

CITY OF MONTEVIDEO
CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
April 22, 2024

The city council met in a worksession on Monday, April 22, 2024 in the council chambers at city hall. President Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. The worksession had been set by the council on April 1st for the purpose of discussing housing study needs/funding opportunities, economic development grants for industrial development, orderly annexation, human resources and for any other business that might come before the council.

Council members present: Nathan Schmidt, Bryce Curtiss, Steve Sulflow, Dan Sanborn and Beverly Olson. Absent: None. Mayor Winter present.

Also present was City Manager Robert Wolfington, City Attorney Janice Nelson, Community Development Coordinator Jordan Thompson and City Clerk Glennis Lauritsen.

2. Discussion Items.

2(A) HOUSING STUDY NEEDS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.

City Manager Wolfington explained that the city's housing study was last completed in 2018/published in 2019. The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP) has suggested updates every three (3) years. Chippewa County Auditor-Treasurer Michelle May reached out to city staff to inquire about the city's interest in partnering on a county-wide housing study. She informed staff that the county has funds available for this purpose. Council discussed the possibility of a county-wide study, or perhaps a regional study, and what that might involve, including the pros/cons, timelines, costs/other possible funding sources, etc. The council suggested setting aside funds annually for housing study updates so that a three-year update happens "automatically."

Following discussion, it was the consensus of the council that staff develop a RFP to work with Chippewa County and the City of Clara City in a joint housing study effort.

2(B) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.

Community Development Coordinator Thompson and City Manager Wolfington explained that Chippewa County is eligible for grant dollars that could be used toward infrastructure and/or road development in the area of the Airport Industrial Park.

Thompson indicated that interest has been expressed for development in this area and such amenities would make the area more attractive/marketable to prospective industries.

It was the consensus of the council to further discuss the matter with Chippewa County.

2(C) ORDERLY ANNEXATION AGREEMENT.

In 1996, the city entered into an Orderly Annexation Agreement with Sparta Township that “designated certain unincorporated land located in the township as in need of orderly annexation in order to provide for the orderly development of said designated areas and the provision of municipal services thereto.” Recent non-agricultural development has occurred within the area known as Area III, thereby triggering a possible annexation. Specifically, a fabricating business is being constructed along the south side of East Highway 7. Currently, the city limits extend to the landmark known as Cherry Creek on the south side of Highway 7 and to the eastern border of the property owned by Walmart on the north side of Highway 7. Directly to the east of Cherry Creek is a parcel of agricultural land, an ag-related development on property owned by Mark Grussing and the new fabricating business property owned by Jeremy Jerve.

City Attorney Nelson explained that in accordance with the Agreement, the Jerve parcel is now subject to annexation. The city has the right to annex; they are not required to annex. The city is not required to provide utilities to the property. The city may initiate or the property owner may petition for city services, subject to city approval.

Following discussion of annexation procedures, tax consequences, etc., it was the consensus of the council that annexation should be initiated. Staff will work with the city attorney to begin the process.

2(D) HUMAN RESOURCES NEEDS FOR THE CITY.

The city does not currently employ one person for its human resources duties. Rather, those duties are shared among city office personnel. At one point, the need for additional city office staff was discussed; however, it was decided to revisit the matter following the retirements of key office personnel for that determination. In 2023, the council had approved the creation of a new position, “Finance Clerk II,” to reflect additional HR duties/responsibilities taken on by the Finance Clerk I position. These duties were previously the responsibility of the city’s Finance Director. By reassigning the duties to the Finance Clerk II, it freed up a good deal of the Finance Director’s time.

The Finance Clerk II position continues to take on additional human resources duties/responsibilities which, most recently, has included a wellness program for the city. Because this position continues to grow in level of responsibilities, staff is wanting to revisit the salary and asked for the council's feedback. Based on the positive feedback received, City Manager will work on a recommendation to present to the council at a future regular meeting.

2(E) OTHER.

City Manager Wolfington discussed the possibility of shared opportunities with neighboring communities. The City of Granite Falls is interested in sharing in the cost of televising camera equipment. They have budgeted approximately \$70,000 for this purpose and would ask that Montevideo participate with a similar amount. Montevideo currently owns televising equipment; however, it is outdated. Wolfington stated that the expectation is that such equipment use will increase in frequency. He also stated that new equipment could add another element of information to the utility data being compiled on each property using the Silversmith program.

Council members expressed their willingness to entertain the idea of a shared equipment purchase with Granite Falls, as well as being open to partnering with other communities on other similar future opportunities. They indicated, however, that they would like to see what an agreement for this purpose might look like, stressing that it would need to address issues such as insurance, maintenance costs, schedule of use, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 7:57 P.M.

Secretary

Approved by council May 6, 2024:

President - City Council