

MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE
INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL AND MAPLE PLAIN CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2015 –7:00 AM

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a joint meeting of the Independence City Council and Maple Plain City Council was called to order by Mayor Johnson at 7:00 a.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mayor Johnson led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Independence Mayor Johnson and Councilors Betts, Fisher Wenck, Spencer. Maple Plain Councilors Eisenger, McCoy, DeLuca and Maas-Kusske.

ABSENT: Maple Plain Mayor Young

STAFF: Independence City Administrator Hirsch, Independence City Attorney Vose and Office Staff Horner and Bemmels. Maple Plain City Administrator Melvin and WHPS Director Kroells

VISITORS: Gary Weiers (David Drown Associates), LuAnn Brunno, Ed Pluth

4. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion by Eisenger, second by Betts to adopt the agenda. Ayes: Johnson, Betts, Fisher, Wenck, Spencer, Eisenger, McCoy, DeLuca and Maas-Kusske. Nays: None. Absent: Young. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

5. SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

Weiers stated he wanted to commend both cities on working together so impressively on shared services already in place. He said he has used Independence and Maple Plain as a model in showing other cities how they may potentially be able to work together. Weiers stated that the shared newsletter has been a positive step for the cities. He said the report he will be presenting outlines the potential to combine Administrative functions and Public Works for the cities.

Weiers stated individuals employed from both cities were interviewed and are listed in the handout. He emphasized the comments are summaries and not direct quotes. He said that overall the sentiment from the interviews was positive for combining some services.

Weiers stated the second part of the analysis involved examining the financial status and where there may possibly an opportunity to save money.

Weiers stated there are two locations within two miles of each other and both are modern, functional buildings. There are 10.5 FTE's between the two cities currently. The building official in Independence is a full-time staff member and Maple Plain contracts with a building official. Weiers said the Independence Public Works department has a fantastic, state-of-the-art facility and a full-time Director with two staff members. The building official in Independence also assists the Public Works department in times of need with snow removal, etc. Maple Plain has an adequate facility and two staff members.

Weiers stated law enforcement has done a quality job of straddling the needs of two different communities and this is another example of how services may be shared effectively. He said the major conclusion, in his opinion, is that there is the potential for more shared services between the cities.

Weiers said his first and most radical recommendation would be to merge the administrative and public works functions. He recommends a staff reduction going from two administrators to one. He also recommends one location to serve as the office for both cities. He recommends keeping the combined Public Works Departments in the Independence facility. Weiers recommends keeping the Building Official employed by Independence and having that person cover the currently contracted position in Maple Plain. Weiers recommends a Joint Powers Board to govern the new model. Weiers said he is not looking at full merger at this time. He stated it would be beneficial to start moving down the line towards that by combining the administrative functions and Public Works. He said there would be pros and cons to a total consolidation and that should be looked at separately. Weiers said public relations could be enhanced to educate and promote the city and all the work that goes on behind the scene.

Weiers stated the next steps would involve gathering public input over the summer. He noted that he did not factor in the costs associated with formalizing a shared services agreement which would involve outside counsel and can be very labor intensive.

Weiers opened up the discussion for any questions from those present. Vose asked how critical it would be to coordinate the location of the joint powers meetings with the council meetings. Weiers stated that it would ideally be in the same location. Vose also asked if Weiers would be suggesting any changes to Police and Fire at this time or ever and how they work under the Joint Powers Agreement. Weiers said not initially but there could be further conversations.

Johnson noted that there were no comments on the Planner position that currently works for both cities. Weiers said this is another great example of how the cities work together effectively. Johnson stated that \$150,000 in savings does not seem like a lot of money considering the magnitude of this whole discussion. Weiers said he is very cautious when making estimated on savings. He said there are a lot of steps in the process before realizing any savings.

DeLuca said that this is being looked at to see if we can improve services and share costs. He stated that these both do not have to be realized and it could still make sense to do a shared services arrangement. DeLuca asked if the staff recommendation is doable or would this model cut too deeply. Weiers stated it is doable contingent on using one common facility.

Spencer stated one of the more promising aspects of this proposal is the Public Works recommendation. He asked if Weiers is recommending blending the Public Works department as it is and maintaining the staff numbers. Weiers stated he is recommending one Director but a reduction in other staff when combined. He recommends going from 5 FTE's to 4.

McCoy asked how the new staffing model would be deployed and what recommendations Weiers would have for that. Weiers stated he is not giving specifics but rather a model and some of the staffing changes would need to involve legal counsel. McCoy asked if the recommendations were all or nothing changes or could they make changes to Public Works and not Administration or vice versa. Weiers stated it was an all or nothing recommendation.

Brenno stated that sharing services adds a great degree of complexity compared to the cost savings. Brenno said it looks like a merger and if that is the ultimate goal than why not pursue it as that? Brunno said public

hearing over the summer would not be a good representation as people are gone on vacation and at their cabins, etc. She suggested a hearing would be better in late summer or early fall.

Johnson said he envisions this as something each Council needs to meet on separately for discussion before it would be presented to the public. Weiers said that would be up the mayor but he feels the appetite is already there and his recommendation would be to move forward with public hearings.

Betts asked if it would make sense to have Public Works report to the Joint Council instead. Weiers said he did not recommend that. He said he believes the best supervisors are individuals not groups.

Fisher stated he thought they should have individual council discussions and then a joint discussion after that. DeLuca agreed with Fisher and suggested scheduling a joint meeting a month out so they would have time to have a couple separate meetings prior to that meeting.

Johnson said he would like to wait to schedule a meeting after both councils are ready and have had a chance to meet separately.

5. COUNCIL UPDATE

A. Resurfacing Budd Street

Johnson talked about Independence Road Maintenance program and that bids are currently being submitted to resurface some roads. He asked if Maple Plain would be interested in resurfacing Budd Street as that is one of the roads that will be done on the Independence side. He asked Melvin of Maple Plain if they had received the information and what their thoughts were. Melvin said they did receive the information but they have some questions and concerns they want addressed first.

McCoy asked how far on Budd the current bids coming in would be covering. Spencer said he has been working with Ende on this and rather than fixing just our side down one half of the road they determined to do both sides to a halfway mark to keep it even.

Eisenger said they have a 5 year plan that includes curb and gutter maintenance. He said he would like to see Budd Street done sooner than later.

Spencer stated Independence is going to carve out sections that need it the most whereas the Maple Plain plan sounds much more intensive. He said that Independence will essentially be doing a mill and overlay project.

Wenck stated it would be 320' of shared road and the cost to Maple Plain would be \$45,000. He said he gave this information to Melvin awhile back.

B. Electronic Sign

Melvin asked if Independence would be interested in paying for a portion of an electronic sign Maple Plain was purchasing to be located at the Fire Station on Highway 12. She said Independence could use the sign for messaging.

Betts asked how much the sign would cost. Melvin said they are moving forward with the purchase and the cost is \$60,000. Johnson said it would have to be added to the agenda for the next Council meeting.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Wenck asked for an update on the Festival planning. Melvin said the planning is going well and it is still planned for August 14th and 15th. Spencer asked if they selected a name for the festival from the entries. Melvin said it is Maple Plain Days for now.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by DeLuca, second by Spencer to adjourn the Joint Council Meeting at 7:50a.m. Ayes: Johnson, Betts, Fisher, Spencer, Eisinger, McCoy, DeLuca, Maas-Kusske. Nays: None. Absent: Young. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Bemmels, Recording Secretary