection. Tom Suffredin came late and left the meeting from time to time.

Meeting started: 7:05 pm

Meeting ended: 8:30 pm

This was a Special Council meeting scheduled to consider several timely matters.

Mayor Biss called the meeting to order and opened **public comment**. Three spoke. One explained the importance of the dog beach and asked council to provide guidance on restoring a dog beach. Two addressed financial concerns, one questioning the need for more spending and asking for more information and public input on the 2023 budget; one expressing concern about the capital projects being discussed at this meeting and requesting more information about past projects and the large costs being projected.

Special orders of Business. (SP1) Discussion of 2023 Capital Improvement Program. Lara Biggs, Chief Engineer, made an extensive presentation on capital projects under consideration for 2023. There is some anticipated income from state or federal grants, but most projects are funded by General Operations Bonds. Major categories of projects are Streets, Water Mains and Sewers, Parks including Fountain Square, and Facilities. Facilities projects include the Animal Shelter, underway; the Civic Center which will need major repairs even if a decision is made to leave the current building; the Service Center and the Ecology Center. The city owns 60 buildings, and 10% of the city buildings absorb 88% of debt-funded repairs.

Council Members Reid and Kelly asked Biggs to clarify priorities. Nieuwsma stressed the importance of replacing lead service links and whether external funds might be available. He also emphasized the importance of CARP and sustainability projects. CM Revelle noted the large number of city-owned buildings and suggested that a study be made to identify buildings that might be sold. She also noted the large rehab projects for the Civic Center and the Facilities Center. Biggs explained that the HVAC systems were fragile and would need attention even if city government moved to another site. Geracaris asked about storm water management. Deputy City Manager Stoneback explained that the city is developing a plan to address storm water management, but there are not yet any specific proposals.

The Mayor expressed appreciation for a rich presentation and good discussion.

The next four special orders of business all passed 9-0.

- **(SP2) Retention “Thank You Bonus for All City Employees.** This would provide a Retention Bonus of \$500 to all city staff at a total cost of \$380,000. Funding will come from the General Fund reserves.
- **(SP3) Retention Bonus for Non-Union Full-Time EPD Staff.** This would provide a \$2,5000 bonus for the non-union employees at the Police Department, funded from the General Fund Reserves. The total cost would be \$50,000.
- **(SP4) Wage Increase for all Exempt Employees.** This provides a three percent wage increase for all exempt employees. The cost would be \$94,000 for the rest of this year and \$375,368 for a one-year period. It would be funded from the General Fund.

- **(SP5) Approval of a one-time payment to the Evanston Firefighters, IAFF employees.** This provides back pay to 105 IAFF employees who forfeited their raises in 2021 and 2022 in anticipation of the revenue shortfall to the city caused by the pandemic. The total cost will be approximately \$494,059.62, funded from ARPA funds. Council Member Kelly expressed strong appreciation to the firefighters for their willingness to forego their negotiated raises to avoid layoffs and declines in service.

Call of the wards. Several meetings were announced.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30.