

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
AUGUST 16, 2023

Charles City city council met in a planning session on August 16, 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 Freeseman, Phoebe Pittman and Phillip Knighten. Also present were city administrator Steve Dier, city engineer John Fallis and engineer in training Brian Sullivan.

Darci Tracey was present to request a street closure for an upcoming event called Harvest Moon Festival on September 28. She is asking that Kelly Street from Main to Jackson be closed from 2:00 to 10:00 that day. Food vendors will be available and live music as well. Most of the downtown businesses are participating in this event. This will be on the next regular agenda for council consideration.

Park and rec director Tyler Mitchell updated the council on the pool renovations. The park and rec board has decided to shift the focus of this project and just fix what needs fixing and if we have funds available, may look at other amenities. They want to keep it under the \$900,000 limit of having to go out for a bond referendum at this time. They hope to do this at the end of the 2024 season. If the repairs turn out to be very major, they may have to close the entire season. A firm is coming next week to do a more definite review and give some cost estimates.

Police chief Hugh Anderson discussed the installation of speed cameras at various spots in the city. He had submitted more data to the council, including the speed studies recently conducted. An accident that occurred a few days ago highlighted the need to reduce speed on S. Grand. He reiterated that signs stating that cameras will be used to enforce the speed limit will be posted clearly and far enough ahead to give people the chance to slow down. We will need DOT approval for the state controlled highways and ground work will also need to be done before it freezes. He would like to have this item on the next regular agenda for council action. There will be a 30 day period right after installation where only warnings will be given and he is looking at having a 10 mile an hour buffer before issuing any tickets.

Patrick Callahan then reviewed the capital improvement plan rankings that were compiled by the city council. He stated that any projects that would come out of the General fund would probably require another funding source, given the constraints set by the state on taxes. One option is to implement a franchise fee. The street projects listed don't include the costs for related water/sewer improvements since we need to know which street projects we will be doing to see if there are any water/sewer portions. Tonight we are looking for an overall consensus with the list as presented. We will meet on September 13 to review the first draft of the plan. The projects were divided into each of the upcoming fiscal years. The highest ranking project was improvements to the Charley Western Trail with the startup of our own ambulance service coming in second. Pedestrian mall in between city hall and the library was third, fire pumper replacement was fourth. The price of the pumper was listed at \$675,000 and it was asked if we could find a used one. City administrator Diers commented that the price was for new since he tried to include the worse case scenario for each of the items. Other high ranking projects were the purchase of property for a brush dump/lime storage/police firing range, updated HVAC at the library and pool renovations. Projects included in FY26 include whitewater enhancements, city remodel/tuckpointing, ball field lights at Lions Field, library circulation desk and some street projects. Fiscal year 27 projects include new tables for Zastrow Room, traffic light replacements (a portion is included in each of the next 5 fiscal years) and removal of shrubs/stamped concrete path along Gilbert Street and S. Grand. Mayor Andrews stated he would like to see those shrubs handled sooner rather than later and it was mentioned that possibly local service groups and the businesses located along there may help with removing the shrubs. Callahan mentioned that this plan isn't set in stone, so things could be rearranged as the council chooses. For fiscal year 28, Wildwood clubhouse project is listed. It was commented that the current opinion is it would cost a lot more to keep the current building than to build brand new. Council member Freeseman stated that he would like to see more definite information on the costs to repair as opposed to brand new before a definite decision needs to be made on what route to take. A storage building for Wildwood is also included here. They are currently using some golf cart stalls for storage so it would be nice to free those up to be rented out. A possibility could be to move the Cal's Auto building that the city owns out to the golf course to be used for storage and/or golf cart rental stalls. The bridge at Sportsmens is included here as well. Concern raised over the safety of this bridge, it may have to be closed temporarily. It is used mainly

for the people playing on the disk golf course. Fiscal year 29 includes playground renovations, E Street paving, traffic lights and various equipment replacements. Councilmember Starr commented that nuisance abatement projects aren't listed anywhere. Reply was that is not really a capital improvement project, it is just normal procedure. ARPA funding the city has received has been earmarked for city hall renovation since funding for that type of project is very limited. Our nuisance abatement is funded by our short term borrowing. Our debt capacity sheet was reviewed. We currently have an eighteen million debt capacity of which we are currently using about six million, so we have room to incorporate any needed G.O. debt. Adding the projects on the list to our GO debt would increase the debt service levy about \$2, which is not bad considering all of the projects being done. Callahan then stated that if the council is not on board with implementing a franchise fee, we should know now because this list would then need to be changed. Council was not opposed to exploring this option but would need more information on how it will affect the citizens before an informed decision could be made. We will have franchise fee discussion on the August 30 planning agenda and the first draft of the capital improvement plan will be ready for review on September 13.

City administrator Diers reported that Charles City had been awarded the Thriving Communities designation and received one million of tax credits each for both low income and workforce housing. The parking lot at 401 N. Main has been paved this week.

Council member Freeseaman reported that there are some electric line issues at the airport so there will be some major work needed to be done. Council member Pittman reported that the historic preservation commission will be selling a new historic puzzle. Mayor Andrews commented that Apple Valley recently opened up a memory unit.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

Dean Andrews, Mayor

Attest:

Trudy O'Donnell, city clerk