

City of Montgomery
Government Affairs Committee Minutes
March 13, 2023

Present

Brian Riblet, City Manager
Tracy Henao, Asst. City Manager
Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council
John Crowell, Police Chief
Gary Heitkamp, Public Works Director

City Council Committee Members Present

Chris Dobrozsi, Chair
Ron Messer
Sasha Naiman

The Government Affairs Committee of Council convened its meeting for March 13, 2023 at 4:49 p.m. with Mr. Dobrozsi presiding.

New Business

Police Department Surplus

Chief Crowell explained to the Committee that the department would like to request that the provided list of vehicles, firearms and various equipment be declared surplus. He explained that the two vehicles listed have significant mechanical issues and require transmission replacement and or transmission overhauls. Repair quotes for each vehicle ranged from \$4,500 to \$5,200 per vehicle. Additionally, the 2017 Ford SUV has been in service as our Police Canine vehicle for a number of years and as such the interior is in poor condition. The overall resale value for each is less than \$5,000 due to their condition and mechanical issues.

Chief Crowell stated that the majority of the firearms be traded to a Federal Firearms License (FFL) holder to offset the cost of purchasing replacement weapons, holsters and training ammunition. He added that some of the listed firearms are earmarked for destruction due to their limited value, these are typically obtained through criminal arrest or through donation by individuals wishing to dispose of the firearm.

Chief Crowell explained that the refrigerator was purchased at a scratch and dent sale from Recker and Boerger around 1997 and was utilized to hold blood and urine samples in our evidence room prior to testing. He added that the OVI breath testing equipment (Intoxilyer 5000EN and 5000) are scheduled to be replaced this year and one of the units was recently shipped back for repair and the company (CMI) shipped it back and indicated that repair parts were no longer available. While one of the units was being kept as a spare and it does still function, it is obsolete and will not be repairable. Chief Crowell stated that all items to be disposed of by auction will be listed on GovDeals.com.

Mr. Messer made a motion to declare all listed items as surplus. Mrs. Naiman seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Public Works Surplus

Mr. Heitkamp explained that the public works department is requesting that the supplied list of various pieces of hand tools and equipment be declared as surplus by the Government Affairs Committee of City Council. If approved as surplus, the items will be sold through Gov-Deals.

Mr. Messer made a motion to declare all listed items as surplus. Mrs. Naiman seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Service to the Community Grant Discussion

Mr. Riblet explained that staff has completed the Service to the Community Grant process for this year. He stated that grant applications were received from the Montgomery Farmer's Market, You to the Rescue, and the Jose Cerda Aquatic Foundation. Mr. Riblet explained each application request as follows:

- For the 2023 grant cycle, the Montgomery Farmer's Market requested \$2,500 to cover the costs of engagement activities to help draw patrons from the monthly O.F.F Saturday Market at Summit Park in Blue Ash.
- You to the Rescue requested \$2,500 for their Dog Days of Summer activities to help draw more customers to help support their mission of supporting local animal shelters.
- The Jose Cerda Aquatic Foundation requested \$2,500 to offset participation costs for Sycamore High School, Sycamore Junior High, and Montgomery Makos swim team members and/or pay for the honorarium of an Olympian to teach the Jose Cerda Memorial Swim Clinic. The clinic is not held in Montgomery.

Mr. Riblet stated that the intent of the grant was to help to better the community. However, it has become a challenge to attract new grant applications that really apply to the current guidelines.

The Montgomery Farmer's Market has received the grant for three years consecutively. The grant guidelines stipulate that a recipient will not be considered for more than two years if there are other applications. The Community and Information Services Department recommends funding to the Rescue in the amount of \$2,000. In addition, it is recommended to fund the Jose Cerda Aquatic Foundation request in the amount of \$1,000 with the condition that the funding is first offered to members of the Montgomery Makos Swim team to ensure Montgomery residents have the first option.

Ms. Gaylor explained that the Grant Team made the recommendation regarding the Montgomery Farmers Market due to the guidelines that restrict the grant going to the same organization for more than two years if there are other qualified applicants. She explained that the guidelines also state that the award is not to support the operations of the organization. She stated that the Grant Team is conflicted to abide by the guidelines and agrees that the guidelines need to be reviewed as well as the vision of the grant.

Mr. Riblet asked if at some point Council would consider an annual stipend to be given to the Montgomery Farmers Market as community service.

Mr. Dobrozsi agreed that a conversation around the Montgomery Farmers Market was needed and asked what the proper Committee would be to have that with.

Mr. Riblet replied that it could be with this Committee and suggested a different meeting to devote time to look at the guidelines of the grant as well as the stipend.

