

PROCEEDINGS  
OF  
CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE  
CITY OF LOWELL

For the Regular Meeting of September 19, 2011.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Hodges and City Clerk Betty Morlock called the roll.

Present: Councilmembers Jeff Altoft, Maryalene LaPonsie, Andrew Schrauben, Mayor Pro Tem Sharon Ellison and Mayor Jim Hodges.

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager Mark Howe, City Clerk Betty Morlock, DPW Director Dan DesJarden, Police Officer Chris Hurst, Lowell Light and Power Boardmember and Planning Commission Chair Jim Hall and Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Brian VanVeelen.

Item #1. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.**

IT WAS MOVED BY LAPONSIE and supported by ELLISON to approve the agenda as written.

YEA: 5. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 6, 2011.**

IT WAS MOVED BY LAPONSIE and supported by ALTOFT to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 6, 2011 as corrected.

YEA: 5. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #3. **APPROVAL OF THE ACCOUNTS PAYABLES.**

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and supported by LAPONSIE that the bills and accounts payables be allowed and the warrants issued.

YEA: Councilmembers Altoft, LaPonsie, Schrauben, Mayor Pro Tem Ellison and Mayor Hodges.

NAY: NONE. ABSENT: NONE. MOTION CARRIED.

<u>BILLS AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (09/19/11)</u>	
GENERAL FUND	\$24,523.44
MAJOR STREET FUND	860.66
LOCAL STREET FUND	695.17

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT FUND	2,231.49
AIRPORT FUND	109.81
WASTEWATER FUND	42,824.46
WATER FUND	15,438.08
CABLE TV FUND	1,800.00
DATA PROCESSING FUND	771.45
EQUIPMENT FUND	1,776.84
CURRENT TAX FUND	321,961.52

Item #4. **CITIZEN COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.** No comments were received.

Item #5. **PENDING COUNCIL PROJECTS UPDATE.** City Manager Mark Howe reported on the following:

- a. Streets, Sidewalks Plan – Discussion was held with Howe, City Clerk Betty Morlock and DPW Director Dan DesJarden regarding a City wide walk/inspection to get an idea of what needs to be repaired.
- b. East Riverbank Renovations – Discussion was held with Williams and Works Dave Austin regarding the DNR grant application. Preliminary scoring looks very good. However, there are some areas in which additional points could be gained. Additional material will be submitted to the DNR in the coming weeks.
- c. Consumers Energy Sidewalk Report – Howe agreed the completed work was not done as well as it should have been done. He spoke with business owners and asked if they believed the sidewalk was a safety problem. It does not appear to be an issue. Councilmember Altoft noted such issues have happened in Lowell for years. This is unacceptable.

Item #6. **HIGHLIGHT AWARD CONTRACT FOR HYDRO DESIGNS.** The Michigan DEQ requires that municipal systems have a Cross Connection Control Program which requires all customer accounts deemed to have a high hazard, be inspected to ensure there are no cross connection in the system. The City has typically contracted with Hydro Designs to conduct these inspections. On behalf of the City and Water Distribution Supervisor Bob Robinson, a proposed contract has been secured. Howe recommended the City approve a three year agreement with Hydro Design, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$10,380 annually.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by ALTOFT to approve a three year agreement with Hydro Design for an amount not to exceed \$10,380 annually.

YEA: Councilmember Altoft, LaPonsie, Schrauben, Mayor Pro Tem Ellison and Mayor Hodges.

NAY: NONE.

ABSENT: NONE.

MOTION CARRIED.

Item #7. **AWARD CONTRACT FOR CITY OF LOWELL WELL #3 REHAB BID.** City Well #3 is in need of repair and cleaning. Water Treatment Superintendent Brian VanVeelen has obtained three bids from qualified vendors to perform the work that is needed.

City Manager Mark Howe recommended the City Council award the bid to Layne Christensen Company for an amount not to exceed \$21,779.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON and seconded by SCHRAUBEN to approve the contract to LAYNE Christensen Company for an amount not to exceed \$21,779.

YEA: 5. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #8. **PROPOSAL TO ADOPT CITY MANAGER GOALS.** City Manager Mark Howe stated a progress report will be presented within the next few weeks regarding his first 90 days as City Manager.

The next set of goals to establish are based upon discussion with City Council. He requested affirmation from Council that this is what they would like for him to work on over the rest of the year.

