

Meeting Minutes
FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 8, 2002

CITY WATER DEPARTMENT

Present: Chairman Barr, Ald. Rackow, Phillips, Nealis and Molski

Also Present: Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice; Mayor Wescott; City Attorney Molepske; City Clerk Zdroik; Admin. Assistant Molepske; Directors Van Alstine, Gardner, Schrader, Disher; Assessor Kuehn; Fire Chief Barnes; Capt. Daubert; Ald. Walther, Sevenich, Seiser, Moore, Sowieja, Filipiak; Gene Kemmeter (Portage County Gazette); Barb Martin (Stevens Point Journal); Mark Ilten; Don Greene; Gary Baier

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5. Request to Replace Compressor - Willett Arena.
6. Bandshell Addition.
7. Traffic Enhancement Grant Application.
8. Update on State Budget.
9. Approval of Payment of Claims.
10. Adjournment.

1 - ASSESSOR'S REPORT

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve the report of the Assessor and place it on file.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

2 - PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX APPEAL - HAERTEL MONUMENTS

Motion made by Ald. Phillips, seconded by Ald. Molski to deny the personal property tax appeal by Haertel Monuments.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

3 - PORTAGE COUNTY YOUTH ON ICE CONTRACT

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice stated that the contract states that the City would own the compressors if something happened to the project at some point in the future, it acts as collateral on the \$100,000 that we have given. We would still need a performance contract that states that they are going to do everything that they said they were going to do, which is done with other organizations also. City Attorney Molepske did work on the contract and has given his approval.

Motion made by Ald. Phillips, seconded by Ald. Rackow to approve the contract for the purchase of the compressors.

4 - ROOM TAX REPORT FOR FOURTH QUARTER 2001

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice stated we are tracking as planned, with Major Projects having a balance of \$15,000 and within that amount, we have already earmarked the \$100,000 for the compressors.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Nealis to accept the room tax report for the fourth quarter 2001 and place it on file.

5 - REQUEST TO REPLACE COMPRESSOR - WILLETT ARENA

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice explained that there are two compressors at the Willett Arena and one of them went down during the middle of all the operations in February so it had to be replaced on an emergency basis and since they are both the same age, it is questionable as to how long the second one could last and this is a proposal that would replace the second compressor and hopefully solve any problems we may have in the future. It is much more cost effective to change the compressor in the summer than during the peak season.

Alderman Molski questioned if we had this in the budget.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice answered that it comes out of planned maintenance in the room tax account and that is why it is being discussed because it was not listed in the budget document as a planned maintenance item for this year.

Motion made by Ald. Nealis, seconded by Chairman Barr to approve the request to replace the compressor at the Willett Arena.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

6 - BANDSHELL ADDITION

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice stated this has been approved by Parks Commission and the Board of Public Works and it is here because the budgeted amount is \$50,000 and there is a shortfall of about \$45,500. We would be in the red for a short time due to this project and the Iverson Park project. We would make up the difference by fourth quarter 2002.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Molski to approve the funding from room tax for the addition to the bandshell.

Ald. Rackow stated he believes that this is the time of the year to do the project and get it done before the band season and he would tolerate going into the red for three quarters of the year because this is something that needs to be done.

Ald. Sowieja stated that he is in favor of beautifying the parks but at this time when we do not have the money he thinks it should be postponed for a year to see how we are sitting then. It is not a necessity and even though it would be nice to have it, it just is not the right time.

Ald. Nealis also stated that he would like to see it postponed, especially because of the cutting of the revenue sharing. Basically we are stabbing in the dark until the State decides what it is doing and we do not want to get caught with something like this over our heads. It is not a necessity and it is over budget.

Ald. Phillips commented that being a member of the Room Tax Committee, one of the reasons that this proposal moved forward for the bandshell was that there was some private funds of \$35,000. They raised \$7,800, only a fifth of the money that was promised by the private organizations or users of this facility. He stated he thinks we should wait just a couple of months, it is a long building season and it is not a rush that we have to get it done.

Ald. Rackow stated both Ald. Nealis and Ald. Phillips made good points, however if the City cuts back on a number of things because of what might happen then it seems as though it gives ammunition to the people who supported the original budget proposal because they can say that, yes, they were the big spenders, see, they can cut those things out of their budget. He is under the impressions that the City runs a tight ship and it budgets real close to what our income is and this is an exceptional year and to cut back on what might happen is sending the wrong signal to Madison by saying that yes, we are the big spenders after all.

