

Meeting Minutes

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

JULY 12, 2000 AT 6:30 P.M.

CITY WATER DEPARTMENT Present: Chairman Barr, Ald. Niedbalski, Rackow, Phillips, and Pazdernik

Also Present: Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice; Mayor Wescott; Clerk Zdroik; Director Schrader; Ald. Kedrowski, Sevenich, Molski, and Seiser; Mike Jacquart (Stevens Point Journal); Mike Wimme; Curt Lindstrom;

Chris Seefeldt; Norm Barber; Michael Hurst; Walter Leppen; Pat Wesenberg; George Rogers; Dan Trainer; Lois Crawley; Gerry McKenna; John Jury; Joe Haydock; Frank O'Brien; Jaime Klasinski; Mark Cychosz; Jeff Peterson; Shelly Eckerson; Lynn Gorzlancyk; Greg Diemer; Timothy Grubba; Daniel Heck

ITEMS

1. Review and Possible Action on Room Tax Plan.

2. Adjournment.

ITEM #1

Chairman Barr stated that the items have already been through a lot of people along with the Room Tax Committee and the Board of Park Commissioners.

John Jury, Chairman of the Room Tax Committee, reviewed the recommended items that are in the packet. He stated that they started in September of last year and the first thing they looked at was whether the percentages were still working. The 10% previously allocated for Planned Maintenance was increased to 15%. The committee used six criteria to evaluate the projects and this year added an additional category which would include external funding. The committee recommended twelve projects to be funded either in part or in whole. Four projects were not funded at this time for various reasons. We also looked at short term borrowing to move forward with some projects and then repayment would be made from room tax funds.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Pazdernik to approve the action recommended by the Room Tax Committee and the Board of Park Commissioners.

Ald. Phillips would like to amend the motion to pull the sports complex and the train items.

Discussion was held by the committee on how they want to review the items tonight.

Ald Niedbalski, Barr and Phillips stated they could not support the list as presented.

Ayes: Ald. Rackow and Pazdernik Nays: Ald. Barr, Niedbalski and Phillips

Motion failed.

Ald. Rackow stated he would like to go item by item.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Niedbalski to approve:

Zenoff Park Improvements (estimated project cost \$70,000). We recommend a \$35,000 grant to the Stevens Point Softball Association to build several pavilions which would provide comfortable seating after games and during inclement weather. The Softball Association, having completely paid off its indebtedness for the development of the facility, will provide the other \$35,000.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Barr to approve:

2713 Project Phase I (estimated cost \$32,000). We recommend a grant of \$32,000 for the on-going renovation of our historic train.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Niedbalski to approve:

Conservation Hall of Fame (estimated cost \$98,000). We recommend a match of \$49,000 for the final exhibit at the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Barr to approve:

Bandshell Upgrades and Addition (estimated cost \$85,000). We recommend a \$50,000 grant for upgrades and an addition to the bandshell in Pioneer-Pfiffner Park. \$35,000 of external funds will complete this project.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve:

McDill Pond Harvester (estimated cost \$75,000). We recommend a \$75,000 expenditure for a second weed harvester. As with the original harvester, all labor is to be provided by the lake district members.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve:

Womens Locker Space in Willett (estimated cost \$120,000). We recommend a \$48,000 grant to help fund 40% of the cost of new locker space at Willett for women s hockey. Fundraising through the university will fund the other \$72,000.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve:

Green Circle Land/Easements and Safety Initiatives (estimated cost \$230,000). We recommend a \$100,000 grant for the purpose of securing long-term easements or the purchase of land associated with the Green Circle Trail. We further recommend that an additional \$50,000 be set aside for three years to match funds from other local governing bodies, private parties or state grants for this same purpose.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve:

Moses Creek Watershed Land (estimated cost \$130,000). We recommend a grant of \$40,000 to help secure the last lands contiguous to the Schmeckle Reserve. Nearly 35 acres are being sought. Much of the land surrounds the Moses Creek corridor. University students have committed \$25,000 which, when combined with this grant, will provide necessary funds to hopefully secure a state stewardship grant.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Barr to approve:

Expanded All Purpose Lodge near Winter Recreation Area in Iverson (estimated cost \$160,000). We recommend funding this project in full. The warming space at the winter recreation area is inadequate to handle the demand. This facility will also serve as an additional four season rental lodge.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Niedbalski to approve:

Portage County Leadership Institute Gazebo Project (estimated cost \$70,000). We recommend funding this project in full. This gazebo and the new crossings at the intersection of Business 51/Northpoint Drive will provide an excellent orientation and information source for thousands of visitors annually.

Ald. Phillips stated that this seems to be a lot of money for a Gazebo.

Director Schrader stated that it includes sidewalks, crosswalks, and trails.

Ald. Kedrowski stated that if sidewalks are going in front of businesses the cost should go to the property owner.

