

**THE MINUTES OF THE RETREAT OF THE
HIBBING CITY COUNCIL**

April 20, 2010

TIME AND PLACE: A retreat of the Hibbing City Council was held on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at the Range Regional Airport Conference Room.

ATTENDANCE: Present at roll call: Mayor Rick Wolff, Clerk Patrick L. Garrity, Councilor Tim Harkonen, Councilor Darby Sater, Councilor Patty Shafer, Councilor Frank Bigelow, and Councilor Jack Lund. Also present were Police Chief Duane Gielen, City Administrator Brian Redshaw, Finance Director Sherri A. Renskers, and Administrative Council Assistant Sharon Ross.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Wolff called the retreat to order at 6:00 p.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Mayor Wolff noted that the agenda of discussion items is quite lengthy but we will try to keep to the scheduled 2 hours and what isn't covered will go on the next month's retreat agenda.

A. **Receive a Status Review of Each of the Items from the minutes and Memo of Retreat Discussions of March 24th.** Mr. Redshaw had given the Council a memo dated March 25th that summarized the items discussed on March 24th that would be reviewed as items to reduce the \$619,123 Budget Deficit for 2010. The following is a status update on those items.

- **Item 1 HPUC Agreement:** A meeting is scheduled for Thursday April 22nd with Jason Fischer, Brian Redshaw, Clerk Garrity, one of the PUC Commissioners to discuss.

- **Item 2 Budget Efficiencies:** Mr. Redshaw asked for an update on being able to fine tune that number of approximately \$50,000 that could be applied to the budget deficit. Mrs. Renskers replied that she is still fairly confident that the number is close to that figure but is unable to finalize that response due to the amount of work preparation with the Auditor coming tomorrow.

- **Item 3 Police Officer Reduction:** The budget for 2010 had the police department staffing at 30 sworn police officers. The department could function with 29 officers so will create an annual savings of \$66,000. The hiring of 2 – 3 officers to bring the department up to 29 is in the process.

- **Item 4 Administrative Aid & Records Coordinator:** Chief Gielen supplied the Council with supporting documentation regarding the need for the department's administrative aid position. Chief Gielen also supplied documents on the process for hiring in the HPD along with the job descriptions of two of the support staff that the Police Commission has revised to include the responsibilities that were covered by the Administrative Aid/Records Coordinator. Chief Gielen stated that the Police Department lives and breathes on information and without that ability to record and pass information properly it is useless.

Chief Gielen reported one of the cuts in services will be that typed transcripts will no longer be able to be provided to the prosecuting attorneys. Also, the at-home transcription will no longer be needed as of May 1st which will be an additional cost savings of \$1,200 per month.

Discussion held on the process for parking tickets and the pro's and con's. The structure of processing parking tickets takes up a lot of time. Discussion held on the possibility of eliminating parking tickets or contracting them out. Chief Gielen mentioned that he had checked into other police departments in cities with similar population as Hibbing and with the same number of officers they have 5 support/clerical staff.

The noted cost saving for the department also had taken the officers in the budget from 30 to 29 officers. The Chief had been given authorization from the Council to hire 2 -3 patrol officers to bring the staffing up to 29, which is still accurate. The first hired patrol officer won't be in place until May 1st, then within the next two months an additional name will be provided for consideration of employment. Cost savings for the department per officer per month is \$5,500. The budget had 30 officers, reduced by one (29 officers) is a \$66,000 savings plus an additional \$5,500 per month per officer until the staffing level is met.

Overtime this year as of April is 8.1% over and by adding another officer the overtime should decrease. As a note of time frames for orientation, the officer hired in November just went out on a crew on April 10th. Another process reviewed relating to overtime was the time spent on background investigations but steps have been made to expand the hours of the background checks and to provide better staff coverage. Also the school resource officer might be able to fill in during vacation times and assist the community police officer. The school resource officer doesn't take time off during the school year but takes it while the schools are in summer vacation.

