

Meeting Minutes  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MAY 10, 1999 AT 7:21 P.M.  
PORTAGE COUNTY ANNEX BUILDING  
PRESENT: Chairman Barr, Ald. Niedbalski, Rackow, Phillips, and Pazdernik

ALSO PRESENT: Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice; Mayor Wescott; City Attorney Molepske; Clerk Zdroik; Directors Van Alstine, Gardner, Schrader; Assessor Kuehn; Administrator Disher; Chiefs Ugorek, Carpenter; Capt. Daubert; Ald. Nealis, Kedrowski, Walther, Perlak, Aldinger, Sevenich; Susan Kampmeier; Scott Krueger, Reid Rocheleau

#### ITEMS

1. Assessor's Report.
2. Proposal to Audit Forms 1240 and 1205 - Marcus Cable.
3. Request for Funding - Polish Sister City Committee.
4. 1998 Budget Return to Departments.
5. Authorization Request to Reverse Furnace Air Flow at Fire Station #2.
6. Wireless Network Proposal
7. Weed Harvester Maintenance Costs.
8. Charge Back of Water Service - Wells Marina.
9. Approval of Payment of Claims.
10. Adjournment.

#### ITEM #1 - ASSESSOR'S REPORT

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

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Back to Top

#### ITEM #2 - PROPOSAL TO AUDIT FORMS 1240 AND 1205-MARCUS CABLE

Mayor Wescott stated that Marcus Cable is now Charter Communications. He stated that due to this being a highly specialized auditing requirement, we are requesting to allocate up to \$6,800 so we can retain a professional communications auditor. There has been a considerable dialog over the growing rates and how quickly they have escalated the cable rates in the City of Stevens Point. In comparing, the City has seen almost a 30% increase in cable service since from July of 1995. By law the City is entitled to review the complicated forms that are prepared by Charter Communications and are submitted to the Federal Communications Commission asking for the rate increase. He stated we have never exercised our legal right to audit the books of Charter Communications. We are asking for an allocation of up to \$6,800 to proceed with the creating of the request for proposal and to retain a communications auditor to look at their books to see if their rate increase has been justified.

Ald. Rackow added that, as Chair of the Telecommunications Commission, the fact that we approve the audit will not affect the bills to the subscribers of the City, at least immediately. The mechanics are that the Cable Company will proceed with their course and if the audit should say that the cost is a little high or a little low, they will make a subsequent adjustments to the bills.

Motion made by Ald. Niedbalski, seconded by Ald. Rackow to allow up to \$6,800 to audit the cable company.

Ald. Niedbalski stated that he feels that it is appropriate at this time during negotiations to find out if, in fact, these rate increases that we have received are warranted.

Mayor Wescott reminded the residents of the City that the ability of the Federal Communications Commission to regulate cable television rates have sunset. There are no federal laws that regulate the price of the cable television for cable service beyond basic service. He stated that even if the City would prevail in the audit, and the auditor shows that they are charging more than they should on the basic tier, there is nothing that prevents Charter Communications from moving it to a level of unregulated cable service. In the past four years we have seen almost a 30% increase in cable television rates in the City of Stevens Point and we should periodically exercise our right to see what they are doing and how they are justifying it.

Chairman Barr stated that his impression was that they don't need any justification since the deregulation, that they can just do what they want.

Ald. Rackow agreed, stating all they basically have to do is fulfill the requirements of the FCC forms.

Ald. Kedrowski questioned where the money would come from and questioned when we can expect results.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice replied it would come from the contingency fund.

Mayor Wescott replied the audit will take about six months.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Back to Top

#### ITEM #3 - REQUEST FOR FUNDING - POLISH SISTER CITY COMMITTEE

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Niedbalski to approve the request for funding in the amount of \$107.50 for the Sister City Project.

Ald. Niedbalski asked if the money would be taken from contingency.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice replied that it would come out of miscellaneous expense.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.  
Back to Top

#### ITEM #4 - 1998 BUDGET RETURN TO THE DEPARTMENTS

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice explained that we have typically given half of the remaining expenditure money back to the Departments, but with the change over of computers, remodeling and a variety of other things, he feels 100% return is warranted. We are finding out that some printers are not compatible with the new hardware, and there are needs for changing furniture with the remodeling, and there are items that Departments could use to upgrade their environment. What we are proposing is a one time return of 100% and there would be nothing that says we would do it again in the future. Any of the requests would require a written copy of what the request is for and then the Mayor and the Comptroller-Treasurer would go over it and give them approval or denial.

Chairman Barr commented that his opinion is that by approving this we are indicating our support and our confidence to our Department Heads.

