



Presque Isle City Council Meeting

Monday, June 1, 2015

5:00 PM

Presque Isle Council Chambers

Call to Order - Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Emily Smith, Vice-Chairman Mike Chasse, Councilors Richard Engels, Leigh Smith, and Craig Green (Arrived at 5:10 PM)

City Manager James A. Bennett, Deputy City Manager Martin Puckett, and Deputy City Clerk Deborah Ouellette were also present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Emily Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Workshop

15-112 Discussion of Community Center

Councilor Chasse reported on the meetings with Harriman Associates and Nickerson & O'Day, Inc. to review the list of potential changes for the Community Center and pool/splash pad.

Chasse provided a spreadsheet which summarized proposed changes and the related cost savings. Items C14, C16, and C17 are bigger picture items with the largest potential cost savings. He said many of the changes involve a similar product at a lesser price. They tried to say "no" to options that reduce quality or cause maintenance issues in the future. The bottom line shows cost reductions of \$322, 214 from original price.

Chasse said a lot more work is needed to get the pool price where it needs to be.

Councilor Green commented the Rec Committee has done a great job in getting the project down to the \$7.5 million range. Councilor Engels and the others thanked Councilor Chasse for his hard work on this important project.

Citizen Comments

Carol McPherson of Third Street, Presque Isle gave a brief presentation to Councilors in favor of staying at the current City Hall building and not moving. She has concerns about the \$6,000/month or \$72,000/year payments the City would have to make per the lease agreement which will have a serious budget impact. The problems with this building are known, and not everything has to be fixed right away. The City needs to do a better job of taking care of the assets it owns.

Melvin Hovey of Academy Street spoke to Councilors and said they should spend no more money on (the City Hall) building. Based on his experience with trying to make do with an older building, he said they have “optimal inefficiencies”. No matter how much money is spent – insulation, air, heating, etc. – it is throwing money down a black hole. He advised Councilors they should not spend another nickel on this building. We now have an opportunity to move into a much better, more suitable building. If we let this opportunity go by, nothing will happen in the future.

Michael McPherson addressed Councilors in favor of staying in the current City Hall building and allowing the lease option to expire. Residents are already facing high property taxes and payments under the lease agreement will be an increased burden. He recommended the City should buy or build a new building, but not lease.

Rita Lannigan of Washburn Road spoke to Councilors against moving. She is recently retired and has worked in this building for forty years. She has no immediate concerns about the suitability of this building. Lannigan said we should stay where we are right now, and not be in a rush to move to another location. She recommends that Councilors survey taxpayers and better understand how they feel about the situation.

Charlene Buzza spoke about putting the question of moving City Hall to referendum.

Blake Winslow, an UMPI student spoke and said that he understands and appreciates the arguments on both sides of the issue.

Consent Agenda

- 15-113 Approve minutes from May 4, 2015 and May 18, 2015**
- 15-114 Approve 2015 Warrants #16-#19, totaling \$1,084,572.42**
- 15-115 Approve nominations to Maine Municipal Association’s Executive Committee**
- 15-116 Accept resignation from Peter Hallowell on the Audit Committee**
- 15-117 Approve contract extension for Grant Writer**
- 15-118 Approve closure of portions of Main Street for Crown of Maine Balloon Fest Street Fair on August 27, 2015**
- 15-119 Approve closure of portions of Main Street and State Street for a Color Run on August 22, 2015**

BE IT RESOLVED by Councilor Engels, seconded by Councilor Green to approve Consent Agenda Items #113 - #119 as presented. **Vote 6-0.**

Old Business

15-111 Amendment to Employee Handbook Section 13.1 Non-union vacation

BE IT RESOLVED by Councilor Engels, seconded by Councilor Chasse to approve the amendment to the Employee Handbook Section 13.1 Vacation as presented. **Vote 6-0.**

New Business

15-120 Discussion of lease at former Maine Potato Growers, Inc. Office Building

City Manager Bennett reiterated the June 15TH deadline for acceptance of the MPG building lease agreement.

