

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS  
APRIL 26, 2023

Charles City city council met in a planning session on April 26, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in council chambers. Mayor Dean Andrews presided and the following council members were present: Keith Starr, Patrick Lumley, DeLaine Freeseaman and Phoebe Pittman. Absent was Phillip Knighten. Also present were city administrator Steve Diers, city engineer John Fallis and engineer in training Brian Sullivan.

Mayor Andrews reported that he had given to the council a letter he recently received that was addressed to the mayor and city council.

Representatives from MidAmerican were present to discuss renewing their franchise with the city. It is up for renewal next year, this last one was for a 15 year term. They would like to renew for a 25 year period but will accept a 20 year length. MidAmerican will reimburse for all publication costs for renewing this franchise. The possibility of implementing a franchise fee was discussed. The city can ask for up to 5% for this fee. If this is implemented, the city would not collect local option sales tax on these sales. There are approximately 350 cities in Iowa that are collecting a franchise fee, so it is becoming more common. A resolution stating a revenue purpose needs to be passed by council before collecting a franchise fee. MidAmerican would need about 90 days lead time to start collection process once the city passes the necessary resolutions. Council member Starr commented that he is very happy with the partnership the city has had with MidAmerican. Council member Lumley asked about charging stations for electric cars and if they were located more in the center of town, could the city receive some of the revenues from them? Mark Reinders from MidAmerican replied that they would likely be open to working with the city on other locations. Currently, they have charging stations at the Kwik Star on South Grand.

Bob Ingram introduced Joe Vens and Jon Vrieze from Sisson and Associates to review the insurance renewal. A total increase of 14% from last year is occurring, mostly due to increases in the property coverage. The devastating storms we have seen the last couple years have a lot to do with this increase. With our mod factor decreasing to .77, that resulted in a large decrease in our work comp premium which kept our total increase much lower. Some of the larger increases in some of our premiums are more market driven and not specific to the city.

Mark Wicks, Chamber director, was present to discuss the concept of parklets in our downtown area. A parklet is basically a seating area that is located in the parking lane in front of a business. He submitted conceptual designs and actual pictures of these that are in other cities. A local Main Street business has a food truck ready right now and would like to put one of these parklets in front of his business out on Kelly Street. With not a lot of food options downtown currently, Wicks feels this would be a good addition to downtown. These would be built on pallets and be movable, so they can be removed easily for the winter months. An ordinance would need to be passed by the council to allow this. The current sidewalks in downtown aren't very wide so it's really not possible to put seating on the sidewalk, so these parklets would allow that. Councilmember Freeseaman stated that parking is already a big issue downtown, if we take away more spots, it could upset some of those business owners. He would like to see the Chamber do a survey of the downtown businesses to see where these parklets might work. Councilmember Starr agreed that downtown parking is an issue. He asked if there would be a fee paid to the city to use the parking lane and Wicks replied that he would talk to other cities to see what their policy is on these. Councilmember Pittman commented that she liked the concept but would like more information before pursuing this further. Councilmember Lumley stated he would like to see downtown more vibrant and that this is worth looking into. With this proposal to locate on Kelly Street, it would be better than being on Main Street. Mayor Andrews agreed that Main Street might not be suited for parklets but Kelly Street should work well, outdoor seating is a big plus in downtown areas. Consensus was that council needs more information and comparisons from other cities before pursuing this further. This particular individual who has a food truck ready to has stated he would like to be in operation for July 4<sup>th</sup> activities. Council consensus was that is too short of a window to give council time to fully hash this out to be in place for this season but there is interest in pursuing this. Question was asked of the insurance representatives who were still in the audience about liability for the city on this. Response was that coverage is not an issue but would need to get a legal opinion on liability concerns.

Dan Rimrod, WRRF superintendent, has presented a request to repair a boiler in the facility. It is 19 years old and had an expected 20 year life. There are two of them but only one is in need of work. He contacted 6 companies and had two responses. It was asked that since both boilers are the same age, should we just look at doing both right now. Rimrod replied that he really doesn't want to fix something that isn't broken but he could get a quote on how much it would be to do both and council can then decide.

A monoform project is being recommended for Main Street. This is being done to be ready for the planned Main Street reconstruction project planned for 2024. We have had great success with this

process and it extends the life of the manhole. Approximate cost for this is \$42,000 and it will be on the next regular agenda for council consideration.

A budget amendment is needed for FY23. City clerk O'Donnell reviewed the main reasons for the amendment which include changes in timelines of some projects, grant receipts/disbursements, work done to the overhead doors and grates at the CVTC and reimbursements. The expenses are increased by approximately 1.2 million with about a million of it being due to changes in timelines of projects.

The layout for the Mill Race Parking Lot project handicap parking was distributed and reviewed. According to the unified development ordinance, a minimum of 5 handicap spots need to be in this parking lot. One is located in front of The Pub, one on the opposite end of the block, one in the northeast corner of the lot and two near the parkade of the Union House building in the southeast corner of the lot. That leaves 123 regular parking spaces in the lot. There was concern voiced over only one spot in front of The Pub. City engineer Fallis replied that he had talked to the owner of The Pub and he preferred only one handicap spot there. Consensus was that we need to get started on this project and can always add more spots later if needed.

City administrator Diers is suggesting that the council do a mobile workshop at the newly constructed WRRF. It might be easier just to hold our normal planning session here in council chambers and then have the council go out to the facility for a tour. Council also commented that a public open house might be a good idea as well. Progress is being made on the ambulance contract. AMR has agreed to a 3 year term and the hospital has stated they will contribute \$100,000 for the first year. Now work will be done on finalizing the agreement after consulting with the city and county attorneys. Floyd County will be declaring EMS as an essential service to start the process of going back for another vote on that levy. General consensus of the ambulance commission is to pursue operating our own service, which give us access to Federal reimbursement funds. Annual spring clean up starts this Saturday and will be operated the same as it was last year. City engineer Fallis's last full time day with the city is May 6. He will stay on part time to advise and supervise Brian as he pursues getting his engineer license.

Councilmember Starr reported that there is a 9-1-1 meeting May 4 where they will discuss enhancing the current communication system and possibly switching to the state system.

Councilmember Pittman stated that work is being done to improve the little league ball fields.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Dean Andrews, Mayor

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, City Clerk