

## CITY OF WAUWATOSA

MEMORIAL CIVIC CENTER  
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### BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, July 8, 2003

Committee Room #2

PRESENT: Alds. Bruderle-Baran, Casey, Grimm, Jenkins, McCarthy, Stepaniak, Subotich – 7

EXCUSED: Ald. Matthews

ALSO PRESENT: T. Wontorek, City Admin.; B. Aldana, Asst. City Atty.; W. Kappel, Public Works Dir.;  
J. Plass, Acct. Mgr.

Ald. Stepaniak as Chair called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m.

#### Assistant to City Administrator vacancy

Mr. Wontorek outlined the various duties that the previous assistant had been performing. He said there are three options regarding this vacancy: 1) keep the position as it exists, 2) change the position to an internship. This would make the position less stable than the first option, and 3) leave the position vacant. He said the former Assistant to the Administrator was deeply involved in the creation and development of the city web site. If option 2 is chosen, the maintenance of the web site will have to be done by the City Clerk's Office and there may be overtime involved. Under option 2 the salary would be lowered from approximately \$19 per hour to \$10 or \$12 per hour. By changing the position to an internship and filling it by September 1, 2003, the city would save approximately \$14,300 in wages and fringe benefits for the remainder of the current year. The full-year savings for 2004 would be approximately \$20,000. An intern position is usually staffed by someone just out of college. He felt relatively sure that they could get people to stay in that position for an average of two years.

Ald. Subotich asked who was taking care of the duties outlined now. Mr. Wontorek responded that one of the staff in the City Clerk's office was maintaining the information on the web site. Hiring an intern would mean the city web site functions would be scaled back and the focus would be on continuing maintenance of the pages as they are. He said the government cable access channel would be delegated to the cable staff and Time Warner liaison duties would be handled by the administration office. He added that the Civic Celebration Commission liaison duties are being handled by a temporary intern currently working in the administration office. Ald. Subotich asked if the position would be advertised at \$10 or \$12 per hour. Mr. Wontorek responded that they would advertise the position at \$12 per hour. Ald. Bruderle-Baran asked about the crossing guard program and the newsletter. Mr. Wontorek said the secretary in the administration office is handling those duties.

Ald. Grimm said that a while back the intern position was a federally funded training program. After the money ran, out the city stepped in to provide a paid salary and the salary became pretty high. He said the population of the city has dropped and the city is using more computer technology. In light of that, he had difficulty seeing any need for an assistant. Mr. Wontorek responded that this position provides a higher level of service to the citizens. The web site and cable access channel are new services that the Assistant to the Administrator has helped to provide for the public. If the Assistant to the Administrator position remains vacant, it would mean a cut back in those services.

Ald. McCarthy said the Assistant to the Administrator position was retained because of the contributions that position could make to city services. The City Administrator would not be able to take on these lesser duties without watering down his position. The city has also understood that the intern position was a good training

ground. The complexities of government legislation and jobs in the government sector still merit that the Assistant to the Administrator be retained at the level of intern.

Moved by Ald. McCarthy, seconded by Ald. Casey to recommend approval to fill the vacancy in the Assistant to the Administrator position at an intern level with salary at \$12 per hour including benefits --

Ald. Casey said the city has been lucky that the last two people in the position have been very talented. The communications functions of the web site and newsletter allows the city to interact with its citizens and that is very important. The list of duties for this position centers on communications functions. He said that one of the other things this position does is to take on special projects like the citizen survey. When there were questions about the crossing guard program the person in this position was able to address them and make it a better program. He expressed his appreciation that the City Administrator has taken the position back to an internship and will be able to save another \$20,000 approximately for the year 2004.

Vote on the motion was Ayes: 6, Noes: 1 (Grimm)

### **Report on alley assessments**

Mr. Kappel said the residents abutting the alley on Jackson Park Blvd. have asked that his department look at the policy for assessments for work being done on those alleys and to come up with recommendations for exceptions to the policy. His department is recommending no change in the policy. Part of the reason for keeping the current formula is that if some people are exempted from paying for alley assessments, people in other districts would have to make up the cost difference.

Linda Draeger, 8222 Jackson Park Blvd., gave the committee copies of a letter addressing the residents' concerns and rebutting some of the points from Mr. Kappel's memo. The letter included signatures of those residents who were unable to attend the meeting. The major point of the letter are as follows: 1) the residents claim that the wear and tear on the alley is caused by the residents on the north side of the alley as well as service vehicles that service the residents on the north side, 2) during repaving of Jackson Park Blvd. the residents were not allowed to park in the alley, 3) realtors have told residents on the south side of the alley that the presence of the alley is a liability, 4) the residents think their situation is unique, 5) Resolution R-02-299 states "The assessment for original permanent pavement shall be at the following rates per assessable foot based upon use." The residents claim that they have no use of the alley. She said the explanation of how assessments have been handled in the past is a dead issue. The residents feel that a blanket policy is being applied without consideration that this is a unique situation.

