

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
City Council Workshop
City Hall
2077 West Larpenteur Avenue

MINUTES
November 1, 2023
6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:34 PM

B. ROLL CALL: GUSTAFSON __X__ LEEHY 7:30 PM__
MEYER __X__ WASSENBERG __X__ WEHYEE __X__

STAFF PRESENT: LINEHAN __X__ VAN DER WERFF __X__

C. POLICY ITEMS:

1. 2024 Budget Workshop #4 - 10-Year Capital Plan Update

Administrator Linehan explains the following highlights for the 2024 Capital Plan, the total 2024 Capital Outlay is \$3.339 million.

2024 Highlights:

- Roselawn Avenue Mill and Overlay
 - o Mill and Overlay Street Costs - \$120,000
- Community Park / Park Improvements - \$2,750,000 – This is the upper limit.
 - o Staff believes \$1 million to \$1.5 million is within the City’s budget. This will fluctuate once plans and prices are more defined.
 - Total cost with purchase of the park comes down to about 4m
 - This year 1.5 was spent on purchase and contract with WSB and architect.
 - 500 thousand – administrative oversight/ design/ plans/environmental
 - Demolition – 50-100 thousand
 - New building est. 1.2 – 1.5 million
 - New parking lot 300 thousand
 - New playground – 200/300 thousand
 - Other amenities – 200/500 thousand
 - o Staff will recommend a tax abatement bond of \$1 to \$2 million for the building. It will be a longer bond than used for street improvements, but the goal will be to have it callable early.
 - o Administrator Linehan informs Council, demo of the current park building is planned for winter, early 2024. The hope is to break ground in spring and have the building done by fall/winter of 2024.
 - o The City is hoping to get public feedback during the engagement session on November 6.
 - o The City will also apply for available grants now that plans are more solid to lower the amount of the bond as much as possible. Other bonds will be paid off significantly by the time Falcon Heights will apply for a new bond.
- Machinery & Equipment - \$146,100
 - o F-450 with Dump Box - \$89,00. Order is placed, hope to be delivered summer 2024.

- Scheduled replacement of the 2012 Ford F-350 1-ton truck (45,284 miles). Was scheduled for 2022 on our equipment replacement schedule, but moved to 2023 due to vehicle inventory shortages. In 2023, it was agreed that we would upgrade to an F-450 for additional towing and hauling capacity.
 - Trade-in valued at \$20,000 - 2012 Ford F-350 1-ton truck
 - John Deere 1585 TerrainCut Front Mowers - \$48,174
 - Scheduled replacement of the 2013 JD 1585 TerrainCut Mowers (used for mowing and snow blowing sidewalks). Administrator Linehan explains this was also scheduled to be replaced for a couple of years. It's very user friendly, high-use vehicle and will be purchased and delivered in 2024.
 - Trade-in valued at \$20,000 -2013 JD 1585 TerrainCut Mowers
- Larpenteur Avenue Streetlights - \$300,000
 - Administrator Linehan explains the Larpenteur Avenue streetlights includes 34 city-owned decorative lights that were installed in the 1990s between Arona and Fry Street. Due to underground wire faults, many of the streetlights no longer function and need full replacement. This includes the conduit underground, involving sidewalk removal and replacement. They will include decorative banners. The proposal is to replace all of the lights along Larpenteur, and utilizing TIF funds in the Falcon Town Square to replace some of the lights in the district. This project was included in the 2023 budget, but following the 2023 PMP and the time required of our engineers, there was not enough time to complete the project by end-of-year.
- Monument Signs / Gazebo Sandblasting and Repainting - \$40,000
 - Complete repainting of all city signs, rust removal, refinishing glass. Current colors will stay the same. Replacing would be a more expensive project.
 - The Gazebo at Curtiss Field will be included as well.
- City Hall Camera Upgrades - \$15,000
 - Capital investment to upgrade the cameras at City Hall.

Administrator Linehan states it is a sizable Capital for the year compared to other years.

Councilmember Wassenberg asks about Solar Panels damage at City Hall.

Administrator Linehan answers that the City has an open claim with insurance to get them repaired. They are not working as effectively anymore, because of hail damage from hailstorms back in 2022. It will most likely not be a capital investment, but depending on what the outcome of the claim is, the solar panels might need to be fully replaced in 2025.

Council discusses other various costs listed on the capital budget sheet from general funds. Such as software contracts, prepare to replace for computers/printers, Snow plow trucks, etc. The City keeps two running snow plow trucks as this is an essential service. Council then discussed the fund balance for the year within the capital fund.

Administrator Linehan adds that this budget will be adopted at the Truth in Taxation hearing in December along with the other budgets.

