

MINUTES

Lowell City Council
Work Session

Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 1:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Sandy Railey

Those attending were Mayor Sandy Railey, Councilmember Phil Bonham, Councilmember Ken Ervin, Councilmember Candy Funderburk, Councilmember Shane Robinson, Councilmember Thomas Gillespie, City Manager Scott Attaway, and City Clerk Beverly Harris. Finance Officer Jared Pyles, Public Works Director Thomas Shrewsbury and Planning Director Alex Blackburn were also present. The Mayor determined a quorum was present and the meeting proceeded.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING

Councilmember Ervin made a motion to adopt the agenda for the meeting, followed by a second from Councilmember Gillespie. The vote was unanimously in favor.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY2021-2022 Budget Planning Discussions

City Manager Scott Attaway gave an overview of current federal grant (CDBG-I & CDBG-NR, etc.) funding and federal rules on how to use that funding within the City of Lowell.

Stormwater Fee

Next Mr. Attaway gave an overview of the stormwater fee study. He stated the fee study included: setup of a separate utility; establishing a project leadership group (PLG); creating an appeals process; data base analysis; providing an ordinance to adopt (NCGS tighter on stormwater than WS); and a presentation in June by Withers Ravenel.

Mr. Attaway reviewed the existing debt summary with Council on the Stormwater Fund (backhoe, dump truck, leaf vacuum, jet vac, and push camera system). He also went over the detail on the financial analysis with 20K-50K annual capital outlay under the City of Lowell Stormwater Program.

Mr. Attaway stated per the stormwater fee study the projected monthly fee per resident would be \$6.75 which would be \$81.00 annually. Non-residential would be figured on their impervious square foot areas.

Council asked how the \$6.75 would be broken out per citizen. Is the cost charged per parcel or per utility account, etc.? Mr. Attaway stated the charge would be billed to utility account owners and anyone who owns a property with impervious area on the parcel, but no water account associated with it, then a separate account would be set up for that parcel owner and billed separately for just the stormwater fee and no water/sewer charges.

Councilmember Ervin stated that the City needs to be able to justify to its citizens why this fee is what it is and be able to justify the fee. The Finance Officer stated that is why you want to set this fee up as its own separate fund, so it is very transparent to the citizens.

Council would like to see a letter explaining the program and fee be mailed to all citizens and business owners.

Mr. Attaway stated this fee would become effective July 1, 2021 with the adoption of the new fiscal budget.

Council thought the fee of \$6.75 was too high and asked staff to remove items proposed from the study and take back to Withers Ravenel to see if the fee can be lowered.

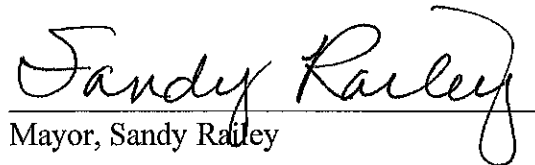
Council discussed if the residential rate could be lowered and the difference to pay for the projected capital outlay be charged to non-residential customers.

There was further discussion, Council directed staff to proceed with the fee as presented, also start creating the educational material to be mailed to residents and businesses.

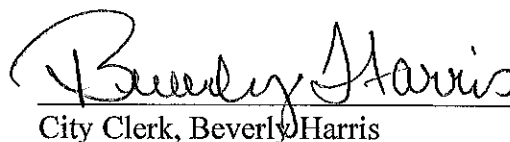
IV. ADJOURN

Councilmember Ervin made a motion to adjourn the work session, followed by a second from Councilmember Funderburk. The vote was unanimously in favor.

ATTEST:



Mayor, Sandy Railey



City Clerk, Beverly Harris