

**CITY OF ST. FRANCIS  
ST. FRANCIS, MN  
ANOKA COUNTY**

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION NOTES**

**OCTOBER 9, 2018**

Mayor Steve Feldman called the work session to order at 5:30 pm.

Members present: Mayor Steve Feldman, Councilmember Joe Muehlbauer, Councilmember Rich Skordahl, Councilmember Robert Bauer, Councilmember Jerry Tveit

Also present: Assistant City Attorney Dave Schaps (Barna, Guzy & Steffen), Police Chief Todd Schwieger, City Administrator Joe Kohlmann, and Acct Tech/Deputy Clerk Lori Streich

1) Animal Control Officer

Mayor Feldman explained that a committee made up of himself, Police Chief Schwieger and Councilmember Tveit were tasked with gathering information to bring back to Council regarding animal control in the City of St. Francis.

This committee interviewed and inspected three separate entities; Dover Kennels, Quiet Oaks and our current animal control company, Gratitude Farms. Pictures were taken at each facility and references were given and contacted. All three entities are licensed, insured and inspected annually by the State of Minnesota.

Feldman discussed the findings and facts based on their interviews, inspections and references. He stated that all three are very similar in their services and it would come down to contract and rates. It is obvious that each of the facilities care for animals and he wouldn't have an issue recommending any of the three.

Skordahl said that when the decision to form the committee came up, his suggestion was to see if our current animal control officer meets our needs. He thinks the committee collected a lot of good information. From what has been presented, he isn't seeing that we have an issue, and he doesn't see any reason to make a change.

Bauer did some fact finding on his own. No evidence substantiating any claims that our animal control agency is doing a poor job. At this time, he sees no reason to change.

Muehlbauer pushed to hear from the residents through social media. He did not get much of a response unfortunately. One thing he would like to see is if the dog get picked up, there's no fee to the City. We currently pay \$350.00 per month. He doesn't know any of these agencies personally and he doesn't have any issues with any of them.

Tveit said that after interviewing and touring these three facilities, he would be comfortable with any of the three being an animal control officer for our City. This is a business that you just don't get into unless you have a love for animals, and all of three of them showed a love for animals. What he wonders is that when the allegations were brought forth back in February, if someone else wanted the contract, why didn't they submit for it then? If nobody submits for a new contract, we just renew the old contract. For the last seven or eight years, nobody has wanted to bid for this. Now it seems like other people are interested. What he foresees now is opening this up to a bid process. He didn't see anything that would lead him to believe that there's a kennel out there that just hates animals. At this point he would like to see it go to staff to look at the numbers and see what's economically feasible and come back with a recommendation. His concern is that the City gets the best deal.

Feldman agrees that all three entities care about animals and they are all pretty equal. Staff can take a look at it and see what the numbers are since we don't have to make a decision until January.

He would like to put out to the public that Council and staff are tired of this. They want to do what's best for the residents and of course the animals, but the facts speak for themselves. They cannot let rumors or posts dictate the governing done in this city. We would never get anything accomplished that way. This was done by fact finding. They took the time by forming a committee that asked good questions, and received good responses. No matter which way they go here, someone isn't going to like the decision. Council's job is to do what's best for our residents. That's what they were elected to do.

Tveit recommended having staff ask for rebids and make a recommendation in January. That would give these entities time to update their proposals.

Skordahl understood it that fact finding was the animal control companies answering questions, not giving a proposal. Do we know enough to have a list of what we expect out of an Animal Control Officer? What are the things that we want them to bid on? Then if they give us all these other nice to have fluffy things, like electronic records, we can take that into consideration and do the evaluation. If we have the list of requirements, that's the package we have them adhere to. Make it as easy as possible, with basic criteria for an apples to apples comparison.

Feldman said that staff will request proposals from all three entities, with a deadline.