Karen Roy, 8130 Jackson Park Blvd., gave some historical information about the creation of the alley and her family's history with the alley. She said that people purchasing a home should be made aware of any costs that may be involved including potential assessments. Two independent appraisers have said that their house is worth approximately \$20,000 less than the house across the street. It is her belief that the city created the alley solely for the convenience of the residents of the apartments.

Michael Arthur Roy, 8130 Jackson Park Blvd., stressed that in Resolution R-02-299 the words "based upon use" are prominent. He said that Jackson Park Blvd. residents have consistently complained about the lack of alley access. Technically former and present residents have not used the alley for 50 years. He said he could not get a satisfactory answer from the engineering department as to where the alley came from. The residents get no commercial or city services by way of the alley. As taxpayers, they are paying for an alley they will never enter.

Don Amacher, 8144 Jackson Park Blvd., claimed that Mr. Kappel's explanations were specious. He pointed out that Ms. Draeger's letter rebutted every argument made by Mr. Kappel. It was his belief that the cost should be charged to the commercial properties. The owners of the commercial properties can either write off the cost on their taxes or pass off the cost to their tenants.

Anne Sobota, 8136 Jackson Park Blvd., asked the committee to step into the residents' shoes. They are very proud of Wauwatosa and appreciate the increase in our assessments and the value of their homes. They have to put up with the apartments across the street. She said that residents of the apartments work different shifts so there is constant noise in the alley. They have no benefit from the alley. Maybe they should be charged a portion of the cost, but not the whole amount.

Paul Klusmeyer, 8122 Jackson Park Blvd., said that Mr. Kappel gave examples of a number of alley projects that he claimed were similar to theirs, but the other alleys didn't involve apartment complexes.

Mr. Amacher said they have asked to be shown alley situations similar to theirs, but he hasn't been able to find any.

Elizabeth Sohnle, 8214 Jackson Park Blvd., said they expected to pay for the street paving, but they did not consider any costs to alley paving. She said the timing was not good. There has been other construction on their street and while that was going on they were told they could not park in the alley.

Laura Buege, 8206 Jackson Park Blvd., said they moved in four years ago. When they got the assessment for the alley they were shocked. She didn't think that anyone that moved in recently was aware that they would be assessed for alley work.

Anne Amacher, 8144 Jackson Park Blvd., said the residents should never have been assessed for the alley work.

Ald. Subotich asked if there were exact similar situations to Jackson Park Blvd. Mr. Kappel responded that one example is Burleigh and Hadley Streets between 124<sup>th</sup> and 122<sup>nd</sup> Streets. In that situation, there are single family homes with four family apartment buildings located across the way. Ald. Subotich said the timing of the alley paving was absurd. He realized that the alley had to be repaved, but the residents should not have to be slammed with another assessment right after they paid for street paving assessments. Mr. Kappel said the residents are not being charged anything at this time because the project was taken off the current projects list. He said it was impossible to say that back-to-back street and alley repairs will never happen again. If they catch the damage early, it means the difference between doing a "Class B" repair or waiting till the problem gets worse and doing a "Class A" repair which costs twice as much for the resident. In this situation he admitted that the timing of the two projects back-to-back was poor planning, but they have gone back to the drawing board and are postponing the project. There will be no assessments charged to the residents at this time.

Ald. McCarthy noted that in the third district on Martha Drive proceeding southwesterly along Blue Mound Road there is an area in Crestview Court similar to the situation on Jackson Park Blvd. The alley just south of North Avenue from 123<sup>rd</sup> to 122<sup>nd</sup> is also similar. The residents in those areas were assessed even though they did not have access to the alley. He was confident that Mr. Kappel continues to do a very credible job of creating a construction budget and schedule. If the policy is changed, the city will have to change past and future alley assessments. He cautioned that it would be a "slippery slope" to change the policy right now.

Ald. Jenkins expressed his concern about the tone of the meeting. He said it was very unfortunate that some of the residents thought it was necessary to insult Mr. Kappel. He voiced his support for Mr. Kappel and the job he was doing. He said he had no problem with breaking from precedence for something like this if the city can recoup the cost some other way. He stressed that there are other things he pays for such as playgrounds that he doesn't use.

Ald. Bruderle-Baran echoed what Ald. Jenkins said about the tone of the meeting. She asked what the apartment buildings on the alley are assessed. Mr. Kappel responded that the apartment buildings are assessed approximately twice the amount of the single family residence assessments.

Ms. Aldana said there are some legal limits in terms of the taxing policy that are very general. Any change in policy would have to be city-wide and uniform. This doesn't mean that the current policy is the only way to go;

however, any policy would have to be applied city-wide and uniformly. She said it was the intent of the Common Council to establish a city-wide assessment policy to make it equitable for all residents. She added that it is recognized by the Council that some improvements are equal regardless of what is being improved.

