

**SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SESSION
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS
MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2017; 5:30 P.M.**

1. Call to Order

The Council convened in Committee of the Whole Session in the Council Chambers, City Hall Building, at 5:30 p.m., Monday, August 21, 2017. Mayor Pro Tem Schmidt 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, Jamie Mathy, Kim Bray and Mayor Tari Renner (Absent).

Staff Present: David Hales, City Manager; Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager; George Boyle, Assist. Corporation Counsel; Renee Gooderham, Chief Deputy Clerk; Brendan Heffner, Police Chief; Bob Yehl, Water Director, Scott Sprouls, Information Services Director; Tom Dabareiner, Community Development Director; and other City staff were present.

3. Public Comment

Mayor Renner opened the meeting to receive Public Comment.

4. Consideration of approving the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes of April 17, 2017.

Motion by Alderman Schmidt, second by Alderman Black, that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of May 15, 2017 be dispensed approved with a correction to the minutes.

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

Ayes: Aldermen, Mwilambwe, Sage, Painter, Schmidt, Black, Hauman, Buragas, Mathy, and Bray.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.

5. Fire Service Strategic Planning. (*Presentation by Fire Chief Brian Mohr 20 minutes, Council discussion 20 minutes.*)

Mr. Hales stated, Chief Brian Mohr will be speaking tonight on fire strategic planning.

Chief Mohr gave a presentation on the Fire Department's strategic plan to address the emergency response time issues that we have been seeing.

Mr. Hales asked a question about the slide presentation concerning EMS response time. Chief Mohr presented information on the history of the Bloomington Fire Department Ambulance service. Mr. Hales asked several questions concerning the staffing and use of a second ambulance.

Chief Mohr explained that they were currently down eight personnel, and that he would like to get staffing increased by October. We has two ambulances last budget year, and both are in currently and are in operation.

Mr. Hales added that we want to continue to work on how both Normal and Bloomington can work together for the betterment of the communities such as with automatic vehicle locators or location technology. We are trying to go beyond this mutual aid and see how we can be functionally integrated with one another. The biggest cost we have in the fire service delivery whether it is EMS or suppression, is not the bricks and mortar, it is the manpower.

Alderman Buragas stated that a number of conversations in the past have focused on the response times in the northeast and southwest quadrants as being an issue and those conversations created the impression that that was where the majority of the response time issues were. But, when it comes to the point map, it drives home that this is an issue facing the entire City, and it looks like the recommendations are focused on staffing. She asked Chief Mohr what his level of confidence was that those staffing issues and ramping up our staffing could be effective at achieving reduced response times in the central portion of our City.

Chief Mohr stated he is confident in knowing that we have the right resources. It is all about concentration and distribution of those resources and how we can fine-tune those.

Mr. Hales added that he and the Chief has had many discussions. We have high expectations. We have an integrated fire suppression and EMS; though it sometimes can be a challenge from hiring.

Alderman Mathy asked whether Chief Mohr would comment on the rate of increase of ambulance calls that are outpacing the rate of increase in population.

Chief Mohr agreed and stated that we have three extended care facilities that are going to be opening up here very shortly, the northeast has two and that is going to impact us two hundred calls in that service area alone in the next year.

Alderman Mathy stated that we use the paramedic/firefighter model and asked if Normal did that also.

Alderman Mwilambwe asked about what is involved in a location study. Chief Mohr explained that you would need to look at the street and whether it is a thoroughfare and has accessibility; bridges, rail, and travel distance from areas of other stations from boundaries and the future growth of the community.

Alderman Black stated, he had heard the subject of collaboration with Normal many times, but the last thing he had heard was that Normal had walked away from the table and asked if that was still the case. Mr. Hales stated that we have continued to have conversations especially on the administrative and the fire. We continue to talk about the AVL and others, but it just has not moved as quickly as we would like.

Alderman Black stated, there is political support to continue these discussions. Mr. Hales stated that we may also have to revisit a serious discussion of the communication centers. Chief Mohr stated in terms of the AVL issue, part of the delay was for Normal to actually get to that same level with that. They are working to improve those times.

Alderman Bray inquired about any analytics that align with population. Chief Mohr stated, he could not say exactly that there was an analytic that he could go out and grab, but that he had talked about other communities and their population base and how our call volume and the number of firefighters we have per capita compare. We are on the high side of calls per capita and we are on the low side of staffing per capita.

6. Five Year Capital Improvement Plan. (*Presentation by David Hales, City Manager, and Patti-Lynn Silva, Finance Director 20 minutes, Council discussion 20 minutes.*)

Mr. Hales presented information on the Capital Improvement Plan stating, staff has updated our revenue numbers, which is such a key part of what we can project. Tonight we want to focus on two scenarios.