Ald. Niedbalski questioned whether we are creating an ordinance that will repeat itself after this year or is it a one time deal.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice replied that this is a one-time request for 100%. This is about the third year of this program where we have been returning funds to our Departments, part of the thinking on that is so that they don't go out on December 29 and see what they can buy just to use up the funds. Typically the return depends on the overall shape of the City for the fiscal year, if our revenues keep coming in as we budget, our expenditures are down, and our fund balance is at an acceptable level, these things are taken into consideration before we bring in a recommendation.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Pazdernik to approve the recommendation for return of 1998 budget money.

Ald. Rackow commented that in the first year or two, we didn't send money back to the Fire Department because they over expended their overtime budget and so it seems this one time policy should be all right.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice explained that this is going to be the second year where the entire amount Police Department funds are going, at the Police Departments recommendation, to fund the unfunded overtime account they used in prior years, they have now gotten a handle on it.

Ald. Niedbalski stated this is something that changes from time to time and should be reviewed every year.

Ald. Pazdernik stated that since some of the amounts that are coming back are large amounts, if a Department wants to buy an expensive item, it should come before the Committee and not just get approved by a couple of people.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice explained that what you have to look at when looking at the dollar amounts is the overall percentage of their budget. \$95,000 on a \$3.5 million dollar budget is probably the same as a \$2,000 on a \$246,000 budget.

Ald. Pazdernik stated that anything over \$2,000 should come to Finance Committee.

Chairman Barr stated that the budget had already been approved by the Finance Committee, what is being asked is permission to extend the extra back to the Departments.

Ald. Pazdernik stated now if they wanted to put something in the budget for \$20,000, it has to go to the Finance Committee, so we need to keep that control.

Chairman Barr stated that it already does.

Ald. Pazdernik stated if this money goes back to them, technically they could spent \$20,000 on something and we would not see it.

Ald. Phillips questioned the situation with the Police or Fire Department and their returns.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice explained that the Fire Department will not get anything back this year and the Police Department is \$94,000 and that money is going back in against the unfunded overtime. Their return money was mostly wages and part of it was created because they had some open positions this past year. The money is used to pay off some previous accrued time.

Ald. Pazdernik made an amendment to the previous motion that any single item over \$2,000 should come to the Finance Committee.

Motion died due to lack of second.

Mayor Wescott stated that Ald. Pazdernik had a good concern but those controls already exist. He stated that the committee has already approved the 1998 budget. All of those dollars have been approved by the Finance Committee and by the City Council. What the City has in place is a system that creates a good business incentive not to spend all of the money at the end of the year. If we return the money to the division and say you have done a very good job in your division this year and as a reward for excellence in management, here is the money that the Finance Committee has authorized returned to you. You form a recommendation on how to spend it internally and work with the Comptroller's office and the Mayor's office for how the money will now be spent.

Ald. Pazdernik stated that if they did a good enough job on their budget they should not have this money coming back. If they are purchasing a large item just because they didn't spend all their budgeted money, it is not right.

Mayor Wescott responded the only thing that is being dealt with that is that large is the Police account and that is all going to the unfunded overtime/comp/vacation time. He stated by doing what is being proposed, you are in danger of creating more bureaucracy by saying that we have a system where we review requests to spend money, then go a whole year and when some of that money is left because of a good job in the division it gets reviewed again. We simply have to trust in the administration of the City.

Chairman Barr explained in that in the past when funds have been returned, there was not a procedure like the one being proposed in place.

Director Van Alstine commented as being the recipient of the largest sum of budget money, the greatest majority of what we get back is going to

go to the Street Repair Program.

Ald. Pazdernik replied he has no problem giving the money back he just thinks some control is needed over where it is going.

Ald. Kedrowski stated that in past years they got half the money back and the other half went into the general fund, which could be used for anything. He questioned whether any of the rollover money was used in this years budget.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice replied it was not, and the audit report will show where we came in over all.

Ald. Kedrowski stated that he has some of the same concerns that Ald. Pazdernik has. He is all in favor of returning the 100%, but a report should be run past the Committee to see what it went for. He feels that part of their jobs is checks and balances to see what is going on.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice stated that the Committee reviews the expenditures each month as part of the claims review.

Ald. Pazdernik made an amendment to his motion, seconded by Ald. Phillips that any single item over \$5,000 should come before the Finance Committee.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice questioned whether the \$5,000 item would come prior to expenditure or just of report of.

Ald. Pazdernik replied it would be prior to.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice commented an expenditure could be delayed by sixty days by doing it that way, which may cause a problem with season changes such as the case with Director Van Alstine's department.

Ald. Niedbalski commented that we have been doing this on a fifty percent basis and we haven't had any problems. We have a system that works and will vote against amendment.