Councilor Engels acknowledged a variance of opinions in the matter. He said he voted not to move initially. The City Hall should remain here until the community center is built. At this point in time, he is not in favor of moving.

Councilor Chasse said he does not want to look at moving and the community center being built at the same time. He is not convinced the MPG building is right for us. This reasoning is partly based on the fact that we don't have a buyer for City Hall.

Councilor Randy Smith expressed that we cannot afford to miss this opportunity. He said the figures are locked in and there will be no surprises for the lease term. We can depend on these costs. The MPG building gives an opportunity for efficiency – employees and managers can work together on one floor. It is not responsible to put more money into this building. We cannot afford both – the community center and reconstructing this building.

Councilor Green stated that we cannot sign any lease agreement without a firm commitment on this building. He further stated the State Fire Marshall's office is not asking that we spend an enormous amount of money on the building, and what is required can be done over time. In order to come into compliance, we need to have a survey of our fire escapes by a certified engineer; to install a fire alarm system; and to reinstall fire doors on all three levels. These three items have a cost estimate of \$60,000-\$70,000 and could possibly be done for less. Councilor Green handed out an information sheet which summarized his concerns about City Hall.

Councilor Leigh Smith said he is in favor of moving. The lease agreement offers 10 years of stable costs. We have any real plan of where to go next. If we stay in this location, for how long? He doesn't want to put any more money into this building.

Councilor Emily Smith thanked citizens for coming forward to express their viewpoints and give feedback. She has listened to citizens tonight and a number of others in the community. The community center is our priority at this time. However, we are here to make decisions for the whole community. We can't spend money to go to referendum on every decision that needs to be made, and we need to be responsible with your money. Being responsible right now means not putting more money into this (City Hall) building. She agrees that purchasing is a better option than leasing, but the lease terms include a purchase option that can be exercised once the public safety building has been paid off in two or three years. She said the responsible thing for us to do right now is to move. Is the MPG building the best option? It would probably be better to move to the public safety building or in conjunction with the community center, but we cannot afford those at this time.

Council Green said that he has not heard from a single person wanting to move from or sell this (City Hall) building; he put out a challenge for anyone wanting to move and sell, please contact him.

BE IT RESOLVED by Councilor Green, seconded by Councilor Randy Smith to TABLE this agenda item until the June 8, 2015 meeting when all councilors will be present and a vote can be taken. **Vote 6-0.**

15-121 Ice System - The Forum

City Manager Bennett said Councilors can discuss The Forum ice system tonight and they will answer any questions, and then he recommends TABLING the agenda item so the public has an opportunity to look at the package that has been provided to Councilors electronically, as the information is now available online. It is a relatively expensive investment we are looking to make in this facility.

Bennett stated the ice system generally is designed to last twenty years, and we got thirty-eight years out of the system at The Forum because of incredible work and diligence of the staff.

Chris Beaulieu, Recreation and Parks Director, gave a high level summary of where things stand. They put an RFP out and received four different proposals from three companies. Two ice systems were freon systems, and the other two

were ammonia systems. The Forum currently has a freon system that uses the refrigerant R22, which essentially has been discontinued.

Beaulieu said there are differences between the systems --freon and ammonia. He recommends going with an ammonia system, which is generally more efficient. The system they are looking at is used but has been refurbished. It is industrial grade and has a 40-45 year life expectancy. It is a larger system relative to the others and comes with a condenser, which will be available in addition to our condenser. The other ammonia system is similar, but it is new and much more expensive.

Proposals include equipment, installation, and electrical costs. All systems require The Forum to move to a 480v electrical, which will bring about energy efficiency as well. City Manager Bennett estimates annual savings in the range of \$35,000-\$45,000, when you factor in discontinuance of the old service contract and electricity savings. Councilor Randy Smith commented on the good work involved in developing the cost-benefit analysis. The annual costs savings will offset the investment in the project.

