



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SESSION
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS
MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2017; 5:15 P.M.**

1. Call to Order

The Council convened in Committee of the Whole Session in the Council Chambers, City Hall Building, at 5:15 p.m., Monday, April 17, 2017. Mayor Renner called the meeting to order and directed the City Clerk to call the roll.

2. Roll Call

Aldermen Present: Mboka Mwilambwe, Amelia Buragas, Joni Painter, Karen Schmidt, Scott Black, Diane Hauman, Jim Fruin, and Mayor Tari Renner.

Absent: Aldermen Kevin Lower and David Sage

Staff Present: David Hales, City Manager; Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager; Jeffrey Jurgens, Corporation Counsel; Cherry Lawson, City Clerk; Greg Scott, Assistant Chief of Police; Jim Karch, Director of Public Works; Bob Yehl, Water Director, Scott Sprouls, Information Services Director; Nicole Albertson, Human Resource Director; Jeanne Hamilton, Library Director, Melissa Hon, Assistant to the City Manager; Nora Dukowitz, Communications Manager and other City staff were present.

Guest attending: Aldermen-Elect Kimberly Bray and Jamie Mathy; Senator Bill Brady; Senator Keith Sommer, Karen Mehta, Legislative Aide for Senator Jason A. Barickman; and Jack Whitsitt, Intern for Senator Dan Brady

3. Public Comment

Mayor Renner opened the meeting to receive Public Comment. There were no comments offered.

4. Consideration of approving the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes of February 20, 2017 and July 20, 2015.

Motion by Karen Schmidt, second by Alderman Painter, that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of February 20, 2017 and July 20, 2017 be dispensed with and approved as printed.

Mayor Renner directed the Clerk to call the roll which resulted in the following:

Ayes: Aldermen, Mwilambwe, Buragas, Painter, Schmidt, Black, Hauman, and Fruin.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.

5. 2017 Annual Legislative Work Session (*Presentation and discussion with local Legislators.*)

Mr. Hales thanked Senator Brady and Senator Sommer. He stated that he thought it was advantageous to share some critical issues relating to the City of Bloomington and ask for help in some matters. We want to talk to you about four projects – two large capital construction projects where the assistance of the state, either through the delivery of a state grant that has been promised for the Fox Creek Bridge. We will also talk about Hamilton Road/Bunn to Commerce in the hope that there could be some federal urban aid money. We will also talk about two other projects that are not as capital-intensive right now but are very important to the City of Bloomington.

Mr. Karch stated there would four projects discussed. The first one is the Fox Creek Bridge. On the southern part of Bloomington, it is the major east-west arterial road for this community. It is currently a two-lane bridge over the railroad that needs to be upgraded. Thanks to our General Assembly for enacting the Grade Crossing Protection Fund. We are asking for help and assistance with a letter of support for the continued Grade Crossing Protection Fund. As we move toward finalizing plans for the bridge, there are a couple of issues that could come up. One is the railroad. They are asking for the City to span the entire right of way. Right now, there is an existing bridge that is there. They are asking for a widened span of this bridge. That increases the cost of the bridge. But, we are asking for is that letter of support because with the ICC, the funding amount is always determined close to the end, so there might need to be some flexibility. We are asking for a letter of support for the overall project. Right now, we think that we are going to prevail with the ICC with the contested petition, so we are not asking for any advocacy with the railroad. We are asking for a letter of support for the project that would go the Illinois Commerce Commission.

Mr. Hales clarified that Ms. Hon had prepared four different letters that have been sent electronically. The current letter we have on the Fox Creek Road Bridge is to help ensure the funding.

Ms. Hon stated that in the packets there are four sample draft letters that she would be sending electronically. The current letter regarding the Fox Creek Bridge Project is just sending a letter to the Illinois Commerce Commission asking for support to make sure that we do continue to get the funding for that project from the Illinois Commerce Commission.

Mr. Hales stated that the current letter may ensure that the state does follow through and makes sure that grant is made available to the City. Our hope is to start this project in the spring

of 2018. We will follow up with you on a second letter once that ICC application is made. Because of the state's financial condition, we did not know whether or not all those grants are being released or being held up, so we are hoping that you will help ensure that the grant that has been promised to us will come through at an increased amount, too.

Mr. Karch stated that the issue is now that we have continued to do design, it has gone from a \$1.6 million dollars to \$2.3 million dollars per grant.

Mr. Karch stated that the next project is Hamilton Road / Bunn Street to Commerce Parkway. We have been talking about this one for decades. There is no road there now. It is a \$14.5 million dollar job. We have been negotiating with a different railroad, not Union Pacific but Norfolk Southern. The issue that we are asking for is support for the funding from the FAU Federal Aid Urban from the state.

Mr. Karch stated the next project is Veterans Parkway at Illinois Route 9 and is a project that has been sitting out there for a long time. The intersection of Veterans and Route 9 is an antiquated intersection and is actually the highest accident intersection within this community. It is in the top 5% in the State of Illinois for accidents. The design of that intersection needs to be redone. Again, we are asking for a support letter to District 5 that would allow for this project to be elevated on importance.

Mr. Hales asked Fire Chief Mohr to comment on what impact you have with emergency response vehicles trying to navigate this intersection.

