

MINUTES
July 19, 2005
City Services Committee
City of Batavia

Chairman Volk called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members present: Aldermen Volk, Wollnik, Barnard, Dietz, and Liva

Members absent: Aldermen Vance and Frydendall

Also present: Aldermen Sparks, Miller, Wolff, and Nelson; Mayor Schielke; Bill McGrath, City Administrator; Randy Recklaus, Assistant City Administrator; Bill Darin, Fire Chief; Gary Larsen, Public Works Director; Scott Haines, Streets Superintendent; Noel Basquin, City Engineer; Howard Chason, Information Systems Coordinator; Kathy Montanari, Recording Secretary

2. Approval of Minutes

None.

3. Items Removed/Added/Changed

None.

4. Fire Stations Renovations Progress Report

Chris Hansen, architect with Kluber Skahan Architects, provided an update on the fire station renovations project. He explained that a building committee was formed to review the original program booklets from 2001-05.

East side additional space includes: pedestrian controlled lobby entrance, laundry room in private sleeping quarters area, vehicle maintenance area, hose room, mezzanine storage, additional apparatus bay to accommodate future vehicles, battalion chief office, vending kitchenette area adjacent to training room, and a quartermaster room for gear storage. Approximately 8,000 square feet has been added to the east side station.

West side additional space includes: pedestrian controlled lobby entrance, laundry room in private sleeping quarters area, vehicle maintenance area, hose room, mezzanine storage, Fire Department apparatus bay, training storage for ESDA, and an ESDA mezzanine. Approximately 3,000 square feet has been added to the west side station.

Hansen explained that additional circulation area of approximately 1,500 square feet at each station will also be required. The total additional space that the committee developed is approximately 14,000 square feet.

Hansen then reviewed quality expectations for the projects. During the tours, two fire stations—West Dundee and Geneva—were identified as benchmark facilities for their level of quality.

A spreadsheet was prepared to show a cost comparison of area fire stations on a square footage basis. Batavia's dollar amounts were adjusted because a portion of the facilities are being renovated. The price points show that Batavia's projects are comparable or at the lower end of stations toured. Hansen expressed confidence that Batavia's needs could be fulfilled at this level, and suggestions by the committee and aldermen could be incorporated into the plans. He explained that West Dundee was not shown on the spreadsheet because the accuracy of the information could not be verified. Hansen reported that the committee thoroughly discussed all suggestions and arrived at a plan with comparable spaces and costs to area fire stations for the population served. Each station (including new and renovated space) will be approximately 25,000 square feet.

McGrath indicated that Finance Director Peggy Colby was preparing a financial analysis to address bonding issues. Staff will also review the program booklets again to identify items that may warrant further discussion.

In response to a question from Volk, McGrath indicated that staff believes the construction management method is the best way to proceed with the projects. A construction manager can provide an important interface between the builders and the designers. Staff is requesting authorization to begin drafting an RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for construction management services.

Volk expressed support for retaining a construction manager and felt this individual should be brought into the project as soon as possible in order to identify possible cost savings.

McGrath said staff was recommending the arrangement in which the construction manager enters into contracts with the subcontractors. He said that staff felt several of the suggestions mentioned at the previous meeting could be incorporated into the projects.

Dietz asked about hiring a construction manager with the proviso that this person also be allowed to participate in construction. Volk said it can be done either way, depending upon how the RFQ is written. Dietz expressed support for having the construction manager act as the builder in order to provide greater accountability.

Barnard and Sparks preferred the construction management arrangement. Wolff said he wanted the construction manager to be involved early in the project to determine if it would be more cost efficient to rebuild the stations or level them and start over; Nelson agreed with Wolff.

Wollnik also agreed with the construction management arrangement, as there could be potential cost savings with the significant renovations to the building. She also felt the construction manager should have an opportunity to bid on the construction aspect of the project.

Liva felt that the skills a construction manager would bring to the project were very important.

Volk directed McGrath to prepare an RFQ and send a copy to the committee for comments. Volk said he wanted to select a construction manager by late September/early October. Hansen informed committee members that hiring a construction manager by the second or third week of September should not cause any delays in the process.