Ald. Casey said that what is really before the committee is a discussion of the neighbors' concerns. He reiterated that the alley was deleted from this year's program and there is no project and no current assessment. He has spoken with the neighbors and they agree that Mr. Kappel needs to keep an eye on the condition of the alley. It will probably need to be repaired in the next 2-3 years. There are 10 of the 12 neighbors who have no access to the alley. In the last three years there have been 12 alley repair situations throughout the city where the neighbors have had no access. The 10 neighbors in this case have all worked to improve the alley. He expressed his hope that the city could at least consider whether there is an opportunity and a possibility to amend this ordinance where there is no access for some residents. He pointed out that the ordinance indicates that single family homes will be treated uniformly, but commercial properties will be assessed based on the benefits they receive. He asked if that situation could be reviewed.

Ald. Grimm cited a situation on Hillside Lane in which six residents put in an alley on their own with their own money. He asked if there would be a possibility of charging only the residents that use the alley such as the two homeowners on either end of the Jackson Park Blvd. alley. Ald. Bruderle-Baran asked if such a plan could be considered. Ms. Aldana said the committee could base alley assessments on a different set of criteria as long as it is uniform.

Mr. Kappel said the city does not prohibit anyone from having access to the alleys abutting their properties. He said that anyone on Jackson Park Blvd. could choose to have alley access. This should factor into any consideration of the policy. The drawback is that his department would have to constantly watch who is accessing the alley and how it is being assessed. Access could be obtained at any time in any place.

Ald. Casey said that somehow, somewhere the story got out that folks were prohibited from getting access to the alley. He said that his house has a garage, driveway and access from the N. 81<sup>st</sup> street. When he asked the building department if he could put a slab on the alleyway, they said he could and he didn't even need a permit. He mentioned the idea that if the Council were to change the policy, a protective covenant that would go with the land could be created.

Moved by Ald. McCarthy, seconded by Ald. Casey to refer the alley assessment policy to the City Attorney and the Public Works Director for recommendation to the committee on appropriate alley assessment policy alternatives that can be enforced uniformly and city-wide – 7

### **Preparation of master plan and design guidelines for 65-acre parcel on the county grounds**

Ms. Welch said that in December and January of 2002, meetings co-hosted by the Mayor and the County Executive were held regarding the approximately 65 acre site located on the northeast quadrant of the Milwaukee county grounds. This site is bordered by Watertown Plank Road on the south, Highway 45 on the west and Swan Blvd. on the north. On March 4, 2003, the Common Council authorized staff to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the development of a master plan and design guidelines. Once the master plan and design guidelines are completed, that document will be used to guide potential developers in their responses to an Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop the site issued by Milwaukee County.

Ms. Welch said that staff received six responses to the RFQ. A review team consisting of the Director of Community Development, the Director of Public Works, the City Administrator and the Milwaukee County Director of Economic Development evaluated the responses. The team has recommended Kubala Washatko Architects in collaboration with Conservation Design and Earth Tech for the project. She said the amount proposed for the project is \$38,500. Milwaukee County has committed \$15,000 to the project. The remaining

\$23,500 will come from the county grounds account which currently has \$50,000 in funds available for projects related to the county grounds. She requested the release of those funds so that the project can proceed.

Ald. Bruderle-Baran said she had no problems with the proposal. The money in the fund was allocated years ago. She asked what would be done with the balance. Ms. Welch said it was her intent to only use the amount needed for the contract. At some point the Council could revisit whether they want to keep the money for contingencies or reallocate it. Mr. Wontorek recommended that the balance be left in the account in light of a variety of potential needs related to the county grounds. Ms. Welch said the Community Development committee recommended approval for the preparation of the master plan and design guidelines.

Moved by Ald. Bruderle-Baran, seconded by Ald. Casey to recommend approval of the allocation of funding in the amount of \$23,500 for a consultant to prepare a master plan and design guidelines for the 65-acre parcel on the county grounds --

Ald. Stepaniak asked if the initial development cost would be recoverable. Ms. Welch said they hope to recover the money later in the project.

Vote on the motion was Ayes: 7

**Vouchers**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>FOR</u>
B. Weber	\$79.25	Police – 6/19-6/20/03 – Green Bay Police Executive Group Training
S. Kirby	\$27.17	Police – 6/17-6/19/03 – Milwaukee Calibre Press – Street Survival Seminar
A. Eldredge	\$57.10	Health – 6/16-19 and 20-21/03 – Wauwatosa UW-Madison Teacher Enhance. Prog. 2003
M. Swanson	\$309.37	Health – 6/23-25/03 – Madison Networking Neuron: Making Connections (Healthy Kids, Health Families)
R. Baker	\$177.25	Muni. Judge – 6/25-6/27/03 – Delavan Mandatory Judicial Legal Education

Moved by Ald. Grimm, seconded by Ald. Casey that the vouchers be allowed and paid – 7

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk  
City of Wauwatosa

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