

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING AND WORK SESSION OF THE  
INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023 – 7:00 AM.  
(WHPS Conference Room)

1. CALL TO ORDER.

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

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Johnson, Councilors Spencer, Betts, McCoy

ABSENT: Grotting

STAFF: City Administrator Kaltsas, Administrative Services Director Simon, Public Works Supervisor Bode

VISITORS: WHPS Chief Kroells, WHPS Sergeant Dennison

3. Pioneer Park Master Plan

Kaltsas discussed that the applications for the HC Youth Sports Grant is due by Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>. He said after talking with HC and looking at the costs, the city would like to start designing a long-range vision for Pioneer Park. The city has met with Orono Softball/Baseball and they would like to see a clover leaf or a 4 field complex for tournaments. In order to provide these fields, we would have to push the entrance about 50ft to the North. It would not impact the entrance off of County Road 90. The park would need significant parking to accommodate these fields (roughly 200 parking stalls). Orono is in the process of fundraising for this right now and they are looking to bring in a combined amount of \$2m. The city would not be able to cover those funds ahead of time and HC will not allow us to use unraised/pledged funds so we can do these fields in the future once we receive these funds. For now, the city is proposing the road project with parking, four pickleball courts and two multi-purpose fields.

The cost is \$1.3m, but \$1m of that is in hard costs. The \$300k in soft costs include fees that the city could potentially bring down. The grant is for \$300k, down \$200k from last year. The city is considering going in with an application for \$280k.

Betts asked if a lot of trees need to come down when the road is shifted.

Kaltsas said there will be about a dozen.

Johnson asked about dredging the wetlands and making a skating area there.

Kaltsas said you could do that. There are many years that there is plenty of water there and some years there isn't. He said Hockey has reached out twice and they would love to have something there, but the city does not have the staff to do this kind of maintenance, supervision and water trucks. There will be another development that will have park dedication that could help support the costs of this in the future potentially.

Johnson said the resolution states that we would be responsible for the maintenance. He asked if that would include the ball fields.

Kaltsas said that is just for the multi-purpose fields such as mowing and spraying for weeds. He said there isn't any nets accounted for in the money. Orono Westonka would have to provide their own.

Betts asked if there is still room for the walking path.

Kaltsas said yes.

Chief Kroells said the back half of the park is where most kids mess around. He said they have been trying to watch it closely. He asked if there is anything the city can do predesigned to stop the kids from ruining those fields. He asked about gates and fencing that would keep them out.

Kaltsas said he thought about putting a gate out in the front that shuts at 10pm. There will be a license plate reader going up very soon in the park since there was just damage done about a month ago.

McCoy said he would be in favor of a curb to keep people off the north side from the parking. Parking is always short when there are tournaments and people tend to park wherever.

Spencer asked if there was any noise screening with pickleball from the neighborhood to the North. He said they do have sound dampening that the city could add to one side.

McCoy mentioned putting the pickleball courts on the South side of the large parking lot to move it further away from the neighborhood.

Kaltsas said the city is not proposing lighting so it wouldn't be outside of ordinance hours. The trees will also help with the sound barrier. He is waiting on Bolton Menk to give detailed scope of cost to show HC.

Johnson asked if this grant is once or twice a year.

Kaltsas said the facility grant is once a year. The DNR has a good park grant as well that the city could start to look into. It is broader. He said the city could also do their own too. He said they will try to use as much of the existing road as possible.

- a. **RESOLUTION 2023-1012-01** – Considering Approval of the Application for a Hennepin County Youth Sports Grant.

**Motion by Spencer, seconded by Betts to approve the Application for a Hennepin County Youth Sports Grant. Ayes: Johnson, McCoy, Spencer, and Betts. Nays: None. Absent: Grotting. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 4-0**

#### 4. Fire District Update

Kaltsas said that Maple Plain would like to have a joint meeting to discuss fire. He said he would really like to have some numbers to look comparing the option to join with West Suburban and to stay independent of West Suburban. He said he needs Jeff to take market evaluation and call data to plug into the spreadsheet.

He said he is looking to see what the tax impact would be if we went to a taxing district. Jeff does not include the \$20m station in Loretto. Maple Plain would need a \$10m station.

Johnson asked if Loretto purchased land somewhere.

McCoy said yes by Chippewa.

Betts asked where MP would put a station.

Kaltsas said in the same location. Kaltsas said it would be about 2 more weeks before he could get numbers back and out to MP and Independence Council. He said he wants to look at the best way to provide fire services to the residents long term. He said the city has set a meeting with the state auditor and PERA to talk about the fire issues. He has not seen a date set yet.

McCoy said that they will also include the person that does the special legislation if anything would have to be done, it would take place next legislation.

Kaltsas said we do have the public safety aid money coming in December. He said the city has not talked about that money yet. The city will get \$166k. On a percentage basis, Independence spends 29% on fire and 71% on police. We would have about \$117k to WHPS and reminder would go to fire. Kroells said he took each city's budget on what they pay for police and fire which is percentage based and proposed the same percentage. You have to use this money for police and fire. He also stated that WHPS is looking for part time officers that was not proposed for 2024 or a part time SCO. This could be used to get us through the next 3-4 years. We are very understaffed compared to the police departments around us.

5. Open/Misc.

Kaltsas stated that we switched our November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting date to November 6<sup>th</sup> a while back because it was election night. We also have a meeting scheduled on the week of Thanksgiving. He asked if we split the difference and have both meetings on Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> instead. We have delinquent sewer bills that we will need to do at the council meeting that we can approve at the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

We could potentially have a joint meeting with Maple Plain on the 6<sup>th</sup> or the 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion by Betts, seconded by McCoy to change the CC meetings scheduled for November 6<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> to November 14<sup>th</sup>. Ayes: Johnson, McCoy, Spencer, and Betts. Nays: None. Absent: Grotting. Abstain. None. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED. 4-0**

6. Adjourn

**Motion by Spencer, seconded by McCoy to adjourn the meeting at 8:09am.**

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Respectfully Submitted,  
Amber Simon/ Recording Secretary