Ald. Nealis stated that everyone here knows that we are not big spenders but we need to come to the reality that we need to start making cuts now.

Ald. Phillips commented that we have a bandshell there, this is just an addition for a storage area so it should not be an immediate need, we have done without it for 10-15 years, he does not understand what the big need is, it should wait for a couple of months.

Ald. Seiser supports the activities that take place in the bandshell and it is true that we could continue to use it the way it is, but it is in poor shape and we do not want it to get worse and then be more expensive to fix. It is a service for our community and it fits into the room tax dollars because people do come for some of these little hometown kinds of activities. She supports approving the addition.

Mark Ilten, City Band Treasurer, stated he sympathizes with the budgetary constraints that hover over the discussion but he would like the committee to understand why we think the project is worthwhile and about timing. He stated that he does not think the project could be done before the band season this year, it is already middle of April and band season starts first week in June and sometimes things take awhile to get started. If the project was done in the fall, that would be fine, then it would be ready to go next year. The group should keep in mind that the bandshell has been there for over 25 years and there has not been any substantial maintenance done to it in all that time. It does provide a very valuable civic function, it is not just the City Band that uses it, although the City Band does have audiences of the neighborhood of 300-400 people on any given Wednesday night, but the bandshell is also used on the Friday night concert performances and the movies in the park. The Band tries to partner with the Library and the Riverfront Arts building to try to build the interest and he believes that a lot of things happen because the bandshell is there. The City Band is operated on a volunteer basis but we do have a budget. When you have volunteers, it is nice to make things as easy as possible for them. For years we had to bring drums back and forth between the University and the bandshell because the area at the bandshell is not secure so we cannot keep them there, so now, we just don't use them anymore. The type of project that is on the table now will help the City Band in it's performances and it will help Riverfront Rendezvous along with a lot of other people. If you look at it as a twenty five year investment and you figure out what your cost is and you figure out the number of people that it serves, I suspect that it would be minimal compared to a lot of other things we do, but it is true that it is not an emergency and it doesn't have to be done today but we certainly would like to see it done sooner than later.

Don Greene, conductor for the City Band since 1987, stated that he wasn't heavily involved in it but he believes that it was the Women's Club who initially raised funds for it and it has been twenty five years now. His concern is security. It was built as a bandshell for the Stevens Point City Band. The Parks Department found that it needed a place to store some of their equipment so the little bit of space that was there is really difficult to work with when you consider there are other materials in there. Two things that are a bigger problem than that are that it is used by these other bands that are brought in on Friday nights and our equipment is not secure and occasionally a few things disappear on us, for example, music stands and a few other things. He is also sympathetic towards the budget problem but this is a good service and investment.

Director Schrader stated that he believes we can get the majority of it done in a month and the contractors have said that too. There might be a point where we have to store some of the items temporarily but it would be more beneficial to start now rather than in the fall. If we do not do this in sixty days there is a chance that we will lose the bid. He would like to see it done now. The one or two times that we have to work around it in the spring would be better than waiting for the fall.

Mayor Wescott stated there is no reason to wait. He does not believe there will be anymore information in a couple of months than we have right now and he would ask that the committee would approve the request.

Ayes: Chairman Barr, Ald. Rackow and Molski Nays: Ald. Nealis and Phillips
Motion carried

7 - TRAFFIC ENHANCEMENT GRANT APPLICATION

Director Gardner gave a brief review of the projects.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice stated that although we are applying for the various grants, dependent on budget constraints, we do not have to accept any of the grants.

Ald. Sowieja stated that he is not always in favor of grants because they put pressure on for adding spending.

Motion made by Ald. Phillips, seconded by Ald. Nealis to approve the grant application.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

8 - UPDATE ON STATE BUDGET

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice gave a brief review of the current budget (attached).

Mayor Wescott stated there are many versions of the repair bill and that he and Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice have been meeting frequently and reviewing various options and when we find out what the exact problem is we will bring a solution to the committee.

9 - APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve the payment of claims in the amount of \$575,153.71.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Adjournment at 7:26 p.m.

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