

CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
April 7, 2017 – 12:00 TO 5:00 P.M.
Wahpeton City Hall

(This meeting was voice recorded.)

Members Present: Mayor Hansey, Schmidt, Dale, DeVries, Bertsch, Wateland, Lambrecht, Miller, and Bajumpaa (enter at 2:42 pm).

Staff Present: Lies, Hatting, Huwe, Bakken, Miranowski, Broadland, Priebe, Johnson, and Amos.

Others Present: Frank Stanko from the Daily News arrived at 12:27.

Welcome by Mayor Hansey at 12:05.

Recap of 2016 Council Goals & Priorities Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Challenges – A handout of a summary of the City Council Retreat agenda items was provided and is attached for reference. Hatting reviewed purpose of retreat. Review of Principles of Good Governance. Miranowski then gave a recap of 2016 Council retreat: what went well, what did not go well, and what to work on. Miranowski also did a recap of 2016 City Council goals and priorities. Discussion held regarding the goals and their successes.

Capital Improvements Plan – Financially Constrained – Huwe said the City is closest than have ever been to adopting this tool, so have something to present to public. CIP quick facts were reviewed. An overview of CIP adoption dates were listed, with approval set for May 15th. Huwe said any suggestions were welcome. Discussion on how we move forward. Miranowski noted the CIP is not a budget, just a plan. Wateland felt Hughes Drive Improvements may need to be done sooner than 2021 but Miranowski did not think it was supposed to be included any longer. Talk about slide in Volunteer Park. Could hire local contractor as will be City's obligation to correct. Miranowski felt should fix now as will be more costly later. A Letter to POTUS on Infrastructure written by Charles L. Marohn, Jr. PE AICP, Founder & President of Strong Towns, was provided in the handouts which Miranowski had found and he provided a summary of the article. Priebe talked about the Mini Match Plus Program and also the HIPP Program. Discussion held regarding how to address properties that aren't maintained. Have to have solid enforceable ordinances and they are not right now. Dale wondered if properties can be identified and letters sent to property owners letting them know when clean up week is so can get rid of junk piled up. If each of the Council members and mayor identify 3 properties that would be 27 properties so would be good start. Schmidt felt was good start but for most people this living situation is historical and the problem is more than just cleaning up the property. Further discussion held on how this problem could be addressed. It was felt keeping the programs available is important. Considerations were reviewed.

Community Development & Economic Development Balance – The handout provided a Community Development & Economic Development current conditions for Partners in Development. WCDC observations options were reviewed. Bertsch felt the four pillars of economic development should be kept in mind. [Johnson enter at 1:16pm] Broadland talked about comments of stakeholders of Focus Group Presentation that you can't get as many good things in a small community as Wahpeton. Miller said ED structure he envisions is to combine the City and County, giving examples of cities that have done this. He also felt the ED Director would be better served under the direction of the CDC, that they are better suited to administer an ED Director, and that the City Council should have a role also. He liked the CDC as felt already have too many entities. He felt the conversation was worth having. To have one group as the driver of ED. Broadland felt the process wouldn't be any quicker because if using public dollars would still need to go through the same process. Lies explained if public funds are used will need to notice. Bertsch questioned the flowchart. Miller said it would be a realignment. He felt the ED Director should have an office downtown. The City Council would have a role in the process. Schmidt said Miller is looking for change and when addressing the focus group and Wahpeton got to where they are in under the way things are being run currently. Because of the system that's currently in place. DeVries talked about focus group report. He believed whole-heartedly what was portrayed in the focus group was personal grudges so hedged on putting too much into that. And there were some things that were contradictory in there. Bertsch felt there was a lot of meso-thinking going on and said she talked to some people and once negativity started it just continued. If facilitator allowed it she wondered and was upset with that. Wateland looked back on businesses in Wahpeton that we have lost. Schmidt said there used to be railroad town. Dale talked about current practices. Lies has been doing this in excess of 30 years need to look at refocusing what purpose of ED. Other communities are growing because they want their kids to be in different school districts than Fargo. Should be focused on getting people to live here rather than to just work here. Make it more affordable to live here by doing things like buying down special assessments. Hansey felt can go any direction from Wahpeton at shift change and see traffic, and if look at businesses here in Wahpeton they are mostly agricultural. Priebe said Huwe is currently her supervisor as was under the Council then organization changed. She noted Wahpeton was first to start the Revolving Loan Fund and then a lot of different loans followed so was very forward thinking. The original RLF was for housing rehab then changed and started making commercial loans so very forward thinking. By moving ED downtown or being under committee did not know what would gain. Liked a blend of both options to bring together and combine roles. If want to try are 3 year terms so could try. Part of options to bring parties together and streamline. Then at that time can look at. If CDC wants to be more involved get CDC Exec on Council. Priebe gets calls, the Chamber directs calls to her. Miranowski felt Priebe had idea that needs to be explored further. How can we make it better. Key considerations and deal makers/breakers were listed in handout. Next steps options were listed for consideration. Huwe felt good conversation was held and need to look at to how to implement and make it better. Talk about marketing Wahpeton.