City Administrator Kohlmann asked Council if they want the animal control companies to submit their own contracts, or would they like staff to set criteria based on a list of every single type of fee and have them fill in the dollar amounts so we can get an apples to apples comparison.

Council agreed that they would like an apples to apples comparison.

## 2) Warning Sirens

Police Chief Schwieger explained that in June he had presented to Council information on an outdoor warning siren in addition to the current two in the city that were purchased in 1996. With the development that the City has had since 1996, there are at least 6 or 7 developments that are currently out of reach of the first two sirens according to the sound map and the recommended decimal level.

The proposed location for the new outdoor warning sign is 237<sup>th</sup> and Nightingale. To the west of that, between Arrowhead Street and Nightingale, there's a lot of open space and swamp area that would be impossible to install a siren, as well as the fact that there is no power capability. That's one of the reasons the location at 237<sup>th</sup> and Nightingale was recommended. There's a power source there from Connexus Energy to hook up to. To connect to that power source is approximately \$1,000 and then a \$5 per month flat fee to the City for the use of the power.

Our current sirens that were installed in 1996 are AC units, which means they run off of electricity. If we were to lose power during a storm, these sirens would not function. The price to convert these sirens to DC power is \$5,716.42 per siren. That price includes batteries, aluminum battery box and labor.

Feldman said that in his opinion, the two that are AC powered alone, with no backup, we are lucky that the power hasn't been cut off.

Muehlbauer said he likes the idea of the backup of the two sirens from AC to DC, but his question is about the funding of it. They already have ideas on funding for the additional siren. As far as a 4<sup>th</sup> siren, he doesn't think we need it now, but he would be happy to look into it as long as the funding is there.

Tveit agreed and said that the ones that we currently have are working. To consider purchasing the 4<sup>th</sup> siren, the cost would be approximately \$60,000 and that's something that we should be putting into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and be planning and putting "x" amount of dollars, (like 20% of the cost for 5 years), and then do the project in 5 years. This year, we did have a little bit of a windfall because of the antenna contract, and that money was earmarked towards this in case no other funding became available. He is totally in favor of putting up the 3<sup>rd</sup> tower since it's already been talked about and the money is available for that. That way next year when storm season rolls around in the spring, it's up and running. Then we should put an upgrade to the emergency sirens and CIP. The budget has not been finalized yet this year. There might be something they can do with the budget this year for a next year project. Once the budget is set it's hard to magically find \$12,000.

Feldman said that he attended a meeting and there was a FEMA Representative there. He learned that in the case of the sirens that are 22 years old, it's more than just the

change from AC to DC power, they are also not digitally up to grade. If we upgrade just the power part of it, and then we end up having to change them out of there, we throw \$12,000 out the door.

Chief Schwieger said that the Anoka County Emergency Management is looking at upgrading all of the sirens in Anoka County in the next couple of years. They don't know any costs at this point, and they will continue to talk about it at their monthly Law Enforcement meetings. He did reach out to Embedded Systems that currently does the monthly siren maintenance. They gave a ballpark cost for a radio receiver of \$12,000.00. That's a cost that we may be looking at in a couple years, but we have no concrete information on what that entails.

Tveit said that if we know that this is coming up in a couple years, lets look at putting something in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Feldman said that we have \$80,000 in the budget for the sirens. \$60,000 came from the antenna lease from American Tower, plus they also added another \$20,000. \$25,000 would come out of that for the expenditure of the new siren. That leaves us with \$55,000 which they said they would put in the Capital Fund to be designated towards this.

Bauer originally wasn't thrilled about the siren cost, but he knows we need it. He contacted Anoka County and found that it is the city's responsibility to have sirens. He reached out to Oak Grove to put the siren on 229<sup>th</sup>, and do a joint venture, and that went nowhere. When the upgrades are done, he would like the upgrade to go solar. By converting an old system to DC, we may be throwing too much money into it.

City Administrator Kohlmann stated that our Assistant City Attorney, Dave Schaps negotiated the additional \$20,000 into the contract from American Tower into the deal.

