



MINUTES

Committee of the Whole

The Committee of the Whole met on Tuesday August 2, 2011 in the City Hall Council Chambers, 30 West Central Street, Chippewa Falls, WI. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Council President CW King.

Committee Members Present: Mike Hanke, Brian Flynn, CW King, Chuck Hull, Jane Lardahl, Bill Hicks and George Adrian

Also Present: Mayor Greg Hoffman, City Clerk Rae Buckwheat, Finance Manager/Treasurer Lynne Bauer, Interim Parks and Recreation Director Dick Hebert, Park Board Members Audrey Stowell, Carmen Muenich and Beth Arneberg, Park Employee Terry Johnson.

1. Discuss Parks, Recreation and Forestry Ad Hoc Committee Report

The Ad Hoc Committee Report was given by Alderperson Jane Lardahl, who served as Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee were summarized as follows:

- The Park Board continue in its role of providing direct citizen input into the operation of the department and into policies that affect the way services are provided.
- The fee structure be reviewed for increases by the Park Board.
- Sponsorships be sought for the pool, the fountain, and Casper park and additional marketing of the pool and Casper Park to increase attendance.
- Evaluating the use of contract mowing as a possible savings.
- Appointing Dick Hebert as the full-time Parks and Recreation Department director.
- Park and Recreation and Public Works Departments remain separate but coexist as team players for the City.
- Computer access be provided in the Irvine Park office so the Director can perform his other duties while providing onsite supervision.
- Adding a texting feature to park cell phones to reduce employee work interruptions.
- Current employed forester be given all the department's forestry responsibilities.
- Fine tuning of the current structure and the addition of a Park Supervisor to full time staff to help revitalize the economy,
- Reducing the budget without cutting major services and reducing the value of the park system.
- Continue to fill the Recreation Supervisor's position with part time help until December 31, 2011, when 2012 budget figures are final.
- A notation that sponsorships, advertising, and funding for operational expenses in 2012 will increase revenue to offset expenses with a net effect of savings to the department/City.
- Recreation supervisor be filled with a full time person in January 2012.
- Looking at the possibility of relocating staff, of moving some financial functions from the Parks Department, and of finding an alternate way to cover the secretary's absence from the department.

- Upgrading the website to make more information available online, reducing the volume of calls to the office.
- Coverage with a part time person until December 31, 2011 with an expectation that this person will set up a better computer program to track donations. In the future, this secretarial position may be replaced with a position with expanded duties, as more of an assistant to the Director/Rec Supervisor.
- Organizing a small group of community leaders with commitment to park programs to assist with fundraising for both operational expenses and for capital projects; a "Friends of the Parks" group similar to the "Friends of the Zoo".
- Looking to the "Friends of the Zoo" to expand their scope to include funding for operational expenses with a focus of increasing revenue rather than an extreme cut in services.
- In the case of program cuts, (hopefully not needed in the near future) suggestions were to make the recreation supervisor's position a permanent part-time position, eliminating paying for benefits, an estimated savings of about \$ 18,000 and providing only minimal recreation programs. If these changes are necessary, that a new Ad Hoc committee be formed to work with the Park Board to prepare a priority for the service cuts.

The Committee of the Whole held discussion on the idea of combining the Streets and Parks/Recreation Departments. Lardahl explained that it was not recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee because the Engineering Department has already taken on supervision of the Street Department. The Ad Hoc Committee felt it would be too much to add another department to their workload. In addition, job descriptions and pay levels between the two departments are different, which could create union issues.

It was suggested that Interim Parks and Recreation Director Dick Hebert identify where changes could be made to the current structure of the department. It was also noted that union contracts will be condensed to wages only at the end of 2012, making other issues much more bargainable now than they used to be.

The Mayor and several of the Committee of the Whole members thanked the Ad Hoc Committee for their efforts. They felt that the report was good, but funding for the recommendations will be dependent upon how the 2012 budget turns out.

There was no further discussion.

2. Adjournment

Motion by Flynn/Adrian to adjourn at 5:30 p.m. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Submitted by:

Rae M. Buckwheat, City Clerk