Question was raised about the Deputy Chief. Discussions included coverage of internal investigations and how those are being covered without the Deputy Chief position. At this time there are two scenarios: what would it cost to fill the position and what would it cost to not to fill the position. No consensus to fill the deputy chief position at this time.

- **Item 5 Seasonal / Casual Employees:** The organizational chart of the Parks and Recreation Department was reviewed and the task regarding summer help was to achieve \$30,000 worth of savings. The proposal brought tonight for review for the listed cuts in summer help finds a savings of \$29,500.

One issue of needing discussion is removing one lifeguard position at the Kelly Lake Beach due to problems with salmonella. Councilor Sater has discussed this issue with Dale Gaasland, Commissioner Raukar, and Mike Haben and it seems that don't want to see the place close. He stated that the motor/pump needs to be replaced. We need the pump going to circulate the water and then to do testing of the water quality. The Canadian Goose droppings are causing a problem at the beach. Pete Hyduke has received estimates for the pump replacement. The pump will help with the water circulation but not the water level. Councilor Sater stressed the fact that this needs to be taken care of and asked where we stand? Mr. Redshaw stated that on an emergency, he can approve up to \$5,000. The pump replacement won't take out the contamination and we don't want people or lifeguards swimming in there. The beach will need to be closed until the water is safe.

In addition to the cuts as reviewed tonight in the Parks & Rec summer help other cuts were also discussed. At the Cemetery, the plan is to use one less summer worker as well. Agreement was to also decrease the summer help for watering flowers to one worker.

Councilor Shafer has received complaints of how the summer help are hired as it seems to be the same people getting the jobs year after year and it has to be advertised better so all of the taxpayers have a chance to have their kids working. Possibly more people need to be involved in the hiring process for summer help. Agreement was made that the list of summer hires should go to the consent agenda for Council approval.

Clerk Garrity noted that the Cemetery staff needs help before Memorial Day to take advantage of the nice weather. Mr. Redshaw wasn't aware if the job requisitions have gone to the Job Service or how many staff will be posted for the Cemetery.

There is also the closing of three outdoor skating rinks that have seen the least amount of use: Cobb Cook, Brooklyn, and Jefferson. Mayor Wolff suggested that communications be posted to notify people of this decision and he will ask Chris Magnusson to post this notification electronically so the public is aware. Council discussed the possibility of volunteers willing to keep the rinks open.

- **Item 6 Distribution of the Insurance Fund Proceeds:** Mrs. Renskers noted that the Finance Department is very busy at this time and that this is not complete as of yet but is still looking at the same rough number which then has to be approved by the unions. Mrs. Renskers was asked to contact Mr. Sellman to find the process of what to do if it is not approved by the unions.
- **Item 7 Reduction of Overtime by Fifteen Percent:** Mrs. Renskers is concerned with the election approaching and making it through the summer and people trying to take vacations and the accuracy of the work as the jobs are detailed and demand attention and it is difficult for accuracy so cutting overtime would be difficult in the Finance Department at this time. Mayor Wolff suggested a few options including closing certain City Hall offices a few days per week or utilizing the phone answering machines. Mrs. Renskers noted that absentee ballots need to be done by a person that has experience in dealing with the process. Discussion was held on the absentee ballot process. One suggestion was to have a summer help clerical person to man the window and the phones to eliminate that constant interruption for the staff. Discussion held on reprogramming the phone system to give the caller automated menu options and functions rather than the staff directory. Mr. Redshaw will contact Service Solutions to reprogram the system and to also give departments a training session on the new system. Other suggestions discussed instead of an additional hire is to utilize staff from other departments to cover a few hours at the window and to answer phones, or to send certain types of calls to be answered by other departments or staff. Mr. Redshaw will pose the question at a department head meeting of what types of calls come into their departments.