Volk asked that staff select the top three RFQs and schedule a date for committee interviews.

On a related issue, McGrath reported that it appeared that the lowest bids for a new water tower on the west side fire station site will be for a spherical design, so there will probably not be an opportunity for ESDA storage in the base of the tower.

In response to a question from Dietz, Hansen said he was initially concerned about the added square footage. However, after reviewing each space to determine if there was excess square footage, he felt that plans were very compact. The circulation calculation is subject to change, and could be lowered, since it is based on layout.

McGrath pointed out that the project also includes the addition of ESDA, emergency operations, and training facilities.

5. Downtown WIFI Discussion

Recklaus reviewed his May 16 and June 3 memos. Staff seeks direction as to whether or not the City Council wishes to explore the concept of a wireless fidelity (WIFI) network.

As background, Recklaus said Batavia MainStreet received notification from the Lt. Governor's office that a \$20,000 grant was available to MainStreet cities that successfully set up a WIFI network. Equipment would be installed in a particular area to create a "hot zone," which would enable anyone with a wireless capable laptop or computer device to access the Internet. This access could be fee-based or free. The initial outlay to set up a "hot zone" in the entire downtown area would be \$35,000-40,000, with an annual fee of \$8,000. Staff felt the downtown area seemed to be a logical starting point, since it would be relatively easy to set up due of existing poles in the area. The downtown area would be roughly bounded by the north damn, the waste water treatment plant, Lincoln Street, and Prairie Street. Larsen added that calculations were based on one square mile of area.

Recklaus said staff also analyzed potential benefits of a WIFI project. With respect to economic development, it would reduce the cost of doing businesses for many companies in the area. The network could also encourage people to live in or visit the downtown.

The City could contract with an Internet service provider for a cost of about \$8,000/year.

Recklaus explained that the WIFI network would also benefit City departments by allowing employees to access the Internet while in the field.

Recklaus indicated that the City did not receive the State grant, but felt the concept was worth exploring. The program would not need to be limited solely to the downtown. The City could opt to fund the project to establish and maintain the network throughout the downtown, using it as a pilot program to determine if it would be worthwhile to expand it elsewhere.

Recklaus then reviewed possible funding mechanisms. Specific areas could be set up in which a developer would contribute towards funding. The program could be built citywide for an estimated \$500,000. Other communities are also exploring the concept, and the City of Philadelphia has already established a citywide WIFI network.

Dietz asked if more funds would be available from the Lt. Governor's office next year, and Recklaus said it was anticipated that the program would continue. Dietz asked any reasons were given for denial of the grant; Recklaus said no, but most of the communities receiving grants were somewhat economically disadvantaged.

Volk felt it would be beneficial to research the communities that were successful in obtaining grants. He pointed out that it is difficult or impossible to get cell phone reception in many of the old stone buildings in the downtown and asked if this would present an obstacle for the WIFI network. Volk preferred to explore the technical aspects and economic benefits of the project before any additional consideration is given. He felt that, if done, the project should be handled as a utility that is capable of paying for itself.

Nelson said free WIFI would not pay for itself. Regarding an extension of WIFI throughout the City, repeaters could be used inside buildings. Nelson did not support the concept of free WIFI, since it is a technology that doesn't provide a great return on the investment. He pointed out that the next generation of cell phones will have Internet access capabilities. Nelson said he did support broadband, but felt if high-speed was provided, it should be for all citizens—not just the downtown.

Recklaus explained that one advantage of a free WIFI network versus broadband concerns legal obstacles involved in establishing a new utility. The network would need to be policed to keep out unauthorized access. There are no legal issues associated with WIFI, since the City would not be involved in the telecommunications field.

Nelson commented that free WIFI is already available in downtown Batavia at Panera Bread and the library. He saw no value in providing this service.

Recklaus explained that staff felt it was appropriate to bring the concept to the committee before spending a great deal of time on it.

Liva asked if downtown businesses believe they would benefit from a WIFI network. Recklaus indicated that Batavia MainStreet and the Chamber of Commerce presented the issue to their boards and the project was endorsed by both.

