

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

FEBRUARY 8, 2024

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 5:13 p.m. on the 8th day of February, 2024, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law. Present were Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Rachel Junck, and Anita Rollins. *Ex officio* Jeff Clark was absent.

FY 2024/25 BUDGET PROPOSALS:

Transportation Program: CyRide Director Barbara Neal opened the CyRide portion of the presentation by noting that the Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees approved the presented budget at its December meeting. The transit levy was not increased significantly from the previous year, and Director Neal noted that state and federal grants help offset costs and keep levies low for funding partners. Director Neal highlighted high levels of ridership per capita, technology improvements, expansion of service on several routes, and sustainability efforts. The Dial-A-Ride service provided to those who cannot use fixed route services is 80% federally funded due to the partnership with Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA), Director Neal explained. An emphasis was placed on equity as a key value in the CyRide mission of connecting people to their community with safe and efficient transportation that exceeds expectations.

Council Member Gartin inquired about accessibility of bus routes in other languages, and Director Neal explained that the app can be displayed in any native language programmed into the phone or device using the app. In response to a question from Council Member Gartin, Finance Director Corey Goodenow confirmed that the Transit Student Government Trust had a healthy balance that met the goals for the fund. Council Member Betcher asked about starting wages for CyRide employees, and Assistant Director for Operations Chris Crippen stated that the starting wage sets CyRide above the competition, particularly for part-time jobs.

Community Development Program: Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann explained that Planning Services includes Current Planning, Long Range/Policy Planning, and Administrative Services, which is shared with Public Works and Fire, along with staff support for the Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA), and Historic Preservation Commission. Annual Planning Services included activities such as Rezoning/Master Plans, Customer Service, Policy Planning, Annexation, Subdivisions, Site Plan Reviews, and other various activities. Applications for construction of single-family homes were projected to remain near recent averages, while an increase in small apartment projects was expected. Commercial/industrial development was anticipated to focus on building out existing areas.

Director Diekmann noted an increased workload for Policy Planning related to the implementation of Plan 2040, including adoption of Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Duplex standards, affordable housing strategy, and recommendations from the Ames Economic Development Commission (AEDC) Housing Task Force. He also noted participation in the process improvements for the Development Review Committee (DRC). Next, Director Diekmann explained that the Administrative Services Division functions as a point of first contact for

customer service for Fire, Public Works, and Planning and Housing. Staff also provides administrative support for multiple boards and commissions, permitting software, and DRC process improvements.

Housing Coordinator Vanessa Baker-Latimer identified the overarching goal of the Housing Division as addressing housing needs by investing in ways to increase availability of affordable housing and exploring ways to encourage availability of all types of housing. City-Wide Housing Programs covers activities that are not eligible under Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) or HOME program funding. FY 2023/24 was the City's 19th allocation of CDBG funding, and the FY 2024/25 allocation had not yet been announced. Activities for this program include Slum and Blight Acquisition and Demolition, installation of a Pocket Park in the Baker Subdivision, construction of affordable single-family homes on S. Wilmoth with Habitat for Humanity, future implementation of a Single-Family Housing Improvement Program, a Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program, and a Public Improvements project with Public Works to replace lead water lines in low-income Census tract areas. Mayor Haila asked whether this type of funding could be used for retrofitting or other sustainability purposes in low-income Census tract areas, and Coordinator Baker-Latimer replied in the affirmative.

Coordinator Baker-Latimer also explained that the CDBG/HOME 2024-2029 Five-Year Consolidated Plan and 2024/25 Nineteenth Annual Action Plan were under development. Coordinator Baker-Latimer shifted to discuss the City HOME Investment Partnership Program. Funding from this program is being used for a low-income multifamily housing development with HATCH Development Group on Lot 27 in the Baker Subdivision, which is expected to begin construction in April. CARES/ARP COVID-19 Program funds were used to purchase a van for Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA) for food delivery and to construct improvements to local daycare centers. The City was awarded funding through the HOME/ARP COVID-19 program for non-congregate housing facilities, and staff is preparing guidelines for a call for proposals. Coordinator Baker-Latimer described the possibilities of future non-congregate housing on a recently acquired property and updated the City Council on the status of the single-family home construction project with Habitat for Humanity in the Baker Subdivision.

