

MINUTES
North Newton City Council – Regular Meeting
December 14, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
North Newton City Hall
Meeting via ZOOM

1. Call to Order

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

COUNCIL: Kurt Friesen, Jim Goering, Ron Ratzlaff, Dennis Campbell and Gregg Dick

STAFF: John Torline, Danny Entz, Randy Jordan, Gregory Nye (arrived late), Josh Lowe, and Cindy Hiebert. City Clerk Redding was not present

OTHERS: Nathan Koontz, Grace Wild, Louis Funk, and Andi Andres.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the November 9, 2020 meeting were presented.

MOTION: Goering moved, Dick seconded, to approve the November 9, 2020 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Citizen Comments

No one spoke.

4. Receive a Representative of the Kauffman Museum who will request a contribution for the annual Kansas Day event.

Andi Andres from Kauffman Museum thanked the city for their contributions to the Kansas Day Celebration for the past 17 years. She reviewed the events of the previous year and noted the changes that are planned in the coming year to address the concerns about the current pandemic. Most events will be conducted outside with use of the North Newton trail system as a focus. Andres requested a donation of \$1,000 for the Kansas Day Celebration at Kauffman Museum.

MOTION: Friesen moved, Goering seconded, to approve a \$1000 community development grant to the Kauffman Museum for the Celebrate Kansas Day event in January 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Braun thanked Andres and the many volunteers that give of their time to make this event happen every year. Andi was also congratulated for recently becoming the director of the museum.

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Attorney Greg Nye joined the ZOOM meeting

5. Receive Louis Funk of Bartlett & West who will discuss services in connection with proposed water line projects.

Torline outlined the three proposed projects. These include extending the water main from North Woods Plaza to the water tower, looping the system on the southern end of the city between 24th and Anderson, and connecting the existing water line at the Newton mission treatment plant with accompanying pump station and holding tank to allow access to Public Wholesale Water District Water. The first two projects would be paid by existing bond money; the third would be by outside financing. Louis Funk outlined the elements that would be included in his firm's proposal and provided a tentative cost estimate for two of the projects. Torline requested action by the Council to approve the project moving forward so that negotiations could begin with the Public Wholesale Water District Board of Directors. Proposals for engineering services would come at a later time.

MOTION: Ratzlaff moved, Dick seconded, to approve Bartlett and West preparing an engineering proposal for two internal water projects and one project outside the North Newton city limits. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Consider recommendations contained in the 2021 Salary and Benefit Package memorandum from the City Administrator.

Torline is required annually to analyze factors regarding compensation of employees and review employee benefits and present his recommendations to the council. Torline reported on the following two recommendations:

1. Cost of Living Raise

Torline is requesting that all employees except the City Administrator receive a 1% cost-of-living raise on January 1, 2021.

2. Healthcare coverage

The city started offering health insurance coverage two years ago and currently pays 70% of a family premium. Torline is recommending the city contribution increases from 70% to 80% at an estimated cost of \$9,000 to the city.

Torline is also recommending that the city continue to provide other benefits at current levels. Council discussed the recommendations.

MOTION: Ratzlaff moved, Campbell seconded, to approve both recommendations. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Consider the purchase of a video surveillance system.

Chief Jordan noted the increase of burglaries of cars and businesses in North Newton and Harvey County. The proposed system would provide eight cameras for internal and external surveillance of City Hall. In addition to the proposal provided he recommended the purchase of an iPad to allow monitoring the cameras by the office staff. Two monitors were suggested by council as an alternative to an iPad.

MOTION: Campbell moved, Goering seconded to approve the proposal. Motion carried unanimously.

8 Consider audit proposal of Knudsen, Monroe and Company for an audit of the city's 2020 financial statements.

Torline reported that the proposed fee of \$8,675 was an increase of \$325 from last year. The firm has provided audits for many years and the City has been pleased with their services.

MOTION: Dick moved, Ratzlaff seconded to approve the proposal. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Consider Authorizing the Mayor to Approve Year End Bills

Torline reported that action on this item was unnecessary as Council has previously approved a resolution to pre-authorize the payment of monthly bills. This agenda item is a relic of many previous years and was inadvertently put on as a year-end agenda item. Braun responded that inasmuch it is included on the agenda, approval would not be inappropriate.

MOTION: Dick moved, Friesen seconded, to authorize Mayor Braun to approve 2020 year-end bills. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Reports

a. Mayor/Council. Mayor Braun reported that he recently participated in a virtual ribbon cutting for a new Smithsonian Exhibit at the Kauffman Museum. He suggested an additional item be added to the list of the city's accomplishments that are included with the agenda materials.

Councilman Goering reported that the current asset balance of the North Newton Community Foundation (NNCF) is \$465,490. There is \$10,000 available to be matched by the City of North Newton for new funds that are established. The North Newton funds designated to match existing funds has been exhausted. Councilman Goering thanked the City of North Newton for their continued support. He noted that he would be stepping back from an active role on the Foundation board but would continue to maintain an active interest.

Councilman Campbell presented the color scheme for the new playground equipment at two locations. They reflect Bethel College maroon and gray with black accents. Councilman Ratzlaff reported that three young neighborhood mothers had been influential in the development of this project and that their input was valued. Prior approval of the cost for this project has been approved and the equipment will be purchased.

b. Staff. Torline reported that the construction of the cul-de-sac at the end of Old Colony Court is underway as are the three entrance pavilion signs. City Hall remains closed to the public in response to the ongoing pandemic. It will remain so for the

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foreseeable future. The City will end the year in a strong financial position, under budget and with substantial balances in each fund. Torline highlighted his 2020 Year End Report that lists the happenings of this past year.

Entz reported on fall cleanup, cleaning leaves out of street gutters, posting of speed limit signs, street patching and Kidron Creek cleanup.

Chief Jordan praised the efforts of the Court Clerk and City Attorney for their efforts to create a successful and safe environment to conduct in person municipal court.

Attorney Nye had nothing more to report.

c. **Clerk/Treasurer.** In the absence of the City Clerk, Hiebert presented the December accounts payable and November/December payroll for review.

MOTION: Friesen moved, Campbell seconded, to receive December accounts payable and November/December payroll in the amounts of \$85,489.71 and \$29,849.91 respectively. Motion carried unanimously.

11. **Adjournment.** Mayor Braun declared the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Patricia Becking Ronald A Braun
City Clerk Mayor

January 11, 2021
Date Approved