

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
DECEMBER 14, 2005**

Mayor Gerhz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Sue Gehrz, Council members Laura Kuettel, Robert Lamb, Peter Lindstrom and Richard Talbot. Also present: City Administrator Heather Worthington, Finance Director Roland Olson, City Engineer Deb Bloom, Parks and Public Works Director Greg Hoag. Absent: Deputy Clerk Stacey Kreuser.

Mayor Gehrz began the meeting by recognizing Mike Clarkin for his 32 years of service to the Falcon Heights Fire Department. Several members of the department were on-hand to see Clarkin awarded mementoes of his service. Fire Chief Kurjahetz stated that Clarkin has been an asset to the department, and he will be missed.

COMMUNITY FORUM:

Bryan Olson, 1592 Roselawn, asked about the charges for the 2005 election. He asked for a breakdown of figures and the whereabouts of the clerk on Election Day. Administrator Worthington stated a copy of the invoice could be sent. Mayor Gehrz replied that the charges were based on an hourly rate, set before the election.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes from November 23 were approved as corrected by Councilmember Kuettel and Mayor Gehrz.

Minutes from December 5 were approved.

Mayor Gehrz asked for approval to add an addendum to the consent agenda, transfer of funds to the scholarship fund for parks and recreation from the Friends of the Parks Fund in the amount of \$280. The item became consent item G8.

Also, Mayor Gehrz asked for approval to add the rulemaking for Capital Region Watershed District to the policy agenda. The item became policy item H9.

The consent agenda item G4, 2006 tax levy and budget approval, became policy item H10 as requested by Councilmember Lindstrom.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. General Disbursements through 12/07/05: \$268,756.01
 Payroll (11/15/05 – 11/30/05) \$12,700.09
2. Approval of renewal licenses for 2006
3. Statutory tort limits
5. Appointment of new volunteer firefighters
6. Approval of progress payment for fire truck
7. Appointment of Amy Onofrey to the Environment Commission and Paula Mielke to the Parks and Recreation Commission
8. Transfer from Falcon Heights Friends of the Parks Fund to the Recreation Scholarship account

Councilmember Talbot commented on consent item G7, thanking the new commissioners for their service on Falcon Heights commissions. He also commented on item G5, by thanking the volunteer firefighters for their service.

Councilmember Kuettel clarified that the payroll amount should be \$12,700.09.

Councilmember Kuettel moved to approve the items on the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

POLICY AGENDA:

1. Roselawn Feasibility Report

Roseville City Engineer Deb Bloom presented a brief overview of the assessment/reconstruction project to the council. She added that a more in-depth explanation will be presented at the public hearing, set for January 11, 2006.

Councilmember Kuettel asked for clarification on where the pathway would be placed. Bloom answered it would be on the south side of Roselawn, between Snelling and Hamline Aves., attached to the curb – with no grass between the curb and pathway. Bloom noted that Minneapolis and St. Paul have been notified of the Roselawn project plans, since the interconnect between the two cities relies on the half-mile stretch of Roselawn proposed for reconstruction. Mayor Gehrz asked the council to decide on whether or not the project appears feasible, with the next step the public hearing on January 11. Councilmember Lindstrom asked whether there is consideration or concern on the drainage issue on Roselawn. Bloom answered the regional storm water systems have the capacity to handle the drainage from Roselawn, but the clay soils in yards are not good for infiltration of water. She said it makes the best sense to maintain a regional holding pond rather than several smaller ponds, like sand ponds along the right-of-way. Administrator Worthington also noted that catch basins will be reconstructed, which will help with water quality, and is part of the NPDES commitment. Mayor Gehrz asked whether there will be a need for new equipment to clean out the sumps. Administrator Worthington replied the City has a verbal agreement with Roseville, as they have a vac-truck. Mayor Gehrz asked for a motion. Councilmember Talbot moved to approve the resolution receiving the feasibility report on the Roselawn Reconstruction project and ordering a public hearing date, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Commission Liaison Appointments

Mayor Gehrz presented her recommendation for council appointments for the year 2006. Councilmember Lamb moved to approve the council appointments for 2006. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Joint Powers Agreement for GIS User Group

Administrator Worthington gave a brief overview of the benefits of being a member of the GIS User Group. She mentioned the cost of renewing is \$561.00. Mayor Gehrz reiterated that residents can go to the website for this group to access information on your address, and if they need help they can call City Hall. Councilmember Talbot noted that the maps online are not legal maps and can not be used in lieu of the actual property markers. He stated although they are always very close, they cannot be relied upon as legal documentation of property lines. Councilmember Kuettel moved to approve the Joint Powers Agreement for GIS User Group. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of Lauderdale Fire Contract

Administrator Worthington began the item by going over the amended fire contract for council approval. Mayor Gehrz noted the per-call rate has increased, and five years of payments for the new 2006 fire truck cost has been added to the contract. Councilmember Lindstrom moved to approve the Lauderdale Fire Contract. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Ramsey County Mutual Aid Agreement

Administrator Worthington began with a summary of the items that the State and FEMA has required for emergency management. She explained the agreement re-states the 7-county agreement already in place. Councilmember Kuettel moved to approve the Ramsey County Mutual Aid Agreement. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Approval of Expenditure for New Finance Package

