

# Item No. B.-1.

## OTTUMWA CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING NO. 34  
Council Chambers, City Hall

November 30, 2021  
5:30 O'Clock P.M.

The meeting convened at 5:30 P.M.

Present were Council Member Dalbey, Roe, Meyers, Pope, and Mayor Lazio.  
Council Member Berg was absent.

Roe moved, seconded by Meyers to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council Member Berg was absent.

Mayor Lazio inquired if there was anyone from the audience who wished to address an item on the agenda. Josh Chance, 313 Lynwood, would like to speak during Item No. 8, Public Safety & Emergency Services.

Meyers moved, seconded by Roe to ack. Wapello County's Abstract of Votes for City General Election on 11/2/2021. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council Member Berg was absent.

Roe moved, seconded by Dalbey to ack. Oct. financial rpt. and pymt. of bills as submitted by Finance Dept. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council Member Berg was absent.

Dalbey moved, seconded by Pope to approve appointment of Jacob Rusch to Zoning & Housing Coordinator in Planning Dept. effective on or about Dec. 5, 2021. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council Member Berg was absent.

Meyers moved, seconded by Roe to approve the Annual Urban Renewal Rpt. for Westgate Urban Renewal Area, Airport Urban Renewal Area, Wildwood Drive/Hwy. 34 Urban Renewal Area and the Hospital District/Pennsylvania Ave. Corridor Urban Renewal Area for the fiscal yr. July 2020 through June 2021 for City of Ottumwa, IA. Finance Dir. Mulder reported total captured TIF for FY20/21 \$557,701 with \$194,403 from Westgate; \$244,553 from Airport and \$118,745 from Wildwood Drive/Hwy 34. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council Member Berg was absent.

Meyers moved, seconded by Dalbey to accept proposal from Willett, Hofmann & Associates, Inc. for Professional Services in the amount of \$30,000 to prepare plans and specs for new campground shower house and auth. the mayor to sign. Parks & Rec. Dir. Rathje reported he sent out RFQ to nine architectural and engineering firms regarding their qualifications for preparing plans and specs. for the new shower house project. Two responses were received. The other rfq received was unable to provide engineering services. Willett Hofmann has extensive experience with campground shower house and park restroom projects. Hope to begin project in 2022. Recently received \$30,000 bright ideas grant from the Legacy Foundation and will continue seeking other grant opportunities for this project. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council Member Berg was absent.

PW Dir. Seals provided general overview of sewer capacity for development on Bonita Ave. The Engineering Dept. reviews capacity of a sanitary sewer for any significant user prior to approving connection to an existing sewer system. For the Bonita Housing Development, we were able to use previous field work that was completed for Helgerson Flats Certified Site project adjusted for any further development in the area. Calculated capacity for this section (Bonita) is est. at 1.055 million gallons per day. Current use is 0.298 MGD with a remaining capacity of 0.756 (MGD) or 756,000 thousand gallons a

day. The estimated flow from the Bonita Complex when fully developed is 48,600 gallons a day leaving an excess capacity of over 707,000 gallons a day.

Roe moved, seconded by Meyers to pass the second consideration of Ord. No. 3187-2021, an ord. providing that general property taxes levied and collected each yr. on all property located within the Bonita Urban Renewal Area, in the City of Ottumwa, County of Wapello, State of IA, by and for the benefit of the State of IA, City of Ottumwa, County of Wapello, Ottumwa Community School District, and other taxing districts, be paid to a special fund for pymt. of principal and interest on loans, monies, advanced to and indebtedness, including bonds issued or to be issued, incurred by the City in connection with the Bonita Urban Renewal Area (The Bonita Urban Renewal Plan). Regardless of the project, we will be able to capture acquired costs. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council Member Berg was absent.

#### Public Safety and Emergency Services Ambulance Services Work Session

City Admin. Rath began; this special mtg. was scheduled to provide update on fire dept. staffing and safety issues. Earlier this yr. fire helped with staffing shortages with ORMICS but the hospital was not looking to subsidize ambulance services. This opens up discussion for other revenue options, but I would like to give representatives from the fire dept. an opportunity to speak before discussing these.

