

CITY OF WAUWATOSA
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BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Committee Room #2

PRESENT: Aids. – Kroll, Ewerdt, Purins, Stepaniak, Grimm, Becker, Maher - 7

EXCUSED: Ald. Hanson

ALSO PRESENT: J. Archambo, City Admin.; D. Redman, Fire Chief; R. Braier, Comptroller;
W. Kappel, Public Works Dir.; B. Wehrley, City Engineer

Ald. Stepaniak as Chair called the meeting to order at 8:17 p.m.

Authorization to apply for Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

Chief Redman requested approval to apply for a 2008 AFG grant administered thru the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Through this grant the chief recommends replacing all of the emergency extrication equipment. The total budget is estimated to be \$80,000. The AFG program requires a 10% matching funds from the city. The amount of the grant being applied for is \$72,000. The projected life span of this extraction equipment is approximately 10 -12 years. He stressed that technology has changed and some of the equipment is non-effective.

Moved by Ald. Purins, seconded by Ald. Grimm to recommend approval to apply for Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of \$72,000 with 10% matching funds by the city - 7

Contingency Fund allocations of \$5,099 for additional road salt

Mr. Kappel reported that the final order of reserved salt was delivered with an additional 1 ½ tons accepted. The city accepted the additional salt as the cost was \$34.14 per ton. Other public work agencies were paying as much as \$150 per ton of salt when they ran out. This gives the city 250 tons in the dome for the remainder of the season.

Moved by Ald. Krol, seconded by Ald. Ewerdt to recommend approval to use funds from the Reserve for Contingencies account for reserve salt purchases as needed in the amount of \$5,099- 7

Assessment policy information

The committee reviewed a memo from Mr. Archambo regarding an assessment policy stemming from the March 18, 2008 Common Council meeting. Several streets and alleys scheduled for 2008 paving were held pending this committee's discussion of the assessment policy. There is no specific recommendation being made.

The impact of special assessments was discussed. He proposed that a scale be put into place based on the larger assessments possibly those over \$4,000 or \$5,000 with an extended length of time to pay.

There are three broad categories (methodologies) which could be instituted:

1. Extend the repayment schedule from five to ten years
2. Reinstate a cap on assessments
3. Utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for qualifying low to moderate income households

Ald. Stepaniak asked about the alleys being 100% assessed. There is no methodology to this program at this time. Mr. Archambo responded that these are options but they would have an equity concern. Ald. Becker discussed the alley on Capital where there is a business. Does the weight of the semis making deliveries cause additional damage to the alleys? Mr. Wehrley responded that there is a lot of alley damage and he does not have a definitive conclusion what caused the damaged.

Ald. Stepaniak questioned the alley assessment in the amount of \$8000. Mr. Kappel explained that this was for a double sized lot which is why the cost was so high. If one or two residents have primary access to the alley they are assessed 50%.

Ald. Maher commented on the methodologies being discussed. He liked the option which extends the payment schedule. He would like to see further consideration of other projects that could be covered by CDBG. He commented that at the public hearing, he got the sense that there was a lack of understanding by residents regarding why certain projects were being done and the materials being used. Ald. Maher mentioned that in the future he hoped there would be a better way to articulate this in the letters that go out to the homeowners to alleviate some of the anxiety.

Ald. Maher asked if there is a way to weigh the assessment cost of these alleys by usage. He noted that there is a difference in the rate charged for manufacturers and businesses. Some businesses use the alleys the same as manufacturers.

Ald. Krol commented that he visited some alleys with Ald. Meaux last week. He said de didn't realize what a financial burden the alley assessment could be. CDBG monies should be used where warranted for families on fixed income. He thought that extending the payment plan to ten years would help.

Ald. Grimm asked if the payment plan were extended to ten years what would happen to the interest rate. Mr. Braier responded that the interest rate would stay constant. The city charges the net interest rate which is dependent upon the bonding interest rate which is a locked in rate.

Ald. Stepaniak wondered that if changes were made to the payment program, how would this affect the 2008 assessments. Mr. Braier said there is enough time because the billing for these projects won't be done until the spring of 2009.

Ald. Ewerdt asked what percentage of taxpayers chose the installment plan. Mr. Braier responded approximately 30%. When homes are sold or when property is refinanced the banks force the homeowners to pay off the assessment.

Ald. Ewerdt also expressed concern about communication to the public. Mr. Wehrley responded that the five year plan is available on the website.

Ald. Purins asked if a variable year payment based on the total amount due would be a bookkeeping nightmare. Mr. Braier responded that it wouldn't necessarily be a problem. The city has new software which could manually be changed.

Ald. Stepaniak said the purpose of this meeting was to review the assessment policy itself. The committee needs to narrow this down for staff feed-back in order to create a methodology. He would like to give the residents some options.

Ald. Maher noted that language should be developed for the repayment plan. Tying the number of years to the amount owed in thousands make sense from Mr. Archambo's discussion. For example a \$7,000 assessment would equal a seven year repayment plan, a \$6,000 assessment would equal a six year repayment plan, etc.

Ald. Krill noted that the committee had received very good information. Staff recommendation was as follows:

- Look at a payment plan extending out to ten years
- Information on the pros and cons of CDBG funding
- Look into removing the 12 ½% internal engineering fee

Ald. Stepaniak commented that he is seeing consensus among the group for these staff recommendations.

<u>Vouchers</u>		
<u>NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>FOR</u>
Theresa Estness	\$30.00	3/13/08 – Madison WI Alliance of Cities Meeting
Katie Gierach	\$28.35	Police – 2/25/08-2/27/08 – Pewaukee WCTC Patrol-In-Service
Brian Zalewski	\$36.58	Police – 3/3/08-3/7/08 - Milwaukee Ethics Instructor Course
James Wojcehowicz	\$1246.08	Water – 3/10/08-3/12/08 – Madison UW Dept. of Engineering Professional Development

		(Asset Management Course)
Richard Baker	\$165.20	Court – 3/6/08 – Elkhart Lake Judicial Education
Bill Tarman-Ramcheck	\$352.60	Public Works – 2/27/08-2/29/08 – Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin Winter Conference
Andrew Vickers	\$75.00	Administration – 1/31/08
Jim Archambo Andrew Vickers	\$452.42	Administration – 3/5/08-3/7/08 – WI City Manager’s Association Professional Seminar
Jen Stohler	\$1145.75	Health (Consortium) 2/20/08-2/22/08 Atlanta, GA Public Health Preparedness Summit
Timothy Brenzel	\$121.55	Police – 2/24/08 – 2/29/08 Johnston, IA Electronic Surveillance Training
Dean Redman	\$262.00	Fire – 3/12/08-3/14/08- WI Dells WI Fire Chief’s Education Conference

Moved by Ald. Maher, seconded by Ald. Krol,
that the vouchers be allowed and paid - 7

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
City of Wauwautosa

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