2. Employee Personnel Policy Update

Administrator Linehan explains The Minnesota State Legislature introduced a number of employment law changes that were signed by the Governor. A few of the recent law changes have already been added to the city's personnel policy. The remainder of the changes will take place on January 1, 2024 and need to be incorporated in to our policy. The recommended changes were advised by our City Attorney and the League of Minnesota's Model Personnel Policy and reviewed by Council. There has been changes in the labor law and the Attorneys updated the policy. This new policy are recommendations of the Attorney for drug testing and the safe and sick leave. There are other changes staff wants to work on, but these laws should be updated before the end of 2023.

Councilmember Wassenberg questions the drug testing policy. He feels drug testing should be done for employees who are operating equipment.

Administrator Linehan adds that he doesn't feel the need to do pre-employment drug testing apart from hiring for Public Works as they need to keep up with their CDL's It elongates the hiring process. He adds we would conduct testing under reasonable suspicion. This is a drug free and alcohol-free workplace.

Other major addition is the language for sick and safe leave.

Administrator Linehan indicated he would like to keep current policy and modify, rather than adopting the LMC model staff policy.

Councilmember Meyer asks if paid sick time is currently provided.

Administrator Linehan answers yes, the sick and safe leave is for employees to use for example when there is a snowstorm and an employee feels they are not able to come into work. It will also be included for part-time employees when they work 80 hours or more in a calendar year.

Administrator Linehan wanted to provide time for Council to review. This will be added to a future council agenda before the end of the year.

Councilmember Wassenberg asks would the City consider combining sick leave and paid time off. Administrator Linehan states there are pros and cons to combining the two.

Mayor Gustafson asks if the budget for legal fees will be increased for the next year. Administrator Linehan answers between the park purchase, law enforcement services and other components the legal service fees were higher for 2023.

Council will review the budget report and updated personnel policy and provide the City Administrator with updates if needed.

3. Pathway Sidewalk Maintenance Map and Plowing Update

Recommendation for Ruggles from Administrator Linehan is not plowing the pathway and putting up signs on each side stating the pathway is closed. He adds it

will be a challenge with pavers as they cannot be treated the same for snow removal as normal blacktop or concrete paths. This will be an item to vote on at a future City Council meeting.

Councilmember Leehy recommends calling the map a snow maintenance map.

Council discusses that the City plows all of Larpenteur except for business zoned district and if we should take on the responsibility to clear the sidewalk for businesses on Larpenteur. It would be business friendly, not very time-consuming and takes care of property owners not taking care of snow removal according to City Code. Some businesses have also asked the City to plow some of their areas as it's challenging for some businesses. It will be to no charge, but the City will not be responsible for when the snow is moved into their parking lots. Certain businesses do not have the ability to remove the snow completely from their property as they have no place to move the snow too.

Councilmember Wehyee asks about staffing and budget for snow removal.

Administrator Linehan adds that the City is currently hiring for 2 Public Works positions. There is 1 full time position and 1 part time. If both positions are filled Public Works will be staffed properly to take care of snow removal. Public Works has also stated they want to clear Larpenteur Ave. from snow.

Council discussed if the City would approve of neighbors taking care of snow removal of Ruggles Pathway.

Administrator Linehan answers he is afraid of the damage it causes to the pathway and recommends not clearing the pathway by the City.

Council discusses snow removal of the path as they feel residents will not appreciate not being able to use it during the winter. It would be challenging to snow remove the path, but not impossible. Public Works has a plan for snow removal of the path. It would not be a priority for clearing. It will be more time consuming.

Councilmember Meyer would like Public Works to give maintaining the path a try for the first year. Public Works will have to be more cautious and use different equipment.

Council agrees it is a service for the City and adds value for residents. For the snow removal guidelines, they want to keep Ruggles Pathway, add Garden Ave. sidewalk and add Larpenteur Ave. including businesses.

4. Law Enforcement Services Update

Administrator Linehan provides Council with an update regarding law enforcement services. The City of St. Paul and Falcon Heights are negotiating contract details. It has been a time-consuming process.

Mayor Gustafson sent Mayor Carter a letter regarding law enforcement services. Staff has been making progress towards a contract and are making concessions to work towards expediting contract approval.

D. ADJOURNMENT: 9:03 PM

Councilmember
Meyer motions to adjourn
the meeting; approved 5-0.

DISCLAIMER: City Council Workshops are held monthly as an opportunity for Council Members to discuss policy topics in greater detail prior to a formal meeting where a public hearing may be held and/or action may be taken. Members of the public that would like to make a comment or ask questions about an item on the agenda for an upcoming workshop should send them to mail@falconheights.org prior to the meeting. Alternatively, time is regularly allotted for public comment during Regular City Council Meetings (typically 2nd and 4th Wednesdays) during the Community Forum.



Randall C. Gustafson, Mayor

Dated this 29th day of November, 2023



Jack Linehan, City Administrator