Chason then reviewed potential benefits to City operations. A WIFI network would provide data access to squad cars and field personnel. It is possible that it could also be used by ESDA to communicate during a disaster. Dietz asked if a citywide network would need to be established in order to obtain those benefits. Chason said yes, but staff was only discussing the concept of creating a small downtown area to evaluate the service. Squad cars and fire vehicles could also be equipped with wireless Internet access.

Larsen explained that the downtown area was chosen because the area related to the dollar amount for the grant. The area could be adjusted as necessary. He then said that surveys were done when staff was exploring broadband to the home. Larsen suggested that perhaps a new survey be sent to downtown residents and businesses to find out what kind of benefit they believe it would provide.

Dietz asked if the old surveys contained any data on Internet access, and Recklaus said there were questions on that issue. He pointed out that one benefit of providing access was to attract people to the area. Larsen noted that previous surveys were based on high bandwidth service, while this would be more limited than what Comcast offers. He supported the idea of surveying the downtown. Recklaus indicated that there were still certain areas of the downtown not served by high-speed Internet.

Volk requested that staff continue to explore the economic benefits of WIFI, but as a lower-level priority.

In response to a question from Dietz, Recklaus explained that the City was not supposed to generate profits from its utilities. In addition, if the City charged a fee it would need to establish a new utility and pass a referendum. Recklaus said it was possible that a Special Service Area could be set up in the downtown area.

6. Resolution 05-53-R: Declare 1993 Jeep Cherokee to be Surplus Property and Authorize the Fire Department to Sell Vehicle

Darin reviewed his July 6, 2005 memo. The committee authorized replacement of a vehicle earlier in the year, but asked that it not be declared surplus property until the new vehicle was received. That vehicle is no longer in operating condition, so staff requests permission to declare it surplus and dispose of it at auction.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council approval of Resolution 05-53-R, Declaring a 1993 Jeep Cherokee as Surplus Property and Authorizing its Sale

MAKER: Wollnik

SECOND: Dietz

VOICE VOTE: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

Barnard asked if it was possible to donate the vehicle to a charitable organization, but Volk indicated that it was preferable to send it to auction where individuals can evaluate it to determine if they can make repairs.

7. Resolution 05-67-R: Participation in Suburban Tree Consortium Program

Haines reviewed his July 13, 2005 memo. He explained that the Suburban Tree Consortium is comprised of approximately 50 municipalities and the City has been a member since 2001. Membership ensures that adequate quantities of trees will be available to the City. The commitment number of 180 trees per year will provide the City with enough trees to supply the 50-50 program and maintain development trees. Haines preferred not to commit to a larger number since the City may not need them in future years.

Larsen explained that this action guarantees that the City will have at least the guaranteed number of trees available for planting. In addition, the locally grown specimens are preferable to trees brought in from other climate zones and are much more likely to survive, which is a long-term benefit to the City.

Haines said staff personally selects trees for the program.

Volk noted that several years ago, Batavia was unable to obtain trees after Chicago experienced problems with the Asian Longhorn Beetle and purchased all available stock. The consortium provides a guaranteed supply of trees for the City.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council approval of Resolution 05-67-R, Participation in the Suburban Tree Consortium Five-Year Contractual Program

MAKER: Wollnik

SECOND: Barnard

VOICE VOTE: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

8. Discussion: Donovan Bridge Reconstruction Project Schedule

Basquin reported that the City was not expected to receive a notice of approval to proceed until late July, which results in the construction schedule being pushed back to August/September 2006. In recognition that this would cause a winter shutdown of the bridge, Mayor Schielke asked the City Council at a recent meeting to review the schedule and consider moving it back to 2007.

Dan Herring of H. W. Lochner and Associates, the City's bridge engineer, then reviewed the project schedule. Based on the latest schedule, notice to proceed would be anticipated around October of 2006. Herring discussed this schedule with local bridge contractors, who all believed that it was inadvisable to start the project in November. From a bidding standpoint, it would be cost prohibitive due to extra measures that must be used for winter construction. Based on that input, Herring recommended that the majority of the work should be reserved for 2007. This will also depend on receipt of Phase 3 funding.