Break

Council Structure Alternatives – Lies reviewed 3 forms of City Government which were listed in the handout. Lies suggest staying with Modern Council or going to Commission. Portfolio system or commission system. Discussion on other cities. Talk about how portfolios work. Lies was not sure on what advantages and disadvantages there were to change systems and committees to portfolios. Dale liked the idea of the way we operate with a budget and PD and PW having only one person knowing things may get lost. Miranowski agreed. Dale talked about redundancy. Lies talked about continuity. Miller liked the two committees currently in place. How to change form of City Government was provided in handout. [Bajumpaa enter at 2:42pm] Huwe said if Council wants to initiate elections are in June of even numbered years so would need to know by February of next year to get on June ballot of 2018.

City Committee Consolidations – Hatting posed a question from the handout of could more be accomplished in fewer meetings and recommendations be made for Council action with less process. Dale felt having one meeting a month may not be enough time to review some items. Miller agreed that there are some items that need more time but some could just be addressed at Council. Hansey disagreed and felt the current format works great. Leave it alone. Miller wondered about having Committee meetings in the Council Chambers so they can be televised. Bajumpaa agreed, but felt it could be challenging for some having longer Council meetings. Dale felt some things are more sensitive and should not be televised and also felt meetings should be kept as currently scheduled unless there is only one item not of urgency. Schmidt liked what we have and felt it works. Do what's best for the City. There is a lot of information coming from Committees. Lies felt televising Committee meetings may be good. Dale felt the Committee Chairs summarize the meetings very well at Council meetings. Broadland commented that at Richland County meetings it's more laid back because they are not televised and would stifle discussion. Miller disagreed saying people would hear things first hand rather than how they are interpreted in the media. Priebe agreed that you do miss the body language. A Municipal Directory was provided in the handout. Considerations were reviewed regarding consolidating CVB and CEO committees. Consolidation Concepts were also reviewed as listed in the handout. Hansey said he has talked to both committees this week and are in favor of it. CVB does not have to wait for Council approval. Separate funds would be maintained for different purposes. Huwe explained both get budget approved by Council. They have no responsibilities for commitments. Lies felt CEO needs structure. Both have had problem with attendance and getting a quorum for meetings. It was suggested to tell the committees what is being done wrong and they can change it. Lies talked about CEO being created for Dakota Avenue maintenance, and would have to change to be for infrastructure. Dale talked about the best use of the CEO money as he did not feel it should have been used for the park bathroom. And is getting farther away from intended use for it. Discussion held. There has to be parameters. Lies said Dakota Avenue was primary purpose but not sole. Huwe wondered if should refer to committee. Mayor will refer to this item to both the Finance and Public Works Committees. A draft policy will be provided. It was suggested to have a combined meeting of CVB and CEO to explain policy.

Identification of Council Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Challenges – Huwe asked each council member to describe three services the city provides well, three services the city provides that have not gone well, and three services that are most important in 2017. [Stanko and Bakken exit at 4:00pm]

2017 Goals & Priorities – Following discussion the following goals were decided on:
[Miller exit at 5:00pm]

Goals

- Commit to Vision Statement
- Dilapidated Properties Enforcement & Community Image
- Lessen Dependency on Property Taxes
(City mill rate reduction)

Priorities

- Long Term Planning for Water Resources
- Development Opportunities for Housing, Retail & Employment
- Marketing Wahpeton
- Support Arts & Culture

Huwe will put together for next committee meetings.

Adjourn

Motion by Bajumpaa, seconded by Schmidt and carried, to adjourn at 5:06 p.m.

Respectively Submitted by Lynelle Amos