

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON  
2215 WEST OLD SHAKOPEE ROAD  
HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA 55431

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Approved Minutes  
Strategic Planning Session  
Meeting #24A

5:30 p.m.  
September 9, 2002  
Council Chamber

Call to Order Mayor Gene Winstead called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

Roll Call Present: Mayor Winstead, Councilmembers D. Abrams, S. Elkins, M. Fossum, H. Harden,  
and S. Peterson.  
Absent: V. Wilcox.

Public Comment Period The Public Comment Period is not usually open during special meetings.

Bloomington Civic Plaza Landscaping Options Clark Arneson, Planning & Economic Development Manager, explained that per Council's previous direction in May 2002, staff provided various landscaping options for Council's consideration. He stated that the new budget for the items Council wanted included in the landscaping design is now \$185,251.00, down from the original estimate of \$198,600. Work would include stone walls, plinths, art seating area, plaza stage area, additional stone walls along the pond area (southerly and easterly), and similar visual enhancements. It does not include the memorial garden area and the bosque for the tree area at the point. With Council's authorization for staff to proceed, these items will come forward as a future change order. Funding would come from the Enhancements category.

Council expressed no objections so staff will move ahead with the approved landscape options.

Regarding the memorial garden estimate of \$100,000, Council inquired if the breakdown of the estimated cost could be provided to the service clubs in case any of them are interested in participating in the design of this space. Staff to develop a budget for the memorial space that might include a portion paid by the City and a portion paid by fund-raising from various service groups.

Bloomington Civic Plaza Theater Seats Regarding the bidding of the theater seats, Arneson explained that the initial bid came in over budget for 377 seats so Council authorized a rebid of the seats. Staff is carrying a budget of \$80,000 and the Arts Council has been carrying between \$120,000-\$130,000. The Arts Council desires a better seat but they don't have sufficient funds to pay for it. Therefore, staff was going to bid two classes of chairs. However, the City Attorney has concerns with bidding two classes of chairs. An analysis of the bond fund reveals that there is approximately \$230,000 in additional interest earnings. The chair desired by the Arts Council is in the range of \$140,000 and their current budget is \$80,000 for seats. Therefore, staff requested Council's approval to proceed to bid and target using approximately \$60,000 of the \$230,000 to buy a better class of chair. Arneson believes it would be worth bidding on a better class of chair, as most of the time spent in the theater will of course be sitting in a theater seat. He described the differences in the quality of the seats. He will provide Council with a background memo and status on the Art Council's three tier budget he gave them.

Council directed staff to proceed with rebidding the theater seats using a \$140,000 budget and that staff would provide Council with a background memo.

Council had received an updated 2003 Budget and levy memo and Cindy Rollins, Finance, provided additional handouts that included background information. She highlighted the following:

1. 2003 Proposed Tax Levy General Fund levy increase will be 4.45% for an overall levy increase of 4.9%.
2. Subtracting the Fire Pension levy, the General Fund Budget increase would be 4.38% and a General Fund levy increase of 2.66% for an overall levy increase of 3.36%.
3. Regarding the 2003 Proposed General Fund Budget, \$1.3 million is proposed from Year-End Strategic Priorities from 2001 of the \$1.8 million total to plug the budget gap. The remainder to be transferred to the Transitional Reserve Fund.
4. Transitional Reserve Fund would be used to plug the gap.
5. Funding from Police Pension reimbursement and Airport South amounts are unchanged.
6. The funding of the gap also provides for a potential \$2 million loss in State funding.
7. Overall increase of 5.49% for the General Fund Budget.
8. 2004 Preliminary Budget - all of the Strategic Priorities levy is proposed to be shifted to the General Fund to offset the declining revenues that are coming in.
9. Increase Transitional Reserves Use by \$300,000.
10. Funding from the Police Pension reimbursement and Airport South would again remain unchanged.
11. A General Fund levy increase of 5.5% and an overall levy increase of 5.5%.
12. Five-year model through 2007 shifts Strategic Priorities levy to the General Fund to offset declining revenues.
13. Increase Transitional Reserves Use by \$227,000.
14. Continued funding from the Police Pension reimbursement and Airport South revenues.
15. Expenditure budget increased 3.75% annually, which will show a budget deficit in 2004 and beyond.
16. General Fund levy increases for 2004-2007 as follows: 5.5%, 2.8%, 5.4%, and 3.5% resulting in overall levy increases of 5.5%, 3.4%, 3.5%, and 3.5%.
17. Downturn strategies were provided that have been used to balance the budget and those that are available in the future.

