



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

SUMMARY
January 25, 2021
5:00 P.M.
Council Office
Virtual Meeting

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, D. Reed, J. Waltman, (all electronically), M. Ventura, S. Marmarou (via dial in)

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, K. Cochran, L. DeFranco-Culp (physically), S. Smith, M. Rodriguez, E. Kraft, F. Denbowski, W. Stoudt, R. Tornielli, C. Jones, N. Matz, J. Abodalo, J. Kelly, A. Acevedo, J. Long, S. Rugis, N. Rivera, A. Shollenberger (all electronically)

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Mr. Waltman. Due to the COVID-19 Emergency Declaration, the public is prohibited from physically attending the meeting. The meeting is convened via virtual app.

I. Municipal Enterprise Resource Planning System Presentation

Mr. Kelly shared a power point presentation.

Mr. Kelly stated that this system would replace the City's current USL and Hansen systems and would provide the City with the ability to perform its own payroll and would provide a portal for CD functions. He explained that both USL and Hansen are obsolete and that the City currently uses ADP for payroll which is very expensive.

Mr. Kelly explained that this new system would reduce the chance of human error as there would be fewer needs for manual input of information, would reduce the City's overall costs, and would be cloud-based for better remote access. He stated that currently the City uses a VPN system for remote working that sometimes has issues due to all the traffic.

Mr. Kelly explained that he, Mr. Cochran and Ms. DeFranco-Culp have been reviewing several options and that there will be an initial cost of approximately \$1 million. He stated that the

system will have several functions over several departments – Finance, Human Resources, Purchasing, CD, and Project