Ald. Phillips stated the reason he seconded the motion was if an item, like an air boat, was purchased for \$5,000, he felt that should be approved by the committee.

Mayor Wescott commented the management team for the City has a strong proven business performance, we are not out there approving frivolous requests. He stated he believes what is going to be created is a real bureaucratic tangle work, causing a real problem for department heads by having to wait sixty to ninety days for an item that is needed and the funds have already been approved by this committee. We need to reduce the bureaucracy and red tape that tie people up and slow down the process. He stated that you have to have faith in the leadership of the City.

Chairman Barr stated the surplus is a sign of good management and hours were already spent approving the budget.

Ald. Phillips questioned why we could give \$6,800 for the Telecommunications problem and questioned if that isn't going to be done anymore.

Mayor Wescott replied that the request was made from unbudgeted money so we could do the audit.

Ald. Phillips questioned whether the money in discussion was unfunded/unbudgeted money.

Mayor Wescott replied that it was not, it was budgeted money.

Ald. Aldinger commented that she supported Chairman Barr's position.

Chairman Barr stated the amended motion was to have prior approval for any item over \$5,000.

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

Motion defeated.

Main motion was placed back on floor, made by Ald. Niedbalski, seconded by Ald. Pazdernik to accept the 100% budget returns to the departments.

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

Motion carried.

Back to Top

#### ITEM # 5 - AUTHORIZATION REQUEST TO REVERSE FURNACE AIR FLOW AT STATION #2

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice explained a few months ago authorization was received from Finance and Council to replace the furnaces at Fire Station #2. While installing the new furnaces the contractor noticed that the original design was not effective and wants to reverse the flow.

Director Van Alstine explained the original design put the hot air coming into the room at ceiling level instead of floor level making the ceilings hot and the floors cold. The intent is to make the hot air come in at floor level.

Ald. Niedbalski commented he hoped we do not have the same contractor that installed the original design doing it now and requested an opinion from Ald. Phillips.

Ald. Phillips questioned what the effect would be on the air conditioning.

Chief Ugorek replied the contractor stated there would be no problem. The hot air would be taken off the ceiling and the cold air would come out of the floor. The original design was a hot water boiler system with an explosion proof room. When bids came in for that building, the bids were too

high and they had to go back and re-spec everything and it was re-specified as a hot air system, no longer a boiler system. They had the okay for explosion proof room, but they only put in a hot air system rather than a boiler system. When they did that they put the hot air coming in at ceiling level, the floor was a concrete floor and was extremely cold in the winter time. The contractor suggested that we reverse that and use the cold air ducts for the hot air now and use the old hot air ducts for the return air.

Chairman Barr questioned if the cost was \$871.00.

Comptroller-Treasurer replied that it was.

Ald. Phillips commented his problem with that is return air ducts are designed differently than supply air ducts.

Chief Ugorek replied that was the reason for the \$871.00, to make the return ducts compatible for hot air.

Ald. Phillips questioned if they were putting in turning veins and all the other equipment that was needed.

Chief Ugorek commented he has not seen any particulars on it but believes the contractor knows what he is doing.

Ald. Phillips stated he cannot believe it, therefore he will vote against it.

Motion made by Ald. Phillips to turn down request and keep it the same way it is and put in circulating fans.

Motion died due to lack of second.

Ald. Niedbalski replied there is a problem we have to get through, but he shares Ald. Phillips concerns about particulars, is it feasible and will it work. He questioned if there is time to look and talk to other contractors and questioned if this is the same contractor that did the original installation.

Director Van Alstine replied it was not and we could hire a heating engineer and do a regular heat design and come back to you with a cost, but we are looking at \$3,000-\$5,000 to hire a heating engineer to do the study.

Ald. Niedbalski commented that he wanted to make sure the problem was corrected.

Motion made by Ald. Phillips, seconded by Ald. Pazdernik to approve the expenditure in the amount of \$871.00 for reversing the air flow at Fire Station #2.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Back to Top

#### ITEM #6 - WIRELESS NETWORK PROPOSAL

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice stated that we have a definite communication problem between outlying departments. We currently use the I-net and the cable company has been unable to correct the problems. We have departments that are not able to link up to our financial system for as long as two to three days at a time. He stated he has been reviewing the problem and has been looking into a hook up with UWSP for the past couple of years. This solution will give us an alternative to the current communication system and will solve our current problem. In case of future upgrades we have been told by UWSP that we would receive 100% trade in for our current apparatus. This proposal will give us complete control of our communication needs between departments. The attachment shows a breakup of cost and a review of the complete program. UWSP will assist in installation and future maintenance at no cost to the City. An added benefit to the system would be that we would have Internet access. A number of departments in the State of Wisconsin are doing most of their communications and report filing through the Internet. Funding would be taken from the contingency account.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Niedbalski to approve the proposal as presented.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Back to Top