Josh Chance, 313 Lynwood Ave. – firefighter with the City for 15 years; it would be easy to make a case for addtl. personnel based on the amt. of OT the fire dept. has. From July 2021-Oct., OT has reached \$117,852 and on pace to be over \$350,000 (equates to 5,736 total OT hours). Personally, since Jan. 1, 2021, I ave. 70 hours/week; 14 hours of OT per week. On the job injuries has increase 311%; on pace to double this figure this year. More employees are getting sick or injured because we are exhausted. On ave, we are running a call every 2 hours.

Deputy Chief Bengé presented; fire dept. is made up of 3 crews of 8 firefighters that work alternating 24-hour shifts. Each crew is made up of an Asst. Chief, 2 Captains and 5 firefighters. Total OT through Oct. 5,736.46 hours with monthly ave. per firefighter 24.51 hours. When not responding to emergency calls, each firefighter does over 200 hours of training, in order to meet ISO requirements. In 2020, OFD responded to 4,017 calls for service.

Mulder stated when I started almost 2 yrs. ago, I walked into a large deficit (\$1.2 Million) with conversations on how to balance it. Council made some hard decisions and cut 6 positions within the fire dept. FY20 ended with \$877,000 deficit. Other changes were made during last FY, that we ended up having \$1 Million surplus. When 6 positions were eliminated, we est. savings of over \$200,000, when in reality, we only saved about \$75,000. If continuing on trend, we will be over \$120,000 spent. Currently, we show \$117,000 in OT costs for FY21, that could easily reach \$350,000 if not addressed. Approximate salary for additional 3 firefighters \$150,000, which would be less than projected OT costs.

Rath added, I don't want council or the public to be disillusioned into thinking we won't have to pay out any OT costs, if we hire 3 addtl. firefighters. OT is one line item in the budget. I think what we need to look at is how do we increase our revenue to the general fund to offset salaries. I do support bringing on the addtl. 3 firefighters; however, looking into franchise fees is something the city needs to consider as a way to help bring in revenue to help offset this expense. Earlier this year we had staffing questions about ambulance services, which opened up a door to looking at the bigger role of ambulance services as a revenue source. We reached out to ORHC to discuss and they were not interested at the time. If it makes sense for both entities, and both entities are in agreement, then we should reassess.

Roe stated when we made the decision to cut fire, it was strictly a financial decision; we made a decision based on best knowledge at the time and none of us felt good about it. Every person that made this

decision, agreed if we were in a better financial position, we would look to hire those firefighters back. Prior to that, we had to address issues at the police dept. Overworked, officers leaving in mass; OT is healthy to a certain level, but there comes a point when it becomes catastrophic. We run the risk of people leaving. We do need to bring 3 firefighters back. Speaking to the ambulance services, I'm concerned and disappointed that ORHC didn't show this evening to speak about this. An entire sector of their business is being discussed and they didn't show.

Dalbey reported we had a lot of things going wrong at the same time; we had to act in the best interest of the city and the tax payers and it cost us jobs and experience that you can't replace. We projected what our numbers would be at and knew a lot of these things could happen. With decreasing property values, we see less money in the general fund. I think as a council we should hire back no less than 3 positions at the fire dept. effective immediately. As a city, we are reactive and not proactive. Discussing ambulance services is an opportunity for us to prepare a plan should the day come that ORHC isn't providing the service any longer and we need to take it over.

Meyers stated we need to be darn careful with future plans and spending money. This is the third time in 3 years that ambulance services has been brought up. ORHC is a for profit business that is not asking us to take over.

Pope stated I didn't hear them ask for ambulance service, that could be a possibility later. If we hire three firefighters, that's a good middle point to start.

Mayor responded that it would be beneficial to hear from ORHC directly on this topic. They are a community partner that also needs to be held accountable. I want to see a plan; operational cost, personnel to be prepared in case something does change and we can be ready to pick up. We should not be interfering with it now.

Lester Den Hartog again stated he was not in favor of the TIF for the Bonita project.

There being no further business, Roe moved, seconded by Dalbey that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried 4-0 vote. Council Member Berg was absent.

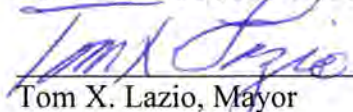
Adjournment was at 7:06 P.M.

ATTEST:



Christina Reinhard, CMC City Clerk

CITY OF OTTUMWA, IOWA



Tom X. Lazio, Mayor