General Government/Internal Services: Assistant City Manager Brian Phillips introduced Assistant City Manager Pa Goldbeck before presenting the City Council activities. In addition to the Goal Setting Retreat, the City Council also participated in the Smart Business Challenge Luncheon and unveiling ceremony for the renaming of the James Herman Banning Ames Municipal Airport. Other public engagement opportunities for the City Council included the Mayor/Council bike ride, Council night at the Bandshell, WelcomeFest at Iowa State University, and hosting a delegation from partner city Kosu City, Japan. Next, Assistant City Manager Phillips explained the role of the City Manager's Office in major projects like the Climate Action Plan, Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center, CYTown, the Linc, and the Steven L. Schainker Downtown Plaza. Additionally, staff supported a number of boards, commissions, and committees, including the Development Review Committee. City Clerk Renee Hall introduced a video presentation for the City Clerk's Office, which covered responsibilities and projects from the past year, including licenses and permits; contracts, resolutions, and ordinances; boards and commissions; records; elections; and support for City Council meetings.

Public Relations Officer Susan Gwiasda announced the rebranding of her division for the new FY as Communications and Outreach, which combined the former Public Relations Office, Media Production Services, and the Print Shop. She highlighted the work the office does on press releases, newsletters, the annual Resident Satisfaction Survey, social media, and legacy media before discussing the website improvement project that is in progress. Outreach and education activities included luncheons, City Council events, and Rummage RAMPage. Officer Gwiasda then covered Sustainability, noting that the City Council accepted the Climate Action Plan and approved seven priority areas within the past year. An application was underway for a regional Climate Pollution Reduction Grant through the Inflation Reduction Act, and a full-time Sustainability Coordinator was expected to be hired within the next year. Media Productions Coordinator Bill Gebhart highlighted increased use of videos across all departments for purposes like training, promotional materials, events, recruitments, and ongoing series. Council Member Gartin expressed appreciation for staff efforts to communicate with the public, especially with decreased coverage from legacy media.

On behalf of the Legal Department, City Attorney Mark Lambert described activities, including providing legal advice to the City Council, staff, and boards and commissions; representing the City in legal matters, drafting and reviewing ordinances, contracts, and other legal documents; litigating matters in district and appellate courts; and coordinating with outside counsel on litigation.

Human Resources Director Bethany Ballou reviewed statistics on recruitments, applications, external hires, and promotions before discussing expanded employee training opportunities. Increased costs for property insurance and liability insurance were covered by Risk Manager Bill Walton. Mayor Haila inquired about the risk of not being able to obtain property insurance due to the burning of refuse-derived fuel (RDF) at the Power Plant. Risk Manager Walton stated it could be a possibility, as insurers are more hesitant after a large fire at a waste facility in Florida in 2022. Human Resource Officer Krista Hammer discussed health insurance costs, noting that the 8% increase meets the goal of keeping increases below 10%. Health Promotion Coordinator Kacie Schumann explained that Health Promotion offers programming catered to all areas of wellbeing, with additional focus on and offerings in mental health this year.

City Manager Steve Schainker concluded the presentation by thanking staff for their great work serving the residents of Ames and thanking the City Council for their time and attention.

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL: Mayor Haila stated that there were no communications to the City Council to consider.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: Council Member Betcher thanked staff for keeping the City fiscally responsible.

CLOSED SESSION: Mayor Haila asked City Attorney Mark Lambert if there was a legal reason to go into Closed Session. Attorney Lambert replied in the affirmative, citing Section 20.17(3), *Code of Iowa*, to discuss collective bargaining strategy.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, to go into closed session at 7:06 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

The City Council reconvened in Regular Session at 7:48 p.m.

Moved by Corrieri, seconded by Betcher, to approved RESOLUTION NO. 24-051 ratifying Collective Bargaining Agreement with PPME local 2003 (Police) for July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0. Resolution declared adopted, signed by the Mayor, and hereby made a portion of these Minutes.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Junck, to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Jeramy Neefus, Principal Clerk

John A. Haila, Mayor

Renee Hall, City Clerk