Discussion held on other department's overtime reduction. The Police Department overtime should decrease once the crew size is at the appropriate level of 29. The Wastewater Treatment Plant has been short staffed. Mr. Redshaw stated that he could force the 15% reduction across the board if had to. The Fire Department is still facing high amounts of overtime. One reason for the overtime is the increase amount of sick time usage. The Council wants to keep public safety as priority. The Fire Department overtime savings of \$120,000 has not been met. Mr. Redshaw

will contact the Chief to discuss options to get to the department's target and that 4-man staffing will need to be done. There are current grievances yet the department still needs to be on target. Discussion held on the ambulance transfers as they relate to overtime as well.

Mr. Redshaw will give overtime reduction instructions to the department heads. Mr. Redshaw and Mrs. Renskers will provide an overtime report on a monthly basis to the Council. We need to achieve the savings of the \$61,000 and if we have not will need to sit down and find out how to get there.

- B. **Alternative Elections for Mayor and Clerk:** This item was discussed as there are two at large positions (Mayor and Clerk) held during the same election year. By staggering the election years for those positions, it may be better for voter turnout and would give the community the chance to vote at large and to run at large. Councilor Sater will contact Mr. Sellman regarding this process for the possibility of either 2012 or 2014.

C. **Special Events:**

Mines & Pines: The Council has received a letter that the Mines and Pines will not hold their event this year due to an event held in Grand Rapids the same day and the lack of the number of vendors and volunteers and the anticipation of a low attendance. The City subsidy for the Mines and Pines event was \$5,000 to \$6000 which will now be noted as a savings.

Jubilee/Street Dance: Mr. Redshaw and Mayor Wolff met with bar owners and the street dance committee to find cost reductions. The bar owners were agreeable to help cut down in sanitation costs and help with the cleaning. The overtime coverage may be reduced as well if not needing as many police officers. The option of closing down the event earlier in the evening was reviewed but the bar owners are willing to assist with the cleanup to cut down city cost. Discussions and agreements will continue to be held to work on the details. A meeting will also need to be held to discuss the options for next year.

Applications: Another item to review is the need to look at all of the city licenses for the various activities along with their applications. For many of the licenses we didn't have application forms on file for everything that could be applied for.

Labor Day Shoot Out: Discussion held on this event and the past years experiences. In order to cover costs of this event the possibility of an event fee may be considered.

Governors Cup: Discussions held regarding this event and possible fees.

During these times we don't have an unlimited amount of money to cover all events and the expenses incurred.

- D. **Ordinance – Lawn Application:** Councilor Shafer was approached about pesticides killing resident's gardens. Councilor Lund distributed information about a private vendor that sprays lawns. Discussion held on adopting an ordinance relative to Lawn Application Regulation, the need to determine license fees and how this would be enforced. Mr. Redshaw will send a copy of the draft

ordinance to companies such as TNT and Green Again and tree service people to ask for their comments if the City was to adopt this.

- E. **Ordinance - Refuge Collection:** This ordinance is revised as an update as now we don't have the requirement of blue bags. Mr. Redshaw will contact Mr. Gaasland for the inventory of our remaining blue bags and ask him to place it on auction and/or sell to the people for cost.

- F. **Commercial Photographers License:** License applications had been sent out to the community photographers and the Mayor is receiving calls asking why. We need to address this ordinance. Even though the ordinance was written quite some years ago, there is still the need to comply with the background checks. Will review the BCA regulations and ask Mr. Sellman to draft an ordinance regarding authorization of background checks for business licenses.

- G. **Massage Parlors License:** The Mayor is receiving calls that people can't afford the annual fee. Discussion held on the fee that is currently at the initial annual fee of \$300 and the renewal fee is \$100. This license also will require the ordinance in place to authorize the police department to do a background check, so we will ask Mr. Sellman to draft an ordinance also including a revision changing the initial fee to \$100 and then a \$50 renewal.

- H. **Economic Development and Marketing of Hibbing.** Discussion held on marketing Hibbing, making contacts, and bringing in new businesses.

ADJOURNMENT: The retreat was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. Another date will be set for next month's retreat to continue with the items of discussion. Please forward any additional items of discussion to the Council Office.

Richard M. Wolff, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Patrick L. Garrity, Clerk-Treasurer