Councilmember Schrauben referred to goal #8 which states “continue efforts”. He asked if this could be reworded so it refers to a benchmark. Howe understood his concern. Howe clarified it should state “update the plan to address water filtration in the sanitary sewer”.

IT WAS MOVED BY LAPONSIE and seconded by ALTOFT to approve City Manager Mark Howe’s goals as amended.

YEA: 5. NAY: 0. ABSENT: 0. MOTION CARRIED.

Item #9. **MONTHLY REPORTS.** No comments were received.

Item #10. **COUNCIL REPORTS AND COMMENTS.** Councilmember Schrauben stated the Airport Board met September 13, 2011. There are no major issues. He noted a new tractor is being purchased for mowing and plowing. The Parks and Recreation Commission will be meeting on September 20, 2011 at Richards Park. LARA met on September 14, 2011 and received a presentation from Carolyn Kane regarding completing the rail to trail from Owasso from Greenville. Also, North Country Trail was there to present their long term plans.

Councilmember LaPonsie stated a training session will be held on October 19, 2011 for the Planning Commission. City Council is encouraged to attend. LaPonsie referred to the Zoning Board of Appeals and asked if discussion should be held during a future work session regarding the City Council continuing to serve as the Zoning Board of Appeals. Howe suggested this be listed under “Pending Council Projects”. The issue could also be discussed during a work session.

The Lowell Area Fire and Emergency Authority met on September 19, 2011. Input is needed from the municipalities as the authority has ended the year in a deficit. A total of \$17,000 was carried over from the previous year, however the board overspent by \$20,000 due to the purchase of a truck. The Grand Rapids Foundation only provided half of what the authority anticipated. A question arose of whether the Fire Board should carry a fund balance for similar situations. The two big questions are should the Authority have a fund balance for the fire board and should the board save for equipment purchases or is this something the municipalities pay for at the time of the purchase?

Councilmember Altoft commented on how busy Lowell was on Saturday, September 17, 2011 during the Fallasburg Festival. The town was booming.

Mayor Pro Tem Ellison commented on the LARA trails and noted the Lowell High School Cross Country team has been using it.

Mayor Hodges stated he and City Manager Mark Howe attended the Lowell Light and Power meeting. Work continues on the bio digestion facility.

The Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors also met. Things are going well. The Harvest Festival will be held October 7 & 8, 2011. This will be the last year the Chamber will sponsor scarecrow building. Any other organization willing to take on the project would be greatly appreciated. The cost to build a scarecrow will be \$5 and can be taken home.

The Fallasburg Fall Festival was a huge success. It was great weather and well attended.

Item #11. **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**. City Manager Howe commented on the following:

- Progress is being made on the new city website. The coding is being completed and soon there will be content integrated into the new design. Also, a link to check the progress will be available soon.
- Lowell Public Schools is hosting Community Forums to discuss district facilities. The first meeting involved discussion regarding the riverside (Unity) property. The district has hired Tower/Pinkster to evaluate current facilities so they can begin exploring what options might be available. The meeting was held to share information about the evaluation of the riverside property and receive input from the public on how the property might be used or if it should be sold.
- Howe began working on the Equipment Fund. He had lunch with a former colleague who has extensive experience with equipment funds and job costing. He is finding for as many cities as there is in the State, there are that many ways to run an equipment fund. A key element of a successful fund involves the type of software being used. Howe is exploring the different options.
- Applicants are being interviewed for the open Water Treatment Plant Operator position.
- A meeting will be held with Greg Pierce to discuss site plan issues relating to the proposed bio-digestions facility.
- A Planning/Zoning meeting will be held on October, 19, 2011. There are plans to discuss general planning/zoning type issues during the first half and then get into more specific ideas concerning the City. Lowell and Vergennes Township Planning Commissions and Zoning Board of Appeal members will be invited for the first half of the meeting.
- The postal service is going through a process of evaluating its system and how they deliver mail. Feedback can be given if one chooses.
- Howe presented a worksheet he wanted to use as discussion begins regarding the General Fund and policy issues which would be related to the General Fund. He asked if this would be appropriate. Mayor Hodges appreciated Howe's thought and the development of such a document.

Item #12. **APPOINTMENTS**. None.

IT WAS MOVED BY ELLISON to adjourn at 8:12 p.m.

DATE:

APPROVED:

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James W. Hodges, Mayor

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Betty R. Morlock, City Clerk