

**City of Moorhead  
Committee of the Whole  
Meeting Minutes  
October 17, 2011 at 5:30 PM  
City Hall Council Chambers**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Committee of the Whole was held in the City Hall Council Chambers, on October 17, 2011, at 5:30 PM.

**Roll call of the members was made as follows:**

|                          |                     |         |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| 1st Ward Council Member: | Luther Stueland     | Present |
| 1st Ward Council Member: | Nancy Otto          | Present |
| 2nd Ward Council Member: | Diane Wray Williams | Present |
| 2nd Ward Council Member: | Mark Altenburg      | Present |
| 3rd Ward Council Member: | Dan Hunt            | Present |
| 3rd Ward Council Member: | Brenda Elmer        | Present |
| 4th Ward Council Member: | Mark Hintermeyer    | Present |
| 4th Ward Council Member: | Greg Lemke          | Absent  |
| Mayor:                   | Mark Voxland        | Present |

Minutes: Mayor Voxland reconvened the City Council meeting of October 10, 2011, which had been held open.

One citizen wished to speak. Arland Woltjer requested the Council to send a letter to American Crystal Sugar executives asking them to negotiate a fair contract, rather than locking out the workers.

Mayor Voxland closed the October 10, 2012 City Council meeting.

**Committee of the Whole Meeting**

Minutes: Mayor Voxland opened the October 17, 2012 Committee of the Whole meeting.

1. [Preliminary 2012 Operating and Capital Budget - Department Presentations](#)

A. [Administration \(5:30 p.m.\)](#)

Minutes: City Manager Redlinger stated the information on the proposed 2012 Capital and Operating Budget will be posted on the City's website under the Budget and Finance page. A sustainable revenue strategy includes Local Government Aid (LGA), tax levy, enterprise transfer, and fees. New fiscal models, big picture thinking, and strategic planning will be important for the next several years. The proposed 2012 budget includes a modest increase in operating and repair budgets and no cost of living or general wage adjustment for employees.

City staff clarified the following in response to Mayor and Council questions:

- LGA has been unallotted several times in the past few years, rescinding \$7.8M in the last two years. This has been absorbed internally through prudent investments.
- Unallotments affect the budget as the City doesn't get the funds upon

which they based the adopted budget.

B. Community Services Department (5:50 p.m.)

Minutes: Community Services Director Scott Hutchins explained the department has four divisions:

- Development Services includes economic development, assessing, building codes, planning, business development, the airport, and real estate.
- Neighborhood Services includes rental registration, nuisance abatement, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) activities, and home rehabilitation.
- Parks and Recreation includes park land and amenities as well as programming. They rely heavily on volunteerism as a way to get tasks completed around the community, with up to 450 people per year assisting in various capacities. Participation in Parks programs is growing.
- Transit is heavily financed by federal dollars as the State gives very little support. Working in cooperation with Fargo, Transit has provided approximately 2 million trips this year and opened a joint maintenance facility.

Other items of note:

- Staffing trends – some positions have been eliminated; other remain vacant.
- Fees – Environmental Health has been transferred to the State with Clay County picking up some of the work.
- Tax Increment Districts – Economic Development Authority (EDA) will monitor the 8th Street apartment project; provide advocacy work at the Legislature, especially regarding tax rates compared to North Dakota; work on use of property in the Industrial Park; and complete an analysis of available property and marketing sites.
- The housing needs survey is done; staff will now work with neighborhoods on a parking study in the MSUM, Concordia, and Eventide area.
- The EDA is discussing a marketing and communications strategy.
- Kevin McKinnon of the Greater Fargo/Moorhead Economic Development Corporation (GFMEDC) has been working with the City, discussing how proposals are submitted and financed.
- Housing development needs to be discussed in the future after flood issues are addressed; Operations is maintaining the permanent levees in the City.

C. [Fire Department \(6:10 p.m.\)](#)

Minutes: Acting Fire Chief Rich Duysen stated the following regarding the Department:

- There are three separate shifts, with each Fire Fighter working

approximately 56 hours per week.

- There are two vacant positions – Fire Chief and one Fire Fighter.
- The call volume is 3,000 calls per year, many of which are medical calls.
- There have been no fire deaths this year.
- The Department has many partnerships and mutual aid agreements.
- Universal connections are being placed on all hydrants.
- There is a 3% increase in the budget for 2012.
- New outdoor warning sirens will be required in the future with annexations.
- Items needed now include new confined space equipment.
- Other items needed in the future include new trucks, more outdoor warning sirens for annexed areas, building replacement, parking lot repairs, and HVAC replacement; some items may be funded through grants.