Finance Director Olson began the item by giving an overview of the research and process of arriving at the current choice for In-Vision software at a price of roughly \$22,000. Councilmember Lamb asked about whether the maintenance package included updates. Olson replied it did. Councilmember Talbot asked where the money came from. Olson replied it was from capital expenditures, with \$15,000 coming from the 2005 dollars budgeted for the item. Mayor Gehrz confirmed the transition would not occur until after the audit. Olson replied everything for 2006 will be on the new system, with the people from In-Vision in to do the conversion. Also, he stated no upgrades to current hardware will be necessary. Councilmember Kuettel moved to approve the expenditure for the new finance package with In-Vision. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Community Forum Length Expansion to Five Minutes and Move to End of Policy Agenda Effective January 1, 2006

Councilmember Lamb began the item by stating people are invited to speak on the agenda during the entire meeting, and five minutes is a reasonable amount of time. As for the change to the end of the meeting, he stated it seemed more appropriate to have the forum occur right before the informal reports from councilmembers. He asked for friendly amendments, there were none. Councilmember Lindstrom asked whether the time amount for comments on agenda items should be changed from three minutes to five minutes as well. Councilmember Lamb agreed.

Tom Baldwin, 1716 Albert St, former mayor, stated the community forum came into being during the policy meeting under his time as mayor. He stated the council is there to set the public agenda, and community forum is the way for people to “rush to the head of the line.” He stated he would like to eliminate the community forum altogether, and the forum moved to the end prevents people that come to see the policy agenda from sitting through those who might use the community forum to vent their personal hostilities, which has no place in the public agenda. He stated his approval with the council’s decision-making abilities, and so time for the forum is perhaps not necessary. Lastly, he reminded the council that meetings are not a court-of-law, and no one should be allowed to accuse the council during the forum.

Bryan Olson, 1592 Roselawn, stated he took offense. He asked about consent items that had been voted on. Mayor Gehrz replied he was out-of-order since the items in question had already been voted on. She asked that if he had questions on the agenda, he could always call ahead of time.

Councilmember Lamb stated that anyone on the council can put an item on the agenda, and people have opportunities through the council to get items on the agenda. He reiterated his belief that five minutes is ample time, and the council should have discipline on holding the time to five minutes.

Councilmember Talbot stated his feeling that the forum should not be allowed at policy meetings, however if it remains it should be at the end of the meeting.

Councilmember Lindstrom stated his support for keeping community forum in the policy meeting.

Councilmember Kuettel stated she agreed with Talbot and Baldwin, in that there are other ways to get in contact with elected officials other than at a policy meeting, but she stated she would vote in favor of the item.

Mayor Gehrz stated she also supported Councilmember Lamb's motion.

Councilmember Lamb moved to expand the community forum to five minutes per person and move it to the end of the policy agenda effective January 1, 2006. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Approval of a Contract with Roof Spec Inc. for Inspection

Parks and Public Works Director Hoag began the item by giving an overview of the current situation of the 10-year old roof of City Hall. He stated Roof Spec Inc. is unbiased, as they do only the inspections and are not roofing contractors.

Councilmember Lindstrom moved to approve the contract with Roof Spec Inc. for inspection. The motion passed unanimously.

9. CRWD Rulemaking

Administrator Worthington began the item by giving an overview of the resolution before the council that re-stated the cities' position on the rulemaking process. She also gave a brief history and the impact of rulemaking on the City, its upcoming reconstruction projects, and residents.

Administrator Worthington replied the resolutions for the four affected cities are along the same lines. She also stated that the process for permitting from the CRWD adds another layer for residents, and is another unfunded mandate on cities.

Councilmember Lindstrom asked this issue be brought before the Planning and Environment Commissions.

Councilmember Lamb brought attention to the last statement in the resolution, and changed the verbiage to "whereas the city council believes the new deadline..."

Mayor Gehrz asked what the worst case scenario is. Administrator Worthington replied the deadline for comments is December 15, and a technical advisory committee would be formed. Worst case scenario she stated, a legal fight, which would be in order if the CRWD went ahead with the rulemaking as it stands.

Councilmember Kuettel asked the CRWD and Ramsey County Commissioners be informed of the discussions held. Kuettel moved to approve the resolution for the CRWD rulemaking process. Lamb seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

10. 2006 Tax Levy and Budget Approval

Councilmember Lindstrom stated he had no changes to the budget, and his recommendation that the item be moved to the policy agenda was a matter of principle. Mayor Gehrz stated the tax levy for 2006 is set at \$865,008, the operating budget for 2006 \$1,652,499, and the special revenue fund budget for 2006 in the amount of \$88,680. Councilmember Lamb moved to approve the 2006 tax levy and budget. The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Talbot consulted his notes, and thanked Councilmember Robert Edward Lamb for his service.

Councilmember Lindstrom, Kuettel, and Mayor Gehrz all stated their pleasure at having served with Councilmember Lamb. He will be missed.

Mayor Gehrz thanked all the volunteers who served the City in 2005.

Councilmember Lamb stated the council was one of the best teams he had ever been on. He admitted the council had a genuine desire to do the best thing for the City, and the staff is among the most-exceptional.

Administrator Worthington stated on behalf of the staff, that everyone learned a lot from Councilmember Lamb, and it had been an honor and a pleasure to serve with Lamb.

Mayor Gehrz adjourned the regular meeting of the city council at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacey Kreuser
Deputy Clerk