

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Workshop of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on October 17, 2011. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. The following were present for the meeting: Mayor Dehen, Council Members Freyberg, Steiner, Norland and Schindle, Administrator Sande, Finance Director Thorne and City Clerk Gehrke.

Revised Bonded Debt Schedules

Administrator Sande presented revised bonded debt schedules which include the bond issues for the T.H. 14/CSAH 41 Interchange Project and the 422 Belgrade Avenue Project.

House Research Simulation Report

Administrator Sande presented information from the House Research Simulation Report reflecting the impact of changes from Market Value Homestead Credit versus Homestead Market Value Exclusion for property taxes payable in 2011. Property taxes in North Mankato would increase from 4.4 percent for residential homestead to an average of 4.8 percent for all properties; property taxes in Mankato would increase from 4.5 percent for residential homestead to an average of 3.9 percent for all properties; property taxes in St. Peter would increase to 6.0 percent for residential homestead to an average of 6.4 percent for all properties; and property taxes in New Ulm would increase to 5.1 percent for residential homestead to an average of 6.6 percent for all properties. A copy of the House Research Simulation Report will be available with the proposed 2012 Budget at the North Mankato Taylor Library.

Fee Schedules

Finance Director Thorne presented a comparison of North Mankato and Mankato fees. She reported the fees highlighted in yellow are currently the same. North Mankato's building permit fees are on the same schedule as Mankato's 2011 building permit fees.

Snow Removal

Administrator Sande noted that Police Chief Boyer, Public Works Director Peterson and Street Superintendent Swanson were in attendance as requested by the City Council to discuss snow removal. Police Chief Boyer reported the City tried calling snow emergencies a couple of years ago and it did not go well. He also reported that calling a snow emergency would require an officer to be called in resulting in overtime. If the City implemented calendar parking, it must be enforced for April 1 to November 1 and Chief Boyer stated it would require officers to go back twice because a vehicle can only be removed four hours after a ticket has been issued. Administrator Sande reported that the initial cost for signage for calendar parking would be approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000. The estimated annual savings for calling snow emergencies to minimize personnel and fuel would be \$5,000 per year. Police Chief Boyer reported that once the plows have been around, an officer will mark the remaining vehicles and they will be towed. He stated the Police Department received a larger than normal amount of complaints when a snow emergency was called. Public Works Director Peterson stated savings will be difficult to quantify since every year is different. Residents are however concerned about safety on the narrow streets such as Wall and Lyndale and calendar parking could be instituted on those streets or parking could be limited to one side. Other narrow streets are McKinley, Tyler, Harrison, Jefferson and South Avenue. The Public Works Director stated he would prefer calendar parking on the narrow streets. Council Member Norland stated it would be more efficient and

safer to have calendar parking on the narrow streets. Mayor Dehen suggested surveying residents on the narrow streets in an upcoming utility billing to get their input regarding snow removal and calendar parking. Administrator Sande stated that a survey sent to the residents on those streets in a separate mailing may be more effective. Council Member Schindle stated that calendar parking was implemented a few years ago to minimize overtime and the number of times it was necessary for the snowplow to go out to completely clear the streets. He stated he is not opposed to calling snow emergencies. The City Administrator reported it would be a Council policy regarding the number of snow emergencies to be called, however some push back from the residents should be expected. The Public Works Director stated that the Street Superintendent does a good job of deciding when a snow emergency should be called. The Street Superintendent stated the main concern is safety of the residents, that it is best not to have a policy that is too stringent and that all snow emergencies are different. He reported there have been zero accidents with any serious injuries.

Revised Budget Worksheet

Administrator Sande presented an updated budget reduction worksheet reporting the reduction of rock and oil for seal coating was removed as a possible budget cut. He stated that in order to keep sealcoating on a seven-year schedule, no cuts can be made in this area. Public Works Director Peterson reported that no inflation has been figured in for sealcoating and does not include any provision for new streets.

Administrator Sande reported the department heads have reviewed their proposed budgets and their suggested reductions are listed under Section 3 of the budget reduction worksheet. Discussion was held regarding discontinuing curbside brush pickup and changing special services to drop off only. The Public Works Director reported many positive comments about the fall drop off and residents appreciated not having items on their boulevards. The Street Superintendent reported a large number of items coming through the gate and the exchange area was a great service for residents. Habitat for Humanity also had a van for residents to drop off donations. In response to a concern voiced by Council Member Schindle, the Street Superintendent reported that all I.D's were checked to ensure only North Mankato residents were using the drop off.

Council Member Schindle asked the cost of appliance pickup and if it could be discontinued since appliance stores will haul away the old appliance for a fee. Administrator Sande reported that by using the Sentence-to-Serve crews along with City staff, the cost is \$7 per appliance. Some discussion was held about providing information about appliance recycling to residents.

Council Member Freyberg reported that he spent an hour going through pages 67 to 99 of the General Fund Budget and came up with \$228,000 in common-sense reductions which do not touch the library, mass transit, swimming pool or sealcoating. The reductions also leave health insurance and vehicles as budgeted. He stated he is disappointed with the reductions the department heads offered. The other Council Members asked him to share his list of reductions. Administrator Sande reported staff would review the proposed list of reductions and respond to this and any other information the Council wants prior to the next Council Workshop.

Council Member Freyberg also stated total bonded debt is up 15 percent and General Obligation debt is up 142 percent. He stated his concern about bonds that are extended out to 2034/2035 and referenced the audit report which spoke of the refunding bonds.

There being no further business, the Council Workshop was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk