

CITY OF MUSCATINE  
IN-DEPTH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES  
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m. – December 10, 2015

Mayor Hopkins called the City Council meeting for Thursday, December 10, 2015, to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers present were Rehwaldt, Fitzgerald, Natvig, Shihadeh, Bynum, and Spread.

The first item on the agenda was a Transit update.

Transit Supervisor Kristy Korpi provided a power point presentation that began with ridership numbers which included the following information:

- Revenue miles driven and rides provided drive federal (5311) money and state (STA) money that we receive.
- Ridership for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015 was up approximately 471 more rides than the previous year.
- Revenue miles are up approximately 966 more than the previous year.

Councilmember Shihadeh asked about the cause of increased ridership.

Ms. Korpi stated the increase was probably due to the expansion of the Green Route.

Ms. Korpi then reviewed funding for this year. She stated that federal legislators recently passed a five-year transportation bill. She stated that prior to its passing, the city was quoted 2/3's funding.

Ms. Korpi then reviewed the expansion of the Green Route stating that effective March 23, 2015, hours were expanded due to the opening of the Unity Point North Clinic. She stated the Green Route does not operate on Saturdays and the pickup point is at the Muscatine Mall.

Ms. Korpi then gave an overview of rate increases that went into effect on July 1, 2015.

Ms. Korpi then reviewed the Medicaid Modernization program. She stated that effective January 1, 2016, the Iowa Department of Human Services will be transitioning most Medicaid members to a managed care program. The four managed care organizations that will be providing their services are Amerigroup Iowa, AmeriHealth Caritas Iowa, United Healthcare, and WellCare. She stated brokers may become the middle men between the managed care organization and transit provider. She stated the current system used by MuscaBus is as follows:

- Currently, one of the ¾ time dispatcher handles the submission of all Waiver (Medicaid) claims on a monthly basis. The amount is significant, almost \$100,000 last year, and done during the course of the work day.
- Currently, ParaTransit passengers call to set up their own rides. Route passengers simply hop on the bus.
- Currently, if a passenger has a waiver that has expired, we contact the agency care provider via email.
- Currently, passengers utilizing a waiver pass shows the driver their pass and the driver tallies it on a waiver sheet. Tallies are entered on a computer daily by dispatchers and monthly counts

are submitted electronically to IME (Iowa Medicaid Enterprise) and payments are received electronically.

Councilmember Shihadeh asked if there would be a scanner used by the drivers to tally the waiver cards.

Ms. Korpi stated the cards would be tallied manually and submitted electronically.

Ms. Korpi stated that after January 1, 2016, MuscaBus will be required to enter into contracts with either the managed care organizations, or brokers, or both, passengers may not be allowed to schedule their own rides, and bills will have to be sent to each managed care organization or broker individually meaning there may now be eight separate submissions.

Ms. Korpi stated that for MuscaBus, more administrative time will be required and there may be an added expense to comply with broker's requirements. She stated there will probably be some confusion for passengers during the transition. She stated no contracts have been signed yet, and they are being reviewed by the City Attorney.

Ms. Korpi stated that on the horizon, MuscaBus is looking at dispatch software that offers a one-time fee, no per vehicle fees, and no annual maintenance fee. She stated the initial investment for the software would be \$5,000 plus the additional expense for tablets. She stated a proposal was received from Transit Alerts Software to integrate our routes and schedules on Google Maps allowing passengers to plan trips from their mobile devices and see where the bus is in real time. She stated the Transit Department is also exploring the use of alternative fuels.

Councilmember Rehwaldt stated that during the period of adjustment for Medicaid passengers, he hopes passengers will be allowed to get on the bus no matter what.

Ms. Korpi stated that is what will be done.

Councilmember Rehwaldt stated he feels the MuscaBus drivers are very considerate toward the passengers.

Ms. Korpi stated the drivers are a great group of people.

There was further discussion concerning the Medicaid Modernization issue.

Mayor Hopkins stated there was a citizen in the audience who would like to address City Council.

Yvonne Curry, who resides at 800 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, stated she was present to complain about the mud and dust issue that she feels has been caused by the West Hill Project. She stated her neighborhood has gone downhill since the project began. She stated if Councilmembers drive through the neighborhood, they will see the damage that has been done.

Councilmember Rehwaldt stated he feels the problems are being caused by the contractor.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation on the proposed sale of vacated right-of-way.

City Planner Andrew Fangman stated a vacation plat request has been filed by HNI for 1.53 acres of right-of-way that includes portions of Spring Street, E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and Poplar Street. The city is proposing to exchange this proposed vacated right-of-way for 1.63 acres of property currently owned by HNI along

Mad Creek between 5<sup>th</sup> and Washington streets. He stated the Traffic Committee is recommending the approval of HNI's request.

Councilmember Natvig asked if the city owns the other property surrounding the 1.63 acres owned by HNI along Mad Creek, and Mr. Fangman answered yes.

There was discussion on who was currently maintaining the property.

Mr. Fangman stated he was looking for a consensus from City Council to move this process forward.

Councilmembers unanimously agreed to move the process forward.

The next item on the agenda was an update on the Capital Improvement Plan for fiscal years 2016 through 202.

Mr. Fangman stated the CIP is a legislative and management tool to facilitate the scheduling, planning and execution of a series of public improvements over a five-year period. He stated it is developed according to priorities based upon need, desire and importance of such improvements to the community within the constraints of the city's ability to finance as well as implement and administer the projects. He then stated that the CIP is required by Iowa law.

