

CITY OF NEENAH
SPECIAL FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, November 1, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.
Hauser Room, Neenah City Administration Building
211 Walnut Street, Neenah, Wisconsin

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Erickson; Aldermen Borchardt, Boyette, Steiner, and Skyrms, and Director of Finance Rasmussen.

Others Present: Alderpersons Stevenson and Lendrum, Attorney Rashid, Director of Information Systems Wenninger, and City Clerk Nagel.

Absent/Excused: Mayor Lang was excused.

Public Appearances: None.

Approval of Minutes from October 23, 2023 Regular Meeting (minutes can be found on the City's website)

Motion/Second/Carried Skyrms/Boyette to approve the minutes as written. All voting aye.

Enter into an agreement to purchase a stretch of fiber optics infrastructure, running from the Commercial and Franklin Streets to the Northeast corner of Oak Hill Cemetery, from Neenah Joint School District (NJSD) for a cost of \$15,000 with the purchase being funded from Information Systems Fiber Build Capital Equipment Account (011-1787-743-8115). (Attachment) (Wenninger)

Motion/Second/Carried Skyrms/Steiner to enter into an agreement to purchase the fiber from NJSD even though the school district was not willing to be cooperative and supportive of taxpayer dollars, contingent upon the results of the ODTR test. Motion carried in voice vote, 3-2 with Erickson and Boyette dissenting.

Director Wenninger explained the purchase and the memo to the Committee. With approval of the negotiated agreement, Director Wenninger would have ODTR completed which would give the overall condition of the fiber to be purchased. With this purchase, the city would still be responsible to build one additional mile of fiber layout in order to reach Oak Hill Cemetery, which is the goal.

There was much discussion regarding the negotiation process. The difference between the projected costs, (25% of the cost of a new build) and the price received from NJSD (\$15,000) is \$30. Therefore, staff is recommending entering into an agreement with NJSD for the fiber at \$15,000 contingent upon the ODTR test. Committee members were concerned that City of Neenah taxpayers already paid for the fiber once through the school system and now they are going to pay for it again through the city; it feels like it's being paid for twice. Atty. Rashid compared it to a dump truck that the school purchased, used it for a number of years in which it depreciated. Now there is no longer a need for that dump truck, and now they are selling it at a depreciated value. However, the feeling is understandable. There was talk on how Fox Valley

Technical College abandoned their fiber, and then the fiber was simply gifted to the city. Committee members are curious as to why NJSD is not offering the city the same.

There was also discussion on the lifespan of the fiber. The fiber was installed in 2007. When fiber was first starting to be installed in the early 2000s, it was thought that the average life span would 25-30 years; that is no longer the case. The city installed their fiber in 1998-1999 and have had no problems with the fiber which is still used today. There is more concern with external, physical damage to the fiber by a pole being struck and knocked down, verses internal issues with the fiber itself. There has also been a minimal amount of maintenance on the fiber since its initial installation.

There is cost savings to be had with the discontinued use of Spectrum at Oak Hill Cemetery and Washington Park of about \$300/month. The Spectrum service will no longer be needed if the NJSD fiber is purchased and complete the last one mile last build out to reach the cemetery. This cost savings will pay the \$15,000 fiber costs in about four years.

The Information Systems Department will be making the initial purchase through their Fiber Build Capital Equipment Account (011-1787-743-8115). Since other departments will be using the fiber, the costs will be split out across the other departments.

Discussion was had on whether this was a want or a need. Either way, the future is fiber, it's the way the world is heading. Having the fiber does set the city up for future opportunities. Waiting a year delays the future integration with Oak Hill Cemetery, traffic signal control, possibly area lift stations, and with Washington Park.

Boyette explained that she will be voting no because she feels the purchase price could be negotiated further.

Resolution No. 2023-30 Approval of Project for Winnebago County Spirit Fund Local Government Allocation. (Attachment) (Rasmussen)

Motion/Second/Carried Skyrms/Steiner for Council to approve Resolution No. 2023-30 Winnebago County Spirit Fund Local Government Allocation as presented. All voting aye.

Director Rasmussen explained the Winnebago County Spirit Fund was created in March of 2023 out of the ARPA dollars. The County Board passed a resolution to pay each municipality \$145,000. In order to receive the money, each municipality had to identify a project that had a one-time expense, with a legacy. The project could be reimbursable. Staff is recommending the resurfacing of Hunt Avenue, Brookwood Drive and Fairwood Drive project as the reimbursable, onetime expense with a legacy project to receive the Spirit Fund money. The total cost of the project was \$486,851. This area had a PASER rating of 2 and is a low to moderate income neighborhood. This neighborhood will benefit from this project for some time.

There was also discussion on additional applications for ARPA funds submitted by different city departments, i.e. Police Department for barricades, Water Utility for piping across Oak Street Bridge, Fire Department for radios and training. Hopefully the city will receive some of those monies.

**Motion/Second/Carried by Borchardt/Steiner to adjourn the meeting. All voting aye.
Meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlotte K. Nagel

Charlotte K. Nagel, WCMC
City Clerk