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**PROCEEDINGS OF THE AFTON CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AFTON
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA**



**City Council Work Session Minutes
February 28, 2018
5:00 P.M.**

1. **THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER** at 5:00 P.M. by Mayor Bend.

2. **ROLL CALL:** Council Members Nelson, Richter, and Mayor Bend. **Quorum Present.**
Palmquist arrived at 5:05.

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Ron Moore, City Engineers Nick Guilliams and Todd Hubmer.

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion/Second: Bend/Richter. To approve the agenda as written. Motion carried 3-0-0.

4. **CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS**

A. South Washington Watershed District Update Report

Matt Moore, Provided a report on projects accomplished by the South Washington Watershed District in 2017 and projects planned for 2018, including the on-going project to improve the quality of Trout Brook.

B. Pennington Avenue Sewer Connection Options

Moore explained that several properties on the east side of Pennington Avenue have septic systems located at the top of the bluff, while the new sanitary sewer lines are located at the bottom of the bluff. Due to the steep slope, and bedrock near the surface, the cost of the private connections to the sewer line is high. In addition, a significant number of properties on the west side of Pennington, that were not included in the sanitary sewer project, have small lots and should be connected to the sanitary sewer system at some point in the future. The City Engineer has been working to develop options for making the private connections to the properties on Pennington Avenue and have prepared a report regarding the options.

City Engineers Nick Guilliams and Todd Hubmer presented the options identified for sanitary sewer connections to the properties on the east side of Pennington, and also presented options for making sewer service available to properties on the west side of Pennington.

Due to very substantial cost differences, the Council much preferred the options related to serving only the properties on the east side of Pennington.

Todd Hubmer indicated there may be funding available from the PFA for the options presented.

The Council agreed this topic needs to continue to move forward to a solution and that it should come back to the Council again in March.

C. The Use of the City's Revolving Loan Fund to Encourage Commercial/Industrial Development

Moore explained that, a number of years ago, the City, through the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), provided a loan to Chandler Inc. When this loan was fully paid, there was a surplus of \$100,000 that remained with the City to be used as a revolving loan fund for economic development. The City has not used these funds. Chris Eng, Washington County Economic Development Director, has suggested that these funds could be used to facilitate obtaining quality development in the City's Industrial zones. The funds could also be used to encourage and assist improvements to properties in the Downtown Village area.

Chris Eng presented information regarding potential uses of the revolving loan fund. He also explained a new grant program being offered by the County to provide funding to cities to assist in preparing Industrial

57 sited for development. Chris also explained that DEED is offering a one-time option to Cities to pay 20%
58 of the loan fund balance to DEED in exchange for all restrictions on the use of the remaining funds being
59 removed.

60
61 Mayor Bend indicated he is not in favor of this because it would waste the funds in two ways. 1. 20%, or
62 \$20,000, would be automatically lost to DEED. 2. It is important that these funds be continually loaned
63 and reused as they are paid back to multiply their effectiveness.

64
65 **D. Appeal Process Regarding Sanitary Sewer Equivalent Residential Units (ERU's)**

66 Moose indicated that a number of owners of commercial properties have questioned the number of
67 Equivalent Residential Units (ERU's) assigned to their properties, based on the volume of water they
68 believe they use. The Zoning Code provides an appeal process regarding ERU's. This process is set out
69 in Sec. 12-2202. Equivalent Residential Units (ERU). While the code language calls for the installation of
70 water meters, it does not provide any detail regarding the time period over which the volume of usage is
71 determined. Neither does it address whether the waste strength needs to be taken into account in addition
72 to the volume. Moose indicate it is important that the details of the appeal process be clarified.

73
74 The Council discussed the appeal process and agreed that the City's appeal process needs to be compared
75 with any related information in State Statute 7081.0130. The Council also suggested that there should be
76 criteria related to the expected water usage based on the highest and best use of the property, and agreed
77 that criteria for measuring ERU's in relation to metered water flow need to be established, and that a key
78 criterion needs to be that the water usage information needs to be from the peak use period and should be
79 for the peak seven-day period. The Council also agreed that properties should be held at the currently
80 assigned ERU's for three years to provide an opportunity to determine how the new wastewater treatment
81 system operates with the current flows and flow strength.

82
83 The Council also agreed that these criteria need to be reflected in an ordinance amendment. The ordinance
84 amendment also needs to include language that enables the city to require metering of water usage for a
85 property if the city believes the water usage is higher than is reflected in the current number of ERU's
86 assigned to the property.

87
88 **E. Option of Contracting with Washington County for Election Administration**

89 Moose indicated that the recent special elections required a very substantial amount of the City Clerk's
90 time, even with substantial assistance from Washington County. The upcoming general election will
91 require more time over a longer period of time. Staff recently became aware that several cities, mostly
92 larger, contract with Washington County for elections administration. This includes the recruiting and
93 training of election judges, testing of election equipment, and managing the election day activities at the
94 polling location. Staff requested a proposal from Washington County for election administration services
95 for the even-year primary and general elections. The proposal was for approximately \$32,000. This
96 includes the cost of election judges. The City currently spends approximately \$7,200 per election, which
97 includes the hours of the City Clerk and the Public Works Supervisor. The cost difference is significantly
98 greater than staff anticipated.

99
100 Palmquist indicated that when the current City Clerk was hired the elections responsibilities were a
101 significant part of her job description and pay level.

102
103 Mayor Bend indicated the Personnel Committee discussed this option and is recommending that the cost
104 difference is too large to make the Washington County option a reasonable option.

105
106 It was suggested that it may be cost-effective to hire a temporary staff person to assist with the office
107 workload during the election season.

108
109 **F. Goal Setting for 2018**

110 Moore indicated the agenda packet included the list of goals adopted by the Council for 2017, with the
111 goals accomplished shown in bold. Also attached was a draft set of goals for 2018 to assist the Council in
112 identifying goals for 2018.

113
114 The Council suggested several goals related to working with the County and its Economic Development
115 Director to attract businesses, and indicated the goal setting process should be continued at a future work
116 session.

117
118 **5. ADJOURN –**

119
120 Motion/Second: Bend/Nelson. To adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. Motion carried 4-0-0.

121
122 Respectfully submitted by:

123
124 _____
125 Ronald J. Moore, City Administrator

126
127 **Approved by Council (on March 20, 2018) as (check one): Presented: _____ Amended: _____**

128
129 **Signed by Mayor Richard Bend _____ Date _____**