We really need to be up and running by October 1, 2015. If we go with a used system, installation will take less time since it is already assembled. Beaulieu talked with a local professional whom he really trusts, and they recommend the used system.

Councilor Green asked about warranty and Beaulieu said both new and used systems are warranted for one year.

Councilor Emily Smith asked about amount of ammonia used by the used system. The system needs to be evaluated in terms of safety and potential costs of noncompliance which can be substantial. Beaulieu will have this information at the next meeting. He said there is certainly a higher level of safety regulations that need to be followed with an ammonia system.

Councilor Engels asked about the age of the used ice system. Beaulieu said it is fifteen years old, and he believes it has been used for twelve years. The condenser which comes with it is six years old.

Bennett recapped the other proposals do not come with a condenser, so you will have one unit that runs continuously. The preferred system allows condensers to be alternated, which will facilitate preventive maintenance and equipment longevity.

Councilor Emily Smith asked about water softeners, and Beaulieu said they installed one about three years ago.

BE IT RESOLVED by Councilor Randy Smith, seconded by Councilor Green to TABLE this agenda item until the June 8, 2015 meeting when a complete package will be available. **Vote 6-0.**

15-122 Bid for Asphalt Paving

The final bids for asphalt paving were as follows: Trombley Industries of Limestone ~ \$423,989 and Lane Construction of Presque Isle ~ \$426,739.

Councilor Emily Smith stated that if you want people to bid, then you go with the lowest bid, all other things being equal. The memo from Dana Fowler states that service has been equal based on past experience.

Councilor Randy Smith and Councilor Chasse expressed agreement with her position.

BE IT RESOLVED by Councilor Randy Smith, seconded by Councilor Chasse to approve an asphalt paving contract with Trombley Industries in accordance with their bid prices. **Vote 6-0.**

15-123 Capital Investment Plan (CIP)

City Manager Bennett handed out the CIP document to Councilors. They probably should workshop the CIP in a month or so.

The CIP document did not exist for the City of Presque Isle prior to 2011.

BE IT RESOLVED by Councilor Hallowell, seconded by Councilor Randy Smith to approve a Star City ATV Club municipal grant application. **Vote 6-0.**

15-124 Generator

Deputy City Manager Martin Puckett described the generators that will be swapped and explained how they were valued; he is looking to resolve the situation so parties can move forward.

The generator at Green Hill Drive is a 2008 CAT valued at \$29,000. The replacement will be a 1994 Onan valued at \$25,200. He said the CAT is generally a more desirable unit. The Onan has a switching unit and the CAT does not.

Aroostook House of Comfort will deliver the Onan to the City and it can be placed in service or sold.

City Manager Bennet recommended Councilors accept the AHOC proposal and approve the swap as outlined.

Councilor Engels said circumstances are such that, if we approve the swap and AHOC buys the former MBNA building, they will have a usable generator with a usable switch, and it will not cost them any extra money. The City will have a replacement generator to use at the airport or sell.

BE IT RESOLVED by Councilor Green, seconded by Councilor Chasse to authorize the City Manager to negotiate swapping the generators and negotiate a sale with the interested party. **Vote 6-0.**

Manager's Report

The City of Presque Isle received \$75,000 grant for the permanent structure of the public market that was written by Kim Smith.

Announcements

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Presque Isle City Council will be held on Monday, July 6, 2015 at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

The MSAD #1 budget validation referendum vote will be held on Tuesday, June 9, 2015, at the William V. Haskell Community Center, 270 Main Street. Voting starts at 8:00 AM and closes at 8:00 PM.

Adjournment

BE IT RESOLVED by Councilor Randy Smith, seconded by Councilor Leigh Smith to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 PM. **Vote 6-0.**

Attested by: _____
Deborah A. Ouellette, Deputy Clerk