John Jury stated that there is not a lot of sidewalks, it would mostly be crosswalks across Business 51.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve:

Plover River Project (estimated cost \$230,000). We recommend setting aside \$100,000 for three years as a challenge grant to be matched 50/50 by other governmental entities. While we realize much of the Plover River corridor is outside city limits, we recognize the importance of protecting these unique lands and the quality of water which flows to and through our community.

George Rogers questioned what is considered matching funds; state, local or other.

John Jury stated that the Committees intention was that any type of external funds would be considered a match.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Pazdernik to approve:

Youth Sports Complex (estimated cost \$2.5 million; request \$400,000). We recommend a \$100,000 contribution to this effort, and we further recommend setting aside an additional \$150,000 during their fundraising period (but not later than February 1, 2001) to be matched 50/50 by other local governmental entities. Because of the problems inherent with providing funds for private ventures, we recommend the city attorney review this project for legality, liability, etc.

Ald. Rackow questioned whether Portage County counts as a local donor.

Chairman Barr responded yes.

Mike Wimpe, Steering Committee, read the attached letter from the Youth Sports Complex Committee.

Ald. Phillips asked if there was a long-term contract in which Portage County Youth on Ice would still purchase the same amount of ice time from the Willett Arena.

Committee members said yes.

Ald. Molski stated she received a number of calls against the project.

Ald. Niedbalski stated that he received more calls on the train than the complex . He stated that everyone knows the County is planning on developing a large County park which would include baseball and soccer fields. This project would be in competition with the County. The County Board will vote on this next Tuesday.

Michael Hurst questioned whether or not the County park would include an ice arena.

Ald. Niedbalski replied no.

Ald. Barr stated that there should be more dialog on this before it proceeds.

Curt Lindstrom stated that he has met with the County Board Chairman and the County was interested in collaboration.

Jamie Klasinski stated that the group is trying to address the immediate needs of the hockey program and both facilities are needed.

Lynn Gorzlancyk stated that 80% of her children s practices were at 5:30 a.m. or 9:30 p.m. More people would be interested in hockey if better practice times would be available.

Tim Grubba stated a lot of people are interested in donating their time and talents to get the project built. He has been volunteering many hours in the program but teams with three practices in two weeks cannot compete with those that practice three times per week.

Ald. Niedbalski asked, other than John Jury, how many other people were involved with the original Room Tax Committee. (Only a few hands went up) He further stated at that time we had promises of donations for the Willett Arena that did not come through and the City had to eat those promises, which is the reason the City was in the red with room tax for many years.

Mike Hurst stated he was involved with the initial lead survey that the Complex Committee did. A County Park Complex was approved by the **County Parks Committee last year but was given a low priority by the Portage County Finance Committee and wasn t funded. He feels that the County project will be done much further in the future rather than solving the need we have today.**

Ald. Rackow stated he had two calls on the complex and two on the locomotive, both in favor.

Dan Trainer stated that he heard a lot of things tonight that he didn t know existed. Concept was approved and the County would also be work with the school system on this.

Ald Phillips said that if the private sector develops a complex, then the County should not be using tax levy money to build another facility.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to deny the request:

Schmeeckle Reserve Community Center Addition (estimated cost \$190,000; request \$95,000). We do not recommend funding this project. While we understand the last exhibit of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame may render the existing meeting room non-usable, there is little support for a new, larger meeting room at this time.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Niedbalski to deny the request:

Bukolt Boat Launch Restrooms (estimated cost \$50,000). We do not recommend this project. There were concerns about esthetics of the riverfront, the recommended location of this facility and the interest/need for the project in general.

Ayes: Ald. Barr, Rackow, Pazdernik and Niedbalski Nays: Phillips
Motion carried.

Ald. Rackow stated that this project could be resurrected if funds become available in the future.

Motion made Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to deny the request:

Pfiffner Mill Building Second Story Project (estimated cost \$80,000). We do not recommend funding this project at this time. While the committee generally agrees that the 3500 square feet of riverfront real estate has value, there is some confusion over how the space would be used if not winterized. (Note: the Arts Council is very supportive of additional space on the riverfront, but it would need to be year around.)

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Pazdernik, seconded by Ald. Barr to deny the request:

2713 Phase II (estimated cost \$90,000). We do not recommend the storage building project for 2713 at this time. We recognize, however, the once the train is renovated, steps will have to be taken to protect it from deteriorating again.

Motion made by Ald. Niedbalski, seconded by Ald. Rackow to amend the motion to include that if funds are available in the amount of up to \$10,000 that it be made available for some type of protection.

John Jury stated the committee would be back to review the program in approximately three years.

Ald. Niedbalski stated that we approved Phase 1 for \$32,000 and we are now being asked for \$90,000 for the storage building. He agrees that once the train is fixed, it should be protected. You can put a roof over it for a few thousand.

