

**CITY OF NEENAH  
FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Monday, November 23, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.**

**Due to the Public Health Emergency caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting occurred at a virtual location accessed by conference call on [gotomeeting.com](http://gotomeeting.com).**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Chairman Erickson; Aldermen Borchardt (7:00 pm), Boyette, Stevenson and Steele (6:45 pm); City Attorney Godlewski; Mayor Kaufert; Director of Finance Easker.

**Others Present:** Director of Community Development and Assessment Haese, Director of Parks and Recreation Kading, Deputy Director of Community Development and Assessment Schmidt.

**Absent/Excused:** None.

**Public Appearances:** None.

**Minutes:** Motion/Second/Carried Stevenson/Boyette to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2020 Regular Meeting. All voting aye.

**Proposed Acquisition of 401 W. North Water Street Utilizing Community Development Block Grant Funding and for the Purpose of Expanding Cook Park:**

Committee reviewed memo from Director Haese requesting Council's direction for City staff to take the necessary steps to purchase the property at 401 W. North Water Street, utilizing Community Development Block Grant Funds, for the purpose of expanding Cook Park. This property in question, along with several other homes that abut Cook Park, have been identified in the City's five-year Comprehensive Park and Open Space Plan as properties that should be considered for acquisition if the opportunity presents itself. Director Haese indicated that staff has secured an appraisal of the property that determined a fair market value of the property of approximately \$58,000. The City Assessor has reviewed the appraisal and updated property information and agrees the value of the home is approximately \$60,000. Recognizing the potential of avoiding costly relocation costs while the structure is empty and the locational value of the property adjacent to Cook Park, staff have negotiated an acquisition price of \$65,000.

Committee and staff discussed various aspects of the proposed property purchase. Items discussed included the reasoning behind the difference between the purchase price and the City's currently stated property assessment of \$87,000, the estimated date to remove the house and an update on the final dates to expend CDBG funds.

**Motion/Second/Carried Stevenson/Boyette recommending Council's direction for City staff to take the necessary steps to purchase the property at 401 W. North Water Street, utilizing Community Development Block Grant Funds, for the purpose of expanding Cook Park, at the negotiated purchase price of \$65,000 along with agreed upon closing costs. All voting aye.**

**Development Agreement – First Addition to Southfield Plat:** Committee reviewed memo of Deputy Director Schmidt recommending Council approve the Development and Fee Agreement for the First Addition to Southfield Plat. The plat is about 3 acres in size and includes 5 single-family residential lots with an average lot size of 22,205 square feet. The Development and Fee Agreement lists the roles and responsibilities of the developer including the fees due as part of this development. Exhibit 8 of the Development Agreement summarizes the estimated costs and fees due. Construction of homes is not expected to begin until the spring of 2021. Committee and staff discussed various aspects of the proposed development agreement.

REPORT

**Motion/Second/Carried Stevenson/Boyette recommending Council approve the Development and Fee Agreement for the First Addition to Southfield Plat.** All voting aye.

**2021 BID Operating Plan and Schedule of Assessments:** Committee reviewed memo of Deputy Director Schmidt recommending Council adopt Resolution No. 2020-17, approving the Neenah Central City Business Improvement District 2021 Operating Plan. The plan calls for a total assessment collection of \$146,534 from BID property owners, with a total budget, including carryovers, of \$165,656.16.

RESOLUTION

**Motion/Second/Carried Stevenson/Boyette recommending Council adopt Resolution 2020-17, approving the Neenah Central City Business Improvement District 2021 Operating Plan.** All voting aye.

**Maintenance Assessment Service Contract (2021-2025) – Associated Appraisal Consultants:** Committee reviewed memo of Deputy Director Schmidt recommending Council approve the Maintenance Assessment Services Contract (2021-2025) with Associated Appraisal Consultants, Inc., for an annual fee of \$36,500. Associated Appraisal has provided assessor services to the City since 2013. The contract assures that the City will be in compliance with statutory assessor responsibilities as required by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. The existing contract with Associated Appraisal is set to expire at the end of 2020. The proposed multi-year contract includes the same services as are currently provided in the existing contract.

Committee and staff discussed various aspects of the proposed contract. Issues discussed included the City's history with Associated Appraisal and the previous contract pricing.

REPORT

**Motion/Second/Carried Stevenson/Boyette recommending Council approve the Maintenance Assessment Services Contract (2021-2025) with Associated Appraisal Consultants, Inc., for an annual fee of \$36,500.** All voting aye.

**Walmart and CVS Lawsuit:** Committee reviewed memo of Deputy City Attorney Westbrook recommending Council approve retaining Larry Nicholson to conduct appraisals for the 2019 and 2020 tax years on the Wal-Mart and CVS properties for a total cost of \$24,000. The memo indicated that the lawsuit's lead attorney Amy Seibel is requesting the use of Mr. Nicholson due to his expertise in appraising "big box"

retail/commercial buildings and has provided similar appraisal services in similar cases around the state.

Committee and staff discussed various aspects of the proposed retention of Mr. Nicholson. Upon questioning from Alderman Stevenson, specific discussion took place on what he considered to be the high fees requested to retain Mr. Nicholson when compared to other commercial appraisers. Attorney Godlewski said that the higher fees are a product of Mr. Nicholson having success in this very specified expertise regarding big box property assessment lawsuits in Wisconsin. He also said that Attorney Seibel was a strong advocate for hiring Mr. Nicholson to ensure the City's best opportunity for a successful outcome.

**Motion/Second/Carried Boyette/Steele recommending Council approve retaining Larry Nicholson to conduct appraisals for the 2019 and 2020 tax years on the Wal-Mart and CVS properties for a total cost of \$24,000.** Motion carried 3-1, with Alderman Stevenson voting no and Alderman Borchardt abstaining.

**Outside Counsel Expenditures for Excessive Assessment Appeals:** Committee reviewed memo of City Attorney Godlewski providing an update with regard to outside counsel expenditures for excessive assessment appeals. No committee action was required.

**Fiscal Matters: October Vouchers:** Motion/Second/Carried Borchardt/Boyette to approve the October vouchers as presented. All voting aye.

**Motion/Second/Carried Stevenson/Boyette to approve and place on file the Third Quarter Financial Statements as presented.** All voting aye.

**Motion/Second/Carried Boyette/Stevenson to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m.** All voting aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael K. Easker, CPA  
Director of Finance

REPORT