Ms. Silva presented information on the different projects in the packet and the funds budgeted for them and explained the two graphs that were presented in the packet.

Mr. Hales then presented information on the infrastructure bond. Ms. Silva stated that Normal is doubling their sewer rate over a 5 to 6 year period and are not just doubling their usage rate but their fixed rate.

Mr. Karch presented information concerning the sewer rates and asked for the temperament of Council if the City implemented some of the rate increases that recently the Town of Normal has done. What if we just matched exactly what they did? It is so much more cost effective to be proactive rather than reactive.

Alderman Buragas asked if we could set some numbers on this issue. When we talk about doubling rates, it sounds like a very extreme solution. Mr. Karch stated initially we would be looking at going from \$9.50 for an average user to \$11.60 May 1st of 2018, and that would incrementally increase over time.

Mr. Hales added that he believes residents do understand that we have a serious problem with infrastructure and thinks it is because we have been very vocal in sharing that information with all these master plans. The successful approach in working with our rate payers and those who are ultimately going to pay the bill is to say if we do nothing what can we accomplish in the way of utility improvements and be specific with it.

Alderman Buragas stated that we have not discussed this since December 14, 2015, but we have to address this issue.

Mr. Karch stated we have put a high priority in this community on the need to keep driving forward economic development. We have talked about the importance of streets, but you cannot neglect what is underneath it. It is time we really need some action or we are getting beyond the crisis point.

Mr. Hales stated part of tonight's discussion is to get some direction from the Council. We have all got to keep in mind, it took decades or probably a half century to get to where we are today. We are not going to get out of it in 5 years, 10 years or even 20 years. Mr. Karch stated they needed five years. They need a communication plan, so to inform citizens of what we are going to be doing.

Alderman Mwilambwe stated that his impression was that the rate increase was over a much longer period of time as opposed to what we have in front of us.

Mr. Karch replied that it was a five-year with an on-going recommendation. One thing we have talked about that the City has not done well is a continuation of small incremental increases. Once we get to a fair level, we forget about it.

Alderman Mwilambwe stated one of things he was thinking about was many other bodies, institutions and groups have a reserve fund so that they can avoid this sort of crisis situation. It will be something we need to explore in the future because I think it does set the expectation of what we want to do.

Mr. Hales stated, the City had been for decades subsidizing residential development and being the banker instead of doing what we should have done and that is paying attention to reinvesting into our existing utilities.

Alderman Mwilambwe stated he would be curious to see what those numbers would look like over a longer period of time but taken into consideration that we want to build up a reserve fund that allows us to address issues as they come up rather than having this crisis situation every so often. As we double rates, or change rates, are we taking into consideration the fact that people might make adjustments as well to their consumption.

Alderman Mathy commented on an article he read that said Comcast says raised their rates for basic cable and has outpaced inflation on average of 60 something percent over the last decade. So, people are willing to pay for basic cable but have we ever asked them are they willing to not

have their sewer back up into their house? When we are looking at things like that, it is just keeping things in perspective.

Alderman Sage stated it is okay to ask our residents, are you not willing to pay to not have sewers back up in your house, but residents then have the right to say City Council what are you doing to reduce expenses elsewhere in order to reallocate money into these core services. That's just as fair question if probably a lot more pertinent question to ask.

Mayor Pro Tem Schmidt asked Mr. Hales what do you need from us and when do you need it? Mr. Hales stated he would like to see if there was general support for staff to bring back a five (5) year projection of what we could do if, and we are going to start with sanitary, sewer and storm water fees, if we were to look at say 100% increase but phase it in, what exactly could we do in five (5) years? What could we not do? The other thing is we are also going to bring back some recommendations how to address the non-enterprise fund projects.

7. Update on Priority-Based Budgeting. (*Presentation by Melissa Hon, Assistant to the City Manager 15 minutes, Council discussion 15 minutes.*)

Mr. Hales stated there is a reason for how we put these together. Studies across the nation have demonstrated that when you look to the electorate and where their threshold is on how much taxes they want to pay, too often they are saying hey, I'm already drowning in federal, state and local taxes. They are saying enough is enough.

Ms. Hon provided a general overview and talked about the importance of priority-based budgeting and what we have accomplished so far and what we plan to do moving forward. She gave the definition of priority based budgeting and explained its importance. She also went through accomplishments talked about at the Saturday budget work session back in March.

Mayor Pro Tem Schmidt thanked Ms. Hon for the priority-based budget briefs that were sent out.

8. Adjournment.

Motion by Alderman Mwilambwe, seconded by Alderman Hales, to adjourn the Committee of the Whole Session. Time: 7:40 p.m.

Motion carried. (Viva voce)

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

ATTEST

Karen Schmidt, Mayor Pro Tem

Cherry L. Lawson, City Clerk