Basquin asked if demolition could begin prior to that time, and Herring said it could begin before winter but it is difficult to do in December or January. McGrath said a winter construction season would certainly have an adverse effect on bids.

Volk said that the City Council targeted 2006 to avoid conflicts with the Fabyan Parkway bridge reconstruction and the Route 56 project in North Aurora. Volk asked if IDOT was planning any other local projects in this area for 2007. Basquin responded that the Kirk Road/Butterfield Road improvements were planned for 2007-08.

Mayor Schielke noted that the North Aurora bridge was reconstructed last year, and the Fabyan Parkway bridge is being done this year. He said the Phase 1 engineering process may have lengthened the schedule, but felt it was time well spent as the committee exercised its due diligence and allowed the community to give its input on the bridge. Schielke said IDOT is undergoing unusual circumstances at this time, since their work has been slowed by lack of funding and mass retirements. The delays were beyond the City's control, except for the Phase 1 engineering process which will result in a long-term benefit to the community.

McGrath said the initial design phase took longer than anticipated. Phase 2 calls for finalization of design elements in a 25-day period after staff is presented with the proposal, which would be very difficult to achieve. If the schedule is revised, the City will have more time to review these elements.

Herring explained that design elements consist of railings, outlooks, pier forms, and decorative lighting. Streetscape issues include decorative plantings and lightings. He agreed that the existing timetable would be extremely tight. Herring thought the schedule change would allow more time to develop a consensus on final design elements.

McGrath commented that an RFQ for downtown streetscape improvements is being prepared with the assistance of Batavia MainStreet.

Wollnik asked if the delay would impact bonding. McGrath said the City is obligated to spend a portion of the bond money within a certain period of time after bonds are sold. Unless there is a major issue, the City should be under contract for Phase 2 of the project within that period.

Dietz asked if the City could face the same problem in 12 months, and Volk said until the City receives the funds from IDOT there are no guarantees. Volk said this project had been discussed for many years, and he did not have a problem working on it a little longer. He felt the design elements were important to the community, as well as the opportunity to have more favorable bids, so it was worth the extra time.

Herring said he would submit a revised schedule as soon as the formal paperwork is received from IDOT.

Mayor Schielke suggested that the City Council take a vote on this schedule so the community is aware of the change in the schedule.

9. Resolution 05-68-R: Purchase New Leaf Machine

Haines reviewed his July 13, 2005 memo. Staff recommends the purchase of a new self-contained leaf vacuum machine. The new unit will have a 30-yard capacity, while smaller trucks can accept only 11 yards. It will replace a 1994 giant vacuum leaf machine that is placed on the back of a truck. This unit will be the City's second self-contained machine. The standard equipment meets specifications. Staff viewed this machine and is satisfied that it meets the City's needs. The smaller machine will be kept to service smaller areas.

Volk suggested that the City always retain at least one trailer unit, and Haines said that was his intention.

Haines said the unit should be received in time for the fall leave pick up.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council approval of Resolution 05-68-R, Purchase of a 2005 Leaf Vacuum Machine for \$32,910.00 from Standard Equipment of Chicago, Illinois
MAKER: Wollnik
SECOND: Barnard
VOICE VOTE: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

10. Resolution 05-70-R: 2005 Street Program – Authorize Execution for Improvement by Municipality Under the Illinois Highway Code with Illinois Department of Transportation

Basquin reviewed his July 13, 2005 memo. The purpose of the resolution is to inform IDOT how Motor Fuel Tax funds will be used in the street program. Basquin said that \$1,280,757.19 would be expended on the program.

MOTION: To recommend to City Council approval of Resolution 05-70-R, for the 2005 Street Program Authorizing Execution of the Resolution for Improvement by Municipality under the Illinois Highway Code with the Illinois Department of Transportation in the amount of \$1,280,757.19
MAKER: Wollnik
SECOND: Liva
VOICE VOTE: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, Motion Carried

11. Other

A. Speed Limits in Third Ward

Volk reported that Chief Anderson had been working with the Plainfield Police Department regarding speed limits. Traffic monitors were installed in the Third Ward but, unfortunately, one was stolen. Volk hoped to bring the issue back to committee in August.

12. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by
Kathy Montanari