Feldman said thank you to Schaps for that.

Skordahl is all for the 3<sup>rd</sup> siren. He also agrees that we need to add a 4<sup>th</sup> siren, as well as funds to deal with one of the existing ones failing into the Capital Improvement Plan. If one of these dies, where are you going to come up with \$25,000 to have it fixed?

Feldman recommends to the Council that the \$80,000 is found money. Let's do the \$25,000 for the 4<sup>th</sup> tower, that gets that up and running with DC power main, AC backup, and then let's put the \$55,000 into the Capital Fund designated for this type of future siren or upgrades. It's money well spent and it's not affecting the budget at large.

Skordahl said that he agrees and also agrees that this is the right location. He would be in favor of going to the DC power source on the existing ones now. It's \$11,000 and we don't know what schedule the county is on. He would rather see the upgrade done now to avoid the potential of having these sirens not work.

Muehlbauer said that sometimes the older something is, the more reliable it is. He doesn't know if the same is true for sirens. They used to build things to last, but they don't anymore.

Feldman said that the bottom line is that it's not \$80,000 out of our budget. It's money that was given to us.

Tveit is fine with that as long as the money is there. He doesn't want to take from another fund to pay for this fund and then at the end of the year see that we are over budget. He knows that this was slated to go into the Capital Improvement Fund but he didn't know if it was slated to go to a specific project in that fund. He doesn't want to recommend taking it from a different project either. He knows that currently there isn't any funding out there.

Feldman said that if it's agreeable with Council, he will do some checking into all of the different options with FEMA on the 24<sup>th</sup> at the JLEC meeting.

Kohlmann said that if Feldman is going to do some investigating, he could stay in communication with Chief Schwieger and they could bring a proposal back to Council.

#### Other Business

Muehlbauer said that he was able to find a whole set up for the sound system for \$900. This would include 12 of each of either pack microphones that go on your lapel or headsets, so when you turn your head, the microphone follows. He also needs to find a mixing board that can suit 12 microphones. He will put a proposal together and give it to Kohlmann.

Tveit said that he spoke some time ago about snowmobile trails coming up Rum River. He feels confident that Anoka County wants to work with us. Jeff Weaver, from the City of Anoka, has been instrumental in getting new trails up here in St. Francis. Weaver is also the person that coordinated the Mayor's snowmobile rides that donated a lot of money to St. Francis. Tveit said that the ball may have gotten dropped on this topic. Staff was going to look into it and a discussion didn't take place, so he wanted to see if this is something that could be put on the agenda to make a recommendation or talk to the county.

Feldman said that the way he is understanding it is that the original site was too small and not accessible, so they moved it down to a bigger site but they were having some problems with people using it for a fire pit. The county was going to site them for that.

Kohlmann said that staff would follow up and get a report. If they can get it on the next agenda they will, otherwise they will get it on the one after that.

Tveit said that Weaver had told him that Anoka has a lot of snowmobile traffic coming off the river, bringing in a lot of business, and they built a parking lot area for them. Anoka loves it.

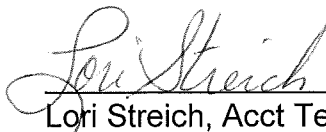
Tveit also said that there was something on the City of Anoka Facebook page saying that the City of Anoka works with Federal Premium Ammunition. They sponsor hunts. These hunts are coordinated with the city. The city works with local businesses helping the youth and veterans. Tveit thought it might be something to throw out there and see if there's any interest for St. Francis in doing this. The City of Anoka is ahead of their times in working with their citizens and helping their businesses.

Feldman said that everything is worth looking into. We will have to get that information from the county regarding the site for the snowmobilers.

Meeting adjourned

Mayor Feldman adjourned the meeting at 6:48 pm

Respectfully submitted by:

  
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Lori Streich, Acct Tech/Deputy Clerk