Ald. Phillips stated that \$10,000 would not cover the cost of a roof. He moved to amend the motion to: Allocate \$50,000 from room tax with \$50,000 matching funds from other sources within a three year timetable.

No second to the motion.

Amendment to motion by Niedbalski and Rackow was withdrawn.

Ald. Barr stated the City is a winter recreation area and we should not hide it for six months.

Ald. Rackow stated that he dislikes putting \$32,000 into the locomotive and then place it in the same elements that caused it to deteriorate.

Ald. Kedrowski requested that the committee approve funding so that closure to this project is not so far out that interest is lost.

Norm Barbers stated that a roof alone would not protect the train and if you are going to spend money on a building, put walls on it. He stated that former Ald. Hoffman wanted to start a railroad park in this area. He further stated that this is a passenger train and never pulled a caboose.

Ald. Sevenich stated she received three calls/letters in favor of the building for 2713.

Ald. Kedrowski gave a complete report on all the work that has been done on 2713 to date. He stated that he has a letter signed by ten former engineers that stated that they are in favor of the building. He questioned how many calls and letters the Mayor received .

The Mayor replied that he received one email in favor.

Ald. Molski received calls and letters in favor of the project. She stated people feel it is a waste of money to fix up the train and not protect it.

Ald. Rackow stated it would not be fixed quickly and we will be back in three years but we need to protect it.

Mayor asked Ald. Kedrowski what timetable would be for Phase 1 of project.

Ald. Kedrowski responded that it could be done in 2001 within a couple of months. He stated that he realizes that since City funds are being expended on the train, specifications need to be drawn and the project bid out. He stated we need closure on the project.

Motion made by Ald. Niedbalski, seconded by Ald. Phillips to amend the motion that roofing for the engine should be a number one or high priority next time the room tax committee convenes.

Mayor Wescott reminded the Committee that they can not bind a future room tax committee or council to future expenditures, this is only a recommendation.

Ald. Kedrowski stated that he was denied funding five years ago from room tax funds. The committee kept working for restoration. The committee raised \$30,000 for repair and has set up \$2,600 for endowment funds for future upkeep.

There is no reason to build a gazebo at the entrance of the City where there are numerous empty buildings.

The train would help to bring tourism to this part of town and let people gain pride in the area. We need to spend more on local historic items. A building would mean more than just a train in the park. This would give us something to promote by having the ability to move it in and out of the storage building. Funding would allow closure to the project and it could be funded now by changing the plan to five years and five months.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Vote on original motion as amended.

Ayes: Ald. Rackow, Pazdernik, Niedbalski and Barr Nays: Phillips
Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Barr to approve the timing for funding room tax projects as listed in appendix D.

APPENDIX D

Recommended Timing on Room Tax Projects 2000-2004

Based on need, readiness and priority, we recommend the following order for the completion of the recommended proposals.

2000

Conservation Hall of Fame \$50,000
Zenoff Park Improvements \$35,000
Sports Complex \$100,000
McDill Pond Harvester \$25,000

2001

McDill Pond Harvester \$50,000
Gazebo Project \$70,000
2713 Phase I \$32,000
Bandshell Addition \$50,000
Sports Complex \$50,000

2002

All Purpose Lodge Addition (Iverson) \$160,000
Sports Complex \$100,000
Land Purchases or Easements any time after 2004

2003

Women s Locker Project \$48,000
Land Purchase and/or Interest

2004

Land Purchase and/or Interest

Final funding and timing decisions shall be made by staff with guidance from the Parks & Recreation Commission, the Stevens Point Finance Committee and the City Treasurer.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve the recommended room tax fiscal policy.

RECOMMENDED ROOM TAX FISCAL POLICY

We also choose to hold some of the funds in reserve because we may need to utilize short-term borrowing to complete some of the recommended projects. It is our intention not to pass on any costs of these projects to the taxpayers of Stevens Point. In the same vein, we recommend that interest generated on accrued room tax funds be returned to the room tax fund as a general policy in the future. In essence, this fund would become a separate profit and loss account.

We look forward to the opinions of the Stevens Point Park Board, the Stevens Point Finance Committee and the Stevens Point City Council as this process moves forward.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion made by Ald. Niedbalski, seconded by Ald. Rackow to approve the following percentage allocations.

15% to go towards Planned Maintenance. These funds will be used for major repairs and capital improvements to facilities that were built with Room Tax funds.

10% to go towards Special Events. These funds will be used as start-up/seed money to get special events up and running. A sub-committee will solicit requests through an application process.

10% to go towards the Arts. This percentage will be split in two; 5% will be put into the endowment and 5% will go towards the operation of the Arts Center and grants given out through an application process, to arts related activities.

65% to go towards Major Projects.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

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Adjournment at 7:28 P.M.

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