Bernhardson stated that the biggest hurdle is the \$2+ million that the State could take away late in 2002 or 2003. He explained that Strategic Priorities monies have been used to take care of the fund balances, city infrastructure, and the community renewal pieces. He added that as usual, staff will work to try and lower the 2003 levy increase of 4.9% before its final adoption in December.

Fossum suggested that the City look at asking department heads to look at reducing their budgets by 2% to show the public what options the City is looking at in light of the State's proposed \$3 billion shortfall for 2003.

Bernhardson stated that a possible freezing of jobs resulting in a \$500,000 reduction and a cutback in other long-term programs could be looked at before service cuts are considered. He asked Council if it's better to lessen the quality of services produced or to say this is a service that the City can't afford to produce any more. He stated that staff would provide Council with the impact of reducing services and the resulting reduction in costs.

Peterson stated his concern that Council not cut too deep in the reserve funds to fill the gap in future budgets and that certain services cuts may have to be examined.

Continuing Discussion  
of Communication  
Strategies

Bernhardson inquired as to Council's interest in the following areas of communication:

1. Council supported continuing to update the BRAIN, which allows those who do not have internet access to access information via their televisions and a telephone.
2. Inquired if Council was interested in sending out a newsletter focusing on the business industry to the business community in addition to the BRIEFING publication that is sent to all residents. Council did not comment.
3. Regarding legal notices on the website - could be done in addition to newspaper notices.
4. Support for including other commission minutes on the City's webpage in addition to City Council and the Planning Commission.
5. E-commerce will continue to be explored for utility billing and permits, etc.
6. External website: Council concurred with making available "Frequently Asked Questions" to be updated with current events.
7. Public GIS access - staff hopes to have online by year's end.
8. Message Service Notification - is being explored. The issue is finding a good way for users to sign up for only what they're interested in learning about and maintaining those lists. It might be easier for them to be able to go to a more updated development and projects list on a map that they could then access to get updated, but it would take some initiation on their part.

Elkins remarked that the Dan Patch issue was set up as a Yahoo group and worked well to keep those neighborhoods informed. He stated that its inexpensive to set up and links can be set up from the City's website to allow users to subscribe to the various news groups. It would require a staff person to monitor the site.

Due to the amount of time put into the reproduction of the city council minutes, it was suggested that the issue of what is really required should be discussed with the City Attorney, as the meeting information is available through multiple mediums, i.e. audio, visual, etc. Is the synopsis enough?

Ornstein stated that it's important to maintain a record that can be transcribed verbatim for litigation purposes, which is available with the audio recordings. He stated that there is no need for anything other than a synopsis for the minutes themselves.

Jim Truax, Director of Community Services, stated that regarding the The Creekside Chronicle, it has an approximate circulation of 500 and there is an \$8 per year charge to subscribe and that in the 2003 Budget, the circulation is supposed to increase to 4,000-5,000 (specifically seniors) and not charge for it. The difference in cost is to be made up by selling advertising. The Summer Spectrum is a joint brochure put out by the Bloomington Schools and the City that lists all of the summer programs.

Council agreed to meet at 5:30 p.m. on September 23 to continue its strategic planning discussion.

Adjourn Meeting

Mayor Winstead adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Barbara Clawson  
Council Secretary