

MINUTES
North Newton City Council – Regular Meeting
August 10, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
Meeting via ZOOM

1. Call to Order.

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

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

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

OTHERS: Grace Wild, Danny Bisoni, Jackie Jordan, Irma Voran, JP Krievins, Adam Strunk, Chuck Regier, Nancy Law, Nathan Koontz, Dena Braun, Joshua Lowe, Joe Regier

Mayor Braun reported that agenda item #7 will be tabled until a later date.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the July 13, 2020 meeting were presented.

MOTION: Dick moved, Ratzlaff seconded, to approve said minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Citizen Comments

No one spoke.

4. Conduct a Public Hearing on the 2021 Budget as Prepared.

Mayor Braun opened the public hearing at 7:04 p.m.

Nathan Koontz stated the letter that was read last council meeting signed by 80 people, 58 from North Newton, asked that the budget for the police department does not increase. He asked what has been done with this recommendation? Torline responded that there is a minor increase in the police budget for additional health insurance benefits but no cost of living raise for police or any city staff.

Braun then read a statement from Tim Hodge stating that he hoped council wouldn't use utility transfers to fund government.

Mayor Braun closed the public hearing at 7:09 p.m.

The proposed mill levy decrease is approximately .25 of a mill while still offering the same level of services.

MOTION: Goering moved, Campbell seconded, to adopt the 2021 Budget as printed. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Consider plans and costs for three entrance signs.

Funds for the sign project have been included in the recent bond issue and the committee has worked on this project for a number of years. JP Krievins talked about the three sign locations that council approved last meeting. The north sign located off of I-135 exit ramp will most likely need to be located in the prairie restoration area instead of the KDOT right-of-way. Chuck Regier is still in conversation with KDOT but getting permission to build the sign in the right-of-way would potentially be a long and cumbersome process. Krievins stated that the sign at 36th and Anderson Avenue would be a nice pause point with a place to sit and a water fountain. Dirt work will be required to build this area up to the same elevation as the walking path. The total cost for the three entrance signs/pause points is \$129,658.00. There was a lot of discussion about the cost and if this was a good use of funds. Council discussed the options of trying to cut costs and go back to the drawing board or maybe not do all three signs at this time. Torline stated that there is \$120,000 in the recent bond issue for this entrance project. Taxes will not be raised if council chooses to complete this project or lowered if council chooses not to proceed with the project. Krievins stated that two of the three locations are not just entrance signs but more like small parks with places to rest and get a drink.

MOTION: Dick moved, Campbell seconded, to accept the proposal of \$129,658 to proceed with the entry point project. Motion carried. Councilman Friesen voted no.

6. Consider a resolution that provides for North Newton to apply for federal CARES funding.

Torline reported that Harvey County is receiving 6 million dollars from the CARES Act to help cover expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. North Newton is entitled to receive reimbursement for approved expenses incurred in response to the pandemic and anticipated expenses moving forward through the end of 2020. Harvey County hired an accounting firm to review the expenditures to verify if each expense meets the criteria. North Newton is eligible to receive \$3,300 and in order to access these funds Council must adopt Resolution 374-20 which will be submitted to Harvey County.

MOTION: Goering moved, Ratzlaff seconded, to adopt Resolution 374-20 approving acceptance and use of corona virus relief funds. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda item # 7 will be tabled until a future meeting.

8. Consider the annual contribution to Bethel College Fall Fest activities.

North Newton has received a contribution request from Bethel College for their Fall Fest activities. In the past we have given \$1,000 for this event. Mayor Braun asked if this contribution should be contingent on Fall Fest actually taking place this fall? Councilman Dick stated at this point Fall Fest is being planned but will look different due to the pandemic.

MOTION: Ratzlaff moved, Friesen seconded to contribute \$1,000 to Bethel College for Fall Fest activities. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Consider the proposal to extend the walking/biking path at two locations.

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Council has requested quotes for an extension of the walking/biking path to North Woods Plaza and south along Anderson Avenue to Wildwood Way. The estimate from Vogts Parga for the North Woods Plaza extension is \$10,374 and the extension to Wildwood Way is \$14,915. Approximately half of the North Woods quote is included in our bond issue. Torline stated if approved the excess funds would come out of bond money for the bike path. Both sidewalks will be 10 feet wide like the existing path.

MOTION: Campbell moved, Dick seconded, to approve the estimate from Vogts Parga for extending the walking/biking path in the two locations mentioned above in the amount of \$25,289. Motion carried unanimously.

