

ROLLING MEADOWS CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
August 17, 2010

Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:58 pm.

COUNCIL IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor Nelson, Aldermen Barb Lusk, Larry Buske, Brad Judd, Glenn Adams, John D'Astice, Jim Larsen

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: City Manager Sarah Phillips, Public Works Director Fred Vogt, Community Development Director Valerie Dehner, Fire Chief Ron Stewart, Police Chief Dave Scanlan, Senior Accountant Rob Fredrickson, City Attorney Jim Macholl, Assistant City Manager Barry Krumstok

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**1) Vacation/Sick/Holiday**

Ms. Phillips: Alderman Judd brought up the policy on the vacation/sick/holiday schedule. She has put together a two-tier system for new hires that would not affect union employees.

Alderman Adams: It is a step in the right direction. He still has issues with the sick time accumulating to 1000 hours. In the private sector, you have to get your own long term disability insurance.

Ms. Phillips: We would have the survey compare both private and public sector jobs.

Alderman D'Astice: Currently, if someone has 0-4 years, they get 80 hours of vacation. What is the 200 max?

Ms. Phillips: They can accumulate 200 hours.

Alderman D'Astice: Just wants to clarify for the people watching on TV. He agrees with Alderman Adams that it is a step in the right direction. He has never been allowed to accumulate more than one week vacation time and sick time is "use it or lose it". For new employees only...more needs to be done.

Alderman Larsen: Echoes Aldermen D'Astice's and Adams comments. It is a step in the right direction. What is the cost comparison on the current and proposed policy?

Ms. Phillips: There is a snapshot in the packet...just related to sick time.

Alderman Larsen: His primary concern is the ability of the residents to support these benefits. It is getting increasingly difficult for the taxpayers to be able to support these benefits.

Alderman Lusk: There is concern about the affordability to the residents. She is concerned about making drastic changes before getting a survey of the surrounding communities.

Mayor Nelson: We need to be competitive in both the private and public sectors.

Alderman Judd: Can an employee take one hour vacation?

Ms. Phillips: Yes.

Alderman Judd: Wants to completely eliminate the carryover of sick time and vacation. Vacation time allows them to clear their head, rejuvenate and come back to work. Maybe carrying over one week upon supervisor approval is a possibility. This is a union issue in his mind. Does not think it is right to single out the non-union employees. We should go back to the unions with this effective 1/1/2011. If they say no then we request that in the contract negotiations. He cannot find the justification for the carryover of vacation and sick time for union personnel. In the mean time we would still owe them \$5 million. He suggests that we would pay that out at \$1 million a years over the next five years. This policy of the carryover of sick and vacation time to this extent is killing us.

Mayor Nelson: Does he suggest we ask the unions to open the contract for 2011?

Committee of the Whole

August 17, 2010

Page 2 of 5

Alderman Judd: Correct.

Alderman Buske: Do they have to have 25 years in to collect sick time?

Ms. Phillips: At least 8 years of service and 55 years old or 25 years.

Alderman Lusk: Cannot see going back to the residents with a tax increase to pay this. She does not want to take out a bond.

Alderman D'Astice: How do we want to move this forward?

Mayor Nelson: Let's listen to the rest of the comments.

Alderman Judd: If there is council support, wants to take \$1M a year to pay off the accumulated sick/vacation for 5 years and then start from scratch. No carryover of sick and maybe carryover of one week vacation time.

Alderman Larsen: We should get back to Ms. Phillips with our thoughts and revisit it that way.

Alderman D'Astice: Has no problem submitting ideas to Ms. Phillips but wants to know what everyone else thinks.

Mayor Nelson: Would council find a survey helpful?

Alderman Judd: No, that would be absolutely worthless to him.

Alderman Larsen: The impetus behind this is that we need to understand what we are looking at for the 2011 budget. What kind of window are we looking at? We should get our thoughts to Ms. Phillips and see what the consensus of the council is.

Mayor Nelson: Alderman Judd brought up a good point....the fairness of the union and non-union. We should talk to the union personnel first.

Alderman D'Astice: The staff proposal is for new hires. Alderman Judd is talking about going back to existing employees. From the new hire aspect...he does not care about a survey.

Mayor Nelson: Without a study we really have no idea how we compare.

Alderman D'Astice: The survey could take 6 months?

Ms. Phillips: Up to 6 months.

Alderman D'Astice: He will give his ideas on the new hires. We should not do anything to the employees just because we can. It should be fair across the board. The public needs to know what everyone is getting....the pay scale, the benefits.

Mayor Nelson: Suggests that Ms. Phillips talk to the unions and that council give her feedback and she gets a consensus of the comments and come back at the September Committee of the Whole meeting.

Ms. Phillips: Correction to Alderman Buske.....employees can collect sick time after 20 years of service.

**2) Fire Department Personnel**

Chief Stewart: Brought up the open Deputy Chief position and the best use of that position and dollars. We anticipated this retirement and redistributed the workload. There are two areas that need to be addressed. In March of 2009, we lost our part-time clerk and have had no clerical staff since then. He feels we should reinstate the position. Proposal is 30 hours at \$15/hr. The other position is Training Officer. These duties have been shifted to the Battalion Chiefs and Lieutenants. We could realize a savings in the 2011 budget between \$43,000-47,000. A Civilian Training Officer could be looked at. A few departments in the area do use a civilian at salaries ranging from \$50,000 - \$75,000.