Mr. Riblet asked if the Committee would like to modify staff's recommendations to \$2,000 to Montgomery Farmers Market, \$2,000 to You to the Rescue and \$1,000 to Jose Cerda Foundation.

Mrs. Naiman stated she felt the guidelines should be expanded to waive the consecutive award restriction.

Mr. Dobrozsi asked if we could grant the entire request of \$2,500 to the Montgomery Farmers Market.

Mr. Riblet stated that the annual grant amount is budgeted at \$5,000 but that \$500 could be added.

Mr. Messer made a motion to award \$2,500 to Montgomery Farmers Market, \$2,000 to You to the Rescue, and \$1,000 to Jose Cerda Foundation. Mrs. Naiman seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Hopewell Cemetery Enhancement Project Discussion

Mr. Riblet explained to the Committee that a previous conversation was held with the Government Affairs Committee in 2019 regarding grave availability and budgeting to possibly fund the maintenance or expansion of Hopewell Cemetery. He stated that at that time staff had met with KZF Designs to discuss options on a very high-level of installing columbarium's at the cemetery. He stated that since that time the discussions were placed on hold during the pandemic and change of the Committee members. Mr. Riblet explained that the purpose of the discussion at this meeting was to present renderings of the location of proposed columbarium's as an expansion of Hopewell Cemetery in separate phases. He stated that this project is included in the Strategic Plan for long term planning purposes.

Mr. Riblet displayed renderings that suggested removing the existing storage building located towards the center of the rear of the cemetery as well as removing a paved driveway directly behind the building that could be turned into a path that would also have columbarium's running the length of it to the rear driveway that encompasses the outside perimeter of the property. He explained that these areas could be broken up into two phases constructed separately.

Mr. Dobrozsi asked if the building was a landmark.

Mr. Riblet replied it was researched and found that it was not and was really only used for storage. He added that it was discussed with KZF that the stone from the building be utilized within the design to retain the historic look of the cemetery. Mr. Riblet also displayed renderings that included different types of materials used to construct columbarium's and the Committee determined they would like for the material to be more of a natural stone to match the wall at the corner of Deerfield and Montgomery and to include the stone from the storage building while retaining a historic feel.

Mr. Riblet explained that of the renderings, the first displayed the columbarium walls as being designed in a circular fashion with each wall being taller to add levels which would contribute to the number of cremation niche's that could be included in that area. The second rendering was more of a spoke wheel design with rectangular walls. This drawing as well would allow for different heights to accommodate a number of niches depending on the return on investment that would be needed as well as the aesthetic that the City is looking for. Mr. Riblet stated that staff would like to get feedback from the Committee on if they would approve staff pursuing additional services from KZF

Design for updated designs, estimated construction costs and preliminary revenue estimates or to determine if the Committee is not interested in an expansion but rather to fund the maintenance of the cemetery as grave sales are concluded.

Mr. Messer asked if this was a demand from residents or was from a financial need.

Ms. Gaylor replied that it was both in that there were only 58 available graves, and they were closer to Montgomery Road which is not as desirable a location so it could take longer to sell those. She also indicated that revenue is beginning to trend lower as maintenance is trending higher.

Mr. Riblet added that many cemeteries are looking into columbarium's as a way to extend revenue.

Mr. Dobrozsi asked if there were no financial needs, would this still be something that would be pursued.

Mr. Riblet replied that while is not yet a demand, it will be down the road.

Mr. Dobrozsi asked if there was an idea of how many years it would take to sell the remaining graves.

Ms. Gaylor reported that an estimated 30 graves were sold each year from 2020 to 2022 but it is difficult to predict sales from year to year.

The Committee discussed the design and liked the circular design in Phase I and the rectangular walls with plantings on top for the Phase II area. They stated they would like the finishes kept simple as discussed and Mrs. Naiman stated she preferred the walls not to be constructed too high.

Mr. Riblet asked if the Committee were supportive of pursuing a scope and fee agreement with KZF Designs to obtain updated information, estimated construction costs and to include the replacement of the split rail fence with a powder coated manufactured fence that would reflect the period of the cemetery.

The Committee advised Mr. Riblet to proceed with an agreement with KZF Designs to pursue the information needed to expand the cemetery.

Mr. Riblet added that incorporating the entrance feature on Montgomery Road would also be added as most people do not see the small existing sign. He also stated that the Landmarks Commission would be included in future planning meetings as well to get their feedback.

Minutes

Mr. Messer moved to approve the December 12, 2022 minutes. Mrs. Naiman seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Adjournment

Mrs. Naiman moved for adjournment. Mr. Messer seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed. The Governmental Affairs Committee of Council meeting was adjourned at 5:34 p.m.


Chair