D. [Operations Department \(6:30 p.m.\)](#)

Minutes: Operations Director Chad Martin discussed the following:

- The Department has several employees that have been with the City for an extensive amount of time.
- There is a large amount of public contact by Sanitation and Park Maintenance employees.
- The Department was reorganized in 2004; they currently have three truck driver vacancies which have been filled with seasonal help who have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).
- Most of the Department costs are static; however, there was a slight increase in the fee schedule. The fees cover boulevard tree maintenance and replacement, other tree replacement, and right-of-way maintenance.
- Additional employees and equipment are needed to maintain all of the flood buyout properties.
- The Gooseberry Park and Woodlawn Park bridges will have to be replaced soon.
- There are increased maintenance needs on bike trails after floods and snow removal.
- The sandbag machines need repair and upgrades.
- Golf course trails need maintenance.
- Some City buildings need roof repairs.
- Crosswalk striping needs to be done.
- Golf courses need more fertilizer and weed control.
- The internal service fund is working as replacement times have lengthened, but still have to pay for repairs.

- Public Works and Park Maintenance have done a good job of keeping costs low, especially with the increase in lane miles of streets.
- City crews will maintain the dikes from the curb to as far up and down as possible. Contractors construct the dikes, cleanup the lots and seed the dikes, then City personnel take over mowing and maintenance.
- There are four public recycling collection points in the City; the recycling goes to MinnKota and the newspaper goes to Pactive which pays for it; the compost site breaks even each year; there is no curbside recycling pickup for apartment buildings but they can take items to the public collection point.
- The Department is now plowing 200 cul-de-sacs with two contractors cleaning up after the City plows; most of the budget is for salt and sand.
- Maintenance shortfalls will increase with increased lane miles of streets; the State mandates street cleaning in the summer.
- The Law Enforcement Center (LEC) is in need of increased maintenance and repair.
- Park Maintenance staff is keeping up with removal of Dutch Elm infected trees.

E. [Police Department \(6:50 p.m.\)](#)

Minutes: Police Chief David Ebinger discussed the following:

- The Department was reorganized in 2008 and realized a savings of \$25,000 in salary and more efficient use of personnel. They have 68 authorized positions, of which, 66 are filled.
- The Department benefits from regional cooperative agreements.
- The Regional Dispatch Center is the first cross-city, -county, -state system. They receive federal grants for the communication system, but maintenance costs are local.
- Another regional cooperative is the SWAT team. Often the North Dakota side wants to purchase more expensive equipment which the City can't afford. This is something to be aware of when forming cooperative groups, especially as grants become scarcer.
- The Department has been active in decreasing gang activity and drug trafficking through collaboration with other agencies. The work with DARE officers, school resource officers, and sentence-to-serve programs is to the benefit of both the City and schools.
- Department budget increases are mostly for insurance for employees, electronic services, communications systems, Dispatch Center licensing, hardware, mobile data computer replacement and upgrades, and some step increases for personnel.
- Some costs are recovered through towing and car and animal impound fees.
- Future projects include renovation of the LEC, expansion of the jail,

and maintenance issues, and moving the firing range.

- There will be future consideration of moving the Dispatch Center. While it is a nice property, it's near a railroad track (danger of derailment) and is flood-prone. It will be very expensive to move equipment, repeaters, towers, etc. The three North Dakota entities have more money available as ND gets 911 fees, but not MN.
- In 2013, there will be an option to buy out the property. All organizations involved will have to discuss the issue. The City owns 19.6% of the property; \$60,000 would be Moorhead's share of buyout costs.
- Oakport annexation is a future concern; satellite offices are not efficient, and there is no supervision. Officers can reach any part of City in good time.
- Police volunteers do ticketing around campuses. The Department is exploring the use of unpaid interns to fill in for police volunteers on vacation and that leave for winter.
- The issue of administrative fees for tickets has been researched. The City receives \$40 from a \$134 ticket now; if an administrative fee is charged, the State will take their share of it.

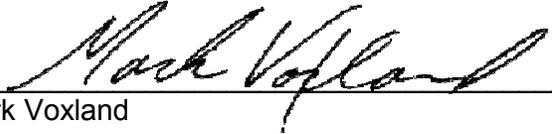
2. [City Manager Reports](#)

Minutes: City Manager Michael Redlinger discussed the following:

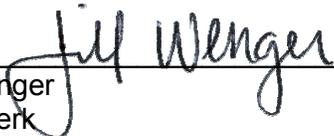
- The closing time of the Moorhead Center Mall is causing some concerns with how to comply with the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. The Mall locks the doors at 9:00 pm and Council meetings occasionally go past that time. It may be possible to have someone stationed at the door to let people in, such as an off-duty police officer. The Mall is concerned about the liability of non-customers entering the building after hours.
- Five firms responded to the Legal Services Request for Proposals (RFP). The interviews should be completed by November 4<sup>th</sup>. Staff will arrange the interviews and make recommendations to the City Council. The Council retains the authority to make the final decision.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

APPROVED BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Voxland  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jill Wenger  
City Clerk

The proceedings of this meeting are digitally recorded and are available for public review.

*Respectfully submitted by:*  
*Becky Jahnke, Executive Secretary*