Alderman Buske: The Clerk position was looked at last year. For Police we hired two part-time people and some sharing was supposed to be done with the Fire Department. That sharing is not being done. He does believe that the Fire Department needs clerical work. Has he looked at a retiree for the Training Officer position?

Chief Stewart: Yes. Having a sworn officer would give us some flexibility and some added benefit.

Alderman Buske: Understands and agrees with that.

Alderman Larsen: Training Officer would have to be a lieutenant?

Chief Stewart: Yes.

Alderman Judd: Does not have a problem with the clerk position, but thinks he could find someone at \$12.50/hour.

Chief Stewart: The range starts at \$12.50.

Alderman Judd: Would be more inclined to go with a civilian Training Officer.

Alderman D'Astice: Is good with the clerk position and the training officer. He can see the pros and cons of using a civilian or a sworn officer.

Mayor Nelson: If this is a sworn officer and a lieutenant called in sick this person could step in and fill his duties?

Chief Stewart: Correct.

Mayor Nelson: With a civilian in that position we could eat up a big chunk of overtime due to the fact that the civilian could not cover the lieutenant who called in sick.

Alderman Adams: Does not have a problem with what is being proposed. He agrees with Alderman Judd about the salary for the clerk position. Is not comfortable making the decision on whether to use a civilian or sworn personnel in the Training Officer position. He thinks that decision should be left to the Chief.

Chief Stewart: His recommendation would be to go with the sworn officer.

Alderman Lusk: Agrees with Alderman Adams.

Alderman D'Astice: Will support the Chief's recommendation.

**3) Fire Department Facilities**

Chief Stewart: Back in April, Public Works did a status update on Station 15 of potential repairs. He presented a list of needed repairs and upgrades for 10-15 years sustainability. Next week, a resolution will be presented on the agenda to approve a sprinkler system partially funded by a FEMA grant. The major cost is that the water main needs to be upgraded which will not be covered under the grant.

**4) Domestic Animals**

Alderman Adams: Has become the advocate for domestic animals. Under the current system, the city charges for dog licenses only. In the past, staff has requested an increase in this fee. 50% of dog owners comply and get a license. He showed a history of impounded animals since 2004. We have handled more cats than dogs. Proposing we eliminate dog license fees and charge every household a \$2.00 fee that will be assessed every year and use that money to help the Humane Societies that are working with Rolling Meadows animals. We are currently working with Almost Home in Elk Grove Village and Friendly and Feral Cat Rescue. Humane Societies are having a difficult time raising funds. They have more expenses than people realize.

Alderman Lusk: Is an animal lover. Has always been a proponent of the dog licenses because she felt it helped us to keep track of people getting the vaccinations for their pets, but if we have 50% of the owners not licensing it is not really a valid point. Would the \$2.00 fee be used to cover the cost when we board an animal?

Alderman Adams: Agrees that there is a cost when boarding an animal, but wanted to use this money for the Humane Societies.

Alderman Lusk: Does not have a problem instituting this fee. Feral cats are a community issue.

Alderman Larsen: How did he come up with \$2.00 per year? And, we will tax the residents and hand the money over to a Humane Society?

Alderman Adams: Those details have not been worked out yet.

Alderman Larsen: Has a concern about taxing the residents. Is undecided and would like more details. What is the cost to the city?

Mayor Nelson: Some staff time.

Alderman Buske: He was more interested in the dog licenses because he thought that people had to show proof of vaccinations. Thought the trap/neuter/release program would release them to a home.

Mayor Nelson: That program is very successful nationwide. Adult cats do not domesticate well. After being neutered they are released but do not then reproduce.

Ms. Lavonne Porter: Only the true feral cats are released. Domesticated cats are put up for adoption.

Mayor Nelson: Direction is to pursue further and work out details.

Alderman Judd: Suggested putting the fee on the water bill so we could track the money.

Alderman Adams: Is open to suggestions.

**5) Senior Snow Plowing Program**

Ms. Phillips: Snow plowing goes through two budget years. Do we want to continue with the program without any changes?

Alderman Larsen: Would it be fair to have more break points?

Mr. Hartnett: We had two break points last year. Under \$25,000 and between \$25,000-\$40,000 (a lesser subsidy was given).

Alderman Buske: Would like to keep this program.

Alderman Adams: All in favor of keeping the program the way it is.

**6) Ethics Ordinance**

Alderman Lusk: First visited about one month ago. She received some feedback and comments. Why the change? In April of next year 4 of our 7 seats will be up for election. She presented a draft "Code of Ethical Behavior and Conduct for City Elected and Appointed Officials" and commented on the feedback.

Alderman Larsen: Does not get where we are going with this. Are we trying to get in line with the State Code of Ethics?

Alderman Lusk: Yes.

Alderman D'Astice: Does not remember, in all his years on the council, there being an issue.

Alderman Lusk: We are governed by a set of rules and she believes they should be made public.

Alderman Larsen: What if we were not to change our existing Code of Ethics. Would that really change anything?

Mr. Macholl: Potentially it could. Ethics is not really a black and white thing.

Alderman Adams: Believes Canon 15 should be removed from the document. It seems to restrict the council input. We need to collectively work together.

Alderman D'Astice: Will not vote for it.

Alderman Adams: Will only support if changes are made.

Alderman Judd: Does not see the necessity.

Alderman Buske: Will not vote in favor.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m.