10. Consider extending the mask ordinance that is scheduled to expire on August 11.

Mayor Braun stated the mask ordinance was passed at the July council meeting and is set to expire tomorrow. All council members stated their support for extending the ordinance. Rather than setting a future date when the mask requirement expires, it was suggested that it be in effect until council takes action to rescind the requirement.

Attorney Nye stated that the new ordinance, if approved, will amend Ordinance 636-20. Ordinance 637-20 will have a few introductory WHEREAS statements and will state that COVID-19 cases continue to rise in the County and that Ordinance 636-20 concerning wearing facemasks will be extended until rescinded by a subsequent ordinance.

MOTION: Goering moved, Friesen seconded, to pass Ordinance 637-20 extending the mask requirement. Motion carried unanimously.

11. Reports

a. Mayor/Council. Mayor Braun reported that city staff met again with Newton city staff to discuss an emergency sewer agreement. Progress is being made to get this agreement finalized.

Councilman Goering reported the latest asset balance of the North Newton Community Foundation (NNCF) is \$427,682 which is the May 31 balance. Of the \$20,000 in match funds provided by the City for 2020, \$13,000 remains to be matched. Of this total, \$10,000 is designated for the establishment of new funds and \$3,000 is available to match donations to existing funds.

Councilman Ratzlaff suggested that Kauffman Museum be contacted about taking care of the weeds along the sidewalk on 27th Street.

Councilman Campbell reported that at Torline's request he has met with citizens who are interested in updating playground equipment at the Tot Lot on Goldenrod Road. This group has picked out some equipment and Campbell plans to meet with a representative from Wichita to find out more details about this specific equipment. Campbell met with John Waltner, Pastor Dawn Harms from Bethel College Mennonite Church and Sam Haynes from Bethel College about parking issues around the church and college. This group is asking that the city pass an ordinance to enforce the 4 hour parking signs. Campbell also reported that citizens are asking that the speed limit on Lakewood Circle be reduced to 15 mph. With the new path close by, there are more people walking on the street to get to the path and traffic has also increased on Lakewood Circle. Torline and Councilman Goering will talk with administration at Kidron Bethel about this issue.

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b. Staff Update. Torline reported that the new path is getting used a lot and is near completion. There is a pause point by North Woods Plaza that will include a bench. Torline and Mayor Braun are working on a sign recognizing those involved in the project which will most likely be installed near this pause point. A dedication of the trail is planned for spring of 2021. Numerous individuals have donated three to four benches as well as landscaping along the trail and around the pause points. Torline asked Entz to install pedestrian crossing signs on 30th street as well as crossing strips on the pavement where the path crosses 30th street. Torline will meet next week with Kidron Bethel administration about park equipment in the Campus Woods area.

Entz reported his department has been gluing bricks down at Campus Pond that were knocked off the wall some time ago. They are also making repairs at the Post Office, sweeping the streets and repairing numerous water leaks around the city.

Police Chief Jordan reported the body cameras purchased last month are now in service. Jordan thanked Deputy Bethards and Officer Lowe for wiring and installing the necessary equipment in the patrol vehicles which saved the city some money. The charging station has had twenty-four charges in the month of July. Jordan then spoke about the parking issues around Bethel College Mennonite Church and Bethel College. This issue has come up numerous times and he feels like this is an issue that needs to be worked out between the college and the church. Enforcement by the police department will be difficult. Mayor Braun stated that this issue won't be resolved tonight but will need to be discussed at a later time.

Attorney Nye reported that his mother, Kathy Nye, turns 95 today. Happy Birthday to Kathy!

c. Clerk/Treasurer. Redding presented accounts payable and payroll for consideration.

MOTION: Ratzlaff moved, Dick seconded, to receive the August accounts payable and miscellaneous checks in the amount of \$78,238.14 and July payroll in the amount of \$27,951.05. Motion carried unanimously.

12. Non-Agenda Items

Braun referenced the letter council received last month about forming a relationship between the North Newton Police Department and a community group interested in policing issues. Braun wants to provide a listening opportunity for staff where these citizens can express their ideas. It was suggested that this be an outdoor meeting so more people could attend and still social distance. Braun will continue to work out details for this event.

13. Adjournment

There being no further business Mayor Braun declared the meeting adjourned at 9:56 p.m.


City Clerk


Mayor

September 14, 2020
Date Approved