Mr. Fangman stated projects were submitted by the various city departments and are included in the initial draft just distributed. He stated the Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the CIP and recommends its approval. He stated that following modifications recommended by City Council, the CIP will be adopted by resolution.

Mr. Fangman then explained how the capital improvement projects were prioritized. He stated the CIP gives an overview of all projects, summaries of proposed capital spending by department, funding source, and fiscal year, and detailed project information. He presented a sample of information contained in the detailed project information.

Mr. Fangman then listed notable projects that are part of the new Capital Improvement Plan. They are the Grandview Avenue Corridor Project, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Enhancement Project, the Houser Street/Fulliam Avenue intersection improvements, the Westside Trail, and the Riverside Park Enhancement Project.

Councilmember Rehwaldt asked about work to be performed under the Riverside Park Enhancement Project.

City Administrator Gregg Mandsager stated the work will be determined during the Master Plan process being done by SmithGroup-JJR. He stated City Council approved the agreement with SmithGroup-JJR a few weeks ago.

Councilmember Fitzgerald asked if they had done the initial Master Plan, and City Administrator Mandsager answered yes.

There was further discussion concerning the completion of the Master Plan.

The final item on the agenda was a presentation on Fire Department staffing.

Fire Chief Jerry Ewers stated the mission of the Fire Department is to safely provide quality emergency services to the community through the protection of life, property, and the environment from the effects of medical emergencies, fires and other hazards and to reduce these threats through fire prevention and public education.

Chief Ewers then gave an historical overview of the beginnings of the Fire Department which will be celebrating its 100 year anniversary in 2016. He stated the dynamics of the Fire Department changed in 2000 following the takeover of ambulance services.

Chief Ewers highlighted the staffing chart. He stated that because the department does not have day staff, work is done by the various shifts. He outlined the core shift services and their daily work schedule/routine. He stated the Fire Department is no longer just a Fire Department because everyone is cross-trained.

Chief Ewers then gave a department overview. He stated there are 37 uniformed personnel, two civilians, and seven part-time ambulance attendants (EMS only). He stated these part-time attendants are not firefighters. Speaking in reference to the department's fleet, he stated that in two years out, the department will be asking for a new aerial truck.

Chief Ewers then presented a chart showing the leading causes of home fires. He stated the department has a good public education program and does fire inspections as well. He stressed the importance of smoke detectors.

Chief Ewers then reviewed the coverage areas for both fire stations. He stated there has been a request for a third fire station in the CIP for the past 30 years but it has not materialized. He stated the recommended number of stations for a community our size is four.

Chief Ewers then talked about response time, core services provided, and EMS operations. Speaking in reference to fire suppression, he stated the city has an auto aid agreement with the Fruitland Fire Department that is dispatched along with the Muscatine Fire Department. He stated the city does have mutual aid agreements with the Wilton Fire Department and the West Liberty Fire Department.

Chief Ewers stated that Assistant Fire Chief Mike Hartman is also the city's Fire Marshal and as such is in charge of investigations. He stated the department does prosecute arson cases.

Chief Ewers then talked about the specialized services offered by the Fire Department. He stated the State of Iowa has 20 HazMat teams in its 99 counties.

Chief Ewers stated that fire inspections are down due to budget constraints. Speaking in reference to businesses, he stated the department is not trying to be mean. It just wants business owners to be safe. He stated that 43% of businesses never reopen after a fire/loss.

Chief Ewers then discussed the EMS and Fire Department training hours.

Chief Ewers then went over the list showing the department's recent accomplishments. He stated that over the last several years, the department has received over \$1.1 million in grant funds.

Chief Ewers then reviewed the charts showing how the Muscatine Fire Department's staffing compares to communities our size. He then discussed the full daily authorized staffing and the normal daily staffing/line up for both fire stations. He explained how staff handles a structure fire to ensure the department is in compliance with state regulations.

Speaking in reference to future challenges and issues, Chief Ewers said the biggest issue is staffing. He stated other concerns include the need for an East Hill fire station and a new aerial truck which is two years out.

Councilmember Rehwaldt asked how old the current aerial truck is, and Chief Ewers stated it is a 1997.

Chief Ewers then summarized his presentation as follows:

- Saving lives and property from fire remains the department's central mission.
- Firefighter staffing directly affects how quickly and effectively a fire department can perform the critical fire ground functions of locating and confining the fire, search and rescue, ventilation, extinguishment, and salvage and overhaul.
- Firefighting is a physically demanding task that requires accomplishing specific actions in a rapidly changing environment.
- The department will be seeking additional staffing through the normal budgetary process for Fiscal Year 2016/2017. Funding for this request needs to be sustainable over the long term.

Councilmember Natvig asked what percentage of ambulance personnel are trained at the highest level, and Chief Ewers stated that only paramedics (the highest level of training) are hired.

Under comments, Councilmember Rehwaldt asked if there has been any movement toward obtaining the IDOT Property on Lake Park Boulevard next to the Moose.

Public Works Director Randy Hill stated it is up to the IDOT for disposal of the property. He stated meetings have been held with the IDOT and they know the city is interested in the property.

Councilmember Rehwaldt asked if there was an educated guess when the IDOT might begin the process of disposing of the property, and Mr. Hill stated it will probably occur during the next couple of years.

Councilmember Rehwaldt stated he feels the city really needs a fire station on that property.

#232339. Councilmember Shihadeh moved the meeting be adjourned at 8:25 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Fitzgerald. All ayes; motion carried.

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Gregg, Mandsager, City Administrator