

MINUTES
North Newton City Council-Regular Meeting
October 12, 2020, 7:00 P.M.
North Newton City Hall

1. Call to Order

Mayor Ron Braun called the meeting to order. Those present and constituting a quorum were:

COUNCIL: Kurt Friesen, Jim Goering and Ron Ratzlaff in person
Gregg Dick via ZOOM

STAFF: John Torline, Danny Entz, Greg Nye, Randy Jordan and Pat Redding
Cindy Hiebert via ZOOM

OTHERS: Randy Smith, Grace Wild, Nathan and Marissa Murphy, Chris Riesen, Katie Schmidt, Julian Gonzalez-Salamanca, Laura Sharp and Wendy Nugent

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of September 14, 2020 Council meeting and September 18, 2020 and October 5, 2020 special meetings were presented.

MOTION: Ratzlaff moved, Goering seconded, to approve the September 14, 2020 regular meeting minutes, September 18, 2020 and October 5, 2020 special meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Citizen Comments

Julian Gonzalez-Salamanca wanted to speak about the police dog that was going to be discussed. Mayor Braun stated that was not on the agenda.

4. Receive a presentation from Marissa Murphy and Councilman Ratzlaff regarding the purchase and placement of playground equipment

Marissa Murphy spoke representing a group of mothers that are requesting more playground equipment in North Newton. The group identified two locations for this equipment. The present equipment at the Goldenrod Tot Lot would be torn down and new equipment installed. The equipment at this park would be appropriate for older children. The cost for equipment, rubber surface, a gazebo and installation is \$71,287. The other location would be a new park located between 403 and 405 Lakewood Drive. The city already owns this lot. This equipment would be suited for younger children. The cost for equipment, rubber surface, fence, gazebo and installation is \$55,514. Murphy stated the upkeep and maintenance required would include staining the gazebos yearly for the first five years and keeping the rubber mulch six inches deep.

Councilman Campbell joined the meeting via ZOOM.

There was council discussion about ongoing expenses for upkeep, liability issues and timeline for getting the project completed. Council was supportive of the project but wants to explore other options for providing shade that are low maintenance.

MOTION: Campbell moved, Friesen seconded, to approve \$126,801 for both parks with the understanding that other options would be researched to replace the gazebo. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Braun thanked Murphy, the group of mothers, Councilman Campbell and Councilman Ratzlaff for doing the research and bringing this need before council. Councilman Ratzlaff will organize a group consisting of mothers and city staff to determine color scheme.

5. Consider an Agreement with the City of Newton regarding water service

Torline reported this agreement has been a lingering item since North Newton built its water tower in 2015. The purpose of the agreement is to provide a backup for each city to receive water in the event of an emergency. Included in the agreement is a provision that North Newton will abandon the valve connecting the two cities near Anderson Road. North Newton has plans to get this accomplished but is still pursuing an easement from the owners of the Lippert building to allow the looping of our water system. Once the looping connection is completed we will abandon the valve. Torline stated the Newton City Commission approved this agreement already and would recommend council do the same.

MOTION: Goering moved, Dick seconded, to approve the Water Systems Connection & Services Agreement with Newton. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Consider an Agreement with the City of Newton regarding the emergency discharge of sewage.

Torline stated this agreement has also been in the works for some time and came into focus May 2019. There was a big rain event and Hesston requested that we stop pumping our sewage to Hesston. We stopped pumping to Hesston and allowed sewage to go through its overflow system and gravity flow into the Newton system. The primary provisions of the agreement are that North Newton agrees to pay Newton \$40,000 in return for services during the flood event in 2019. North Newton will start paying Newton \$1,800 per month for the benefit of having an emergency overflow option available. In return, North Newton will not be charged for the first 10,000 cubic feet of incidental flow per month. Additional amounts pumped will be billed at a rate of \$11.70 per hundred cubic feet. The monthly fee will be capped at \$50,000 regardless of the actual flow. North Newton will be responsible to install a new meter with an estimated cost of \$25,000.

MOTION: Ratzlaff moved, Goering seconded, to approve the Sewer Services Agreement with Newton. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Braun thanked city staff of both cities for working together to get these agreements finalized.

7. Consider a proposal to extend and complete Old Colony Court

Torline reported that Old Colony Court was paved and water and sewer lines installed approximately 30 years ago. However, the cul de sac was never completed. Ron Harder, owner of these lots, is now proposing completion of the cul de sac. The city has received an estimate from Vogts-Parga Construction, LLC to complete the street and cul de sac in the amount of \$78,787.60. The city would contract with Vogts-Parga Construction, LLC to do the work and city staff would inspect the project using existing plans and specifications. Harder would pay the city for the cost of the project and Vogts-Parga Construction, LLC would agree to accept \$78,787.60 as payment in full. Torline recommends we enter into a contract with Vogts-Parga Construction, LLC and Ron Harder. Completing this project will provide lots for new homes in North Newton which will increase our tax base.