#### ITEM #7 - WEED HARVESTER MAINTENANCE COSTS

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice explained that a request came in from the McDill Lake Association. In the past they have been paying for the maintenance costs for the weed harvester. The City residents own a lot of the land around the McDill Pond, which is why the harvester was funded with room tax, grants, and Association money. The Association is putting in extra money for improvements around the pond and they are asking for a contribution toward improving the pond by taking over the actual cost of the maintenance of the harvester. Actual cost to the City, since wages and fringes are already budgeted, would be about \$1,000 per year. If approved, recommendation would be that charges would come out of the Planned Maintenance in the Room Tax account, as we have taken other maintenance expenses that have been funded by room tax in the past.

Ald. Niedbalski questioned if the request is perpetual.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice stated he believes it is perpetual.

Chairman Barr explained that it is his understanding that maintenance for equipment purchased with room tax dollars was funded by room tax dollars. There is a provision for this under the 10% maintenance part of the room tax dollars. The weed harvester was excluded from it and we are now asking that it be included like the zamboni and the track.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice stated the Planned Maintenance account is in the black.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to approve the request to fund the maintenance costs of the weed harvester.

Ald. Rackow stated for some reason in 1996 and 1997, there is zero noted for gas and oil, how was that managed.

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice responded that was purchased directly from the Standard Station, they have a credit card account. He believes the oil is for special oil needed for the harvester.

Chairman Barr explained it was biodegradable in case there would be a spill.

Ald. Niedbalski stated that since it was out of room tax maintenance, he would not oppose it.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Back to Top

#### ITEM #8 - CHARGE BACK OF WATER SERVICE- WELLS MARINA

Comptroller-Treasurer Schlice explained the reason this is before the committee is because last month the council said we would charge the cost of installation back to people who rent boat slips and it was not totally clear how it was to implemented or whether or not it would be a special charge.

Motion made by Ald. Rackow, seconded by Ald. Phillips to charge \$50 to all boat slip owners as a surcharge and half of it be charged in the next billing season and the other half the following season.

Ald. Kedrowski stated he rents a boat slip, and it was never clear at any of those meetings what exactly we were getting. He got the impression that there would be a bubbler/spigot by the walking path by the boat landing and that there would be a couple of spigots where the boats are. There is electricity there that a boat owner could use if they paid the price, would this work the same way. He questions since they are paying for it, will they all get a spigot.

Director Schrader stated that the request said it would be one spigot and each owner would have a hose to transport the water to their boats or they could carry the water from the spigot to their boats. He would not recommend putting the bubbler there because it is not going to be cold water and anyone walking along the path might think it is and be in for a surprise.

Ald. Kedrowski asked how many spigots.

Director Schrader replied there would be one.

Ald. Kedrowski commented he thinks everyone was confused on what they were voting on the first time because that is a lot of money for one spigot for the entire area.

Ald. Nealis commented we could put more in but it would cost more money.

Ald. Phillips questioned what the distance is from the first dock to the last dock.

Director Schrader replied 150-200 feet.

Ald. Phillips stated there would be a hundred foot hose that would go one way and another hundred foot hose that would go the other way. He questioned if it is one spigot then only one person can use it at a time, then that is wrong, we need more spigots.

Director Schrader explained that from talking to other boaters, you are not going to have ten people at once wanting water. The cost difference if you want to put two or three more spigots would be the cost of running a pipe to another spigot. The initial \$800 is for the service installation and the other \$200-\$300 is for the spigot and other needed parts.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Back to Top

#### ITEM #9 - APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF CLAIMS

The claims were discussed.

Motion made by Ald. Phillips, seconded by Ald. Rackow to accept the payment of claims in the amount of \$326,057.23.

Ayes: All Nays: None Motion carried.

Adjournment at 8:15 P.M.

The meeting minutes reproduced on this website are derived from the computer files used to produce the official minutes for the City of Stevens Point, but are unofficial. The minutes on this web site cannot be certified under s. 889.08, Wis. Stats., and cannot be considered prima facie evidence under s. 889.04, Wis. Stats. Certain tables, maps, and other documents that are a part of the official minutes are not included in the files reproduced on this website. Please consult the printed minutes, available in the City Clerk's Office, for the official text. The decisions made by City of Stevens Point boards, committees, and commissions (other than the Police & Fire Commission) are advisory only and are not binding on the City until affirmed at a meeting of the Common Council. Some of the minutes on this web site might not be approved by the Common Council as of today.