Mr. Mohr stated that crossing that intersection adds to response time but also the added call volume that is associated with one of our busier stations.

Mr. Hales stated that at times emergency vehicles cannot get across Veterans Parkway at this intersection during peak rush hour. He stated that we would like the study to begin and that it is way past its time and should have been done five, eight, ten years ago.

Mr. Karch stated that the last project is one that needs that extra push, and is the rerouting of U.S. 150 and Illinois 9.

Mr. Hales stated that in the eight years that he had been there, he was not aware of the Bloomington Council having formal discussion like is being referred to. Decades ago, there was that kind of discussion, but it does not mean that we cannot reconsider it and look at it again.

Mayor Renner stated that we are trying to do more with less and build up our reserves and be financially responsible.

Ms. Silva stated that we had come a long way and have made a lot of strides.

Mr. Hales stated that we strongly support the Illinois Municipal League that is trying to push through and recommend that we have automatic appropriation authority for motor fuel tax

revenue, video gaming use tax and 911 revenue. We have Public Safety employee arbitration reform.

Ms. Hamilton asked for support of funding for libraries.

Mr. Renner stated that since the last time in 2005 when the library was expanded, we have gone up roughly \$600,000 to in the ball park of \$1.5 million in terms of circulation, so this is about a 250% increase. The library needs to accommodate the needs of the citizens.

Alderman Buragas brought up a concern of the Public Works Department and that is the funding that is received by District 5 and IDOT. We are in District 5—it receives the lowest per capita funding amount than any of the other IDOT districts. It is a concern as it affects the routine maintenance on our bridges and roads. It is very frustrating as the City receives many complaints about our roads. She asked for some assistance for the City to be able to receive the same amounts that other communities receives.

Alderman Black stated that the citizens he represents have concerns about economic development issues.

Senator Brady stated that he appreciated Alderman Black’s comments. Everyone is concerned about having a budget that works. People are concerned if they are going to be okay. Is this service that we rely on going to be there? There is an uncertainty that has gotten into people’s personal lives now. Just as we have had to deal with the economic development and jobs in the state, corporations have seen uncertainty. Now we are seeing it on the personal level. People are uneasy about everything.

Mr. Hales asked if an update could be given on what is going on in both the House/Senate and if the governors could project what could happen as far as a budget deal between now and when the General Assembly is scheduled for closure.

Mayor Renner thanked Senator Brady and Senator Sommer for their information and support.

6. Brief recess

[6:35 PM Minutes:] Mayor Renner called for a brief recess of the meeting.

[6:47 PM Minutes:] Alderman Joni Painter departed the meeting.

[6:50 PM Minutes] Meeting resumed

7. Elected Officials Orientation (*Organized and facilitated by Alderman Diana Hauman*)

Mayor Renner welcomed Ms. Bray and Mr. Mathy.

Brief discussion facilitated by Alderman Diana Hauman ensued on the following questions: Current Alderman and Mayor share what s/he personally gains from serving on City Council; Outgoing Alderman share what they will miss about serving on City Council; Brief overview of the Council's Five Priorities (Alderman Schmidt); Questions from the incoming Aldermen; Discussion how Council can best work together, and Wrap-up of the discussion.

Mayor Renner shared that his personal gain from serving on the City Council is getting Bloomington to tap into its inherent resources and use those to make the place a better community. We are getting our act together in terms of economic development, and Bloomington is on the move.

Alderman Schmidt stated that this job has such a strong potential to connect people to City resources, City staff, to give people amazing ideas about their community and into a place where some of them can turn into something even bigger than they imagined. She appreciates the information and ideas that we share even though we do not always agree with one another or see the world in the same way.

Alderman Black stated he likes watching the projects come to fruition, and because City government can be slow sometimes, it is fun to have things we have been working on for sometimes come to life.

Alderman Mwilambwe stated he really enjoys helping people and also enjoys some of the things the community has to offer such as the airport, the BCPA and the coliseum and being able to participate in things like that and set a vision for the future that coming generations can enjoy.

Alderman Buragas stated that the most rewarding thing is being able to help people and doing things that make our City a better to place to live.

Alderman Fruin stated that he had had the opportunity to work for a lot of great people and he would miss what we have accomplished as a group. Partnerships with those in the community are so critical to our successes.

Incoming Alderman Bray stated she was interested in serving because she found it a great dynamic when people can sit around the table and just agree, but come from a point of knowledge that while you might not agree with it, you can respect it and you can learn from it.

Incoming Alderman Mathy stated that he liked to fix things and started to get involved when serving as President of the Downtown Bloomington Association. As long as we keep talking, we keep growing bridges and communicating. We can accomplish things, and we can take care of our fellow citizens.

Alderman Fruin stated that he would like to continue to help in some way after May 1st.

[7:00 PM Minutes] Alderman Karen Schmidt departed the meeting.

[7:35 PM Minutes] Alderman Scott Black departed the meeting.

A quorum of the Council no longer existed, as it was an informal discussion of the remaining members of Council.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Alderman Hauman, seconded by Alderman Mwilambwe, to adjourn Committee as a Whole Session. Time: 7:37 p.m.

Motion carried. (Viva voce)

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

ATTEST

Tari Renner, Mayor

Cherry L. Lawson, City Clerk