MOTION: Dick moved, Ratzlaff seconded, to approve the development of a contract with Vogts-Parga Construction, LLC and Ron Harder. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Consider the proposal to repair a section of the 30th Street bridge over Kidron Creek

Entz stated that he received an estimate of \$7,830 from Vogts-Parga Construction, LLC to repair a portion of 30th Street near the bridge over Kidron Creek. This has been a problem area for some time and Entz recommends we hire a contractor to repair it rather than continuing to put a band-aid on the issues.

MOTION: Friesen moved, Goering seconded, to approve the estimate of \$7,830 from Vogts-Parga Construction, LLC to repair 30th Street near the bridge. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Consider the sale of a police patrol car

Braun stated that council approved the purchase of a new patrol car last month and now it is time to discuss if we keep or trade in the 2017 Charger that is being replaced. Chief Jordan reported the department currently has three police vehicles, but the Honda Clarity is not equipped for patrol. If one of the two patrol vehicles is in the shop or in an accident they only have one patrol vehicle. Jordan recommends we keep the 2017 Charger as a back-up vehicle. Jordan believes keeping the Charger also would extend the life of the remaining vehicles by reducing their usage. Resale value on the 2017 Charger is \$12,000-\$14,000. Braun stated there are financial implications if we keep the vehicle. There will be insurance and maintenance costs as well as adding a fourth vehicle to the fleet. There was lots of council discussion about the need for a fourth police vehicle. If having three pursuit rated police vehicles is important then we might need to trade in the Honda Clarity. There was consensus from the council to continue discussion on the need for a fourth patrol vehicle and not make any decisions tonight. Jordan will look into the resale value of the Honda Clarity.

Jordan then stated he would like to purchase a second police K-9. A K-9 has become available in the county and Jordan thinks it would benefit North Newton to add another K-9 to the department. Jordan believes a K-9 is a great community policing tool. This dog is already trained and would cost \$3,000. This is a great price as a new dog typically costs

October 2020 Minutes

between \$8,000-\$10,000. North Newton currently has a night time officer that wants to become a handler. There was council discussion about the annual expense of our present K-9. Jordan stated the expenses include dog food, shots, re-certification and hotel room during re-certification. Braun stated it is hard to justify two K-9s when Hesston, Halsted and Sedgwick don't have any K-9s. Torline supports one K-9 to benefit the larger police community but isn't supportive of having two K-9s. Torline stated this was not an agenda item and warned the council it might not be wise to make a decision of this magnitude without informing the public. Dick asked if Julian Gonzalez-Salamanca would speak about this issue since he brought it up during citizen comment. Julian's concern is the priorities of our community. He works at Bethel College and stated some students feel targeted by police or complain about racial profiling. Julian would like to see the police department invest in relationships with students rather than investing in another policing tool. Braun stated we have started conversations about racial justice and those dialogues need to continue. Braun asked the question if another K-9 was a need or a convenience. There was council discussion about the pros and cons of adding another K-9 to the police department. Braun recommended prolonging a decision until there is time to process this issue and there is research and data to make sure this is a need for North Newton.

10. Reports

a. **Mayor/Council.** Mayor Braun reported that he has been involved in a lot of meetings due to our annexation request along Anderson Avenue. Newton has passed an ordinance annexing the Prestressed property. We have withdrawn our annexation request and Braun felt that was a good decision in being a community partner.

Councilman Goering reported that the North Newton Community Foundation's (NNCF) asset balance is \$457,000. Funds remaining to be matched for 2020 total \$11,000. Of these funds, \$1,000 is available for existing funds and \$10,000 is available for new funds.

b. **Staff Update.** Torline reported the city has received a \$4,000 donation for benches along the Kidron Loop Trail. There is an additional \$3,000 also pledged for landscaping and more benches. Torline stated the third quarter financial report reflects healthy balances in all of the funds. Torline reported the sign pavilion project should be started by the end of the month. Torline personally thanked Braun for being involved in lots of meetings regarding the annexation request. Braun is a diplomat, displays wisdom and Torline is proud to work along-side him.

Entz reported that he plans to clean the debris from the ditch on the west side of Anderson Avenue in the coming weeks. Entz has also arranged for the sewer pumps to be pulled one at a time for routine maintenance. This is a preventative measure to ensure the pumps continue to run smoothly.

Jordan reported the charging station has had seventeen charges in September.

Attorney Nye had nothing additional to report.

c. **Clerk/Treasurer.** Redding presented October accounts payable and September/October payroll for payment.

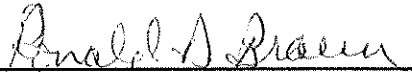
October 2020 Minutes

MOTION: Friesen moved, Ratzlaff seconded, to receive the October accounts payable in the amount of \$83,759.13 as presented and September/October payroll in the amount of \$29,257.67. Motion carried unanimously.

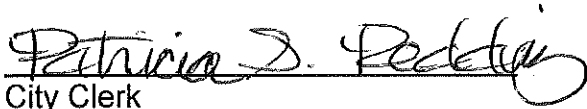
11. Non-Agenda Items

None presented

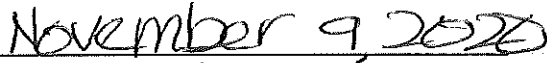
12. Adjournment. There being no further business, Mayor Braun declared the meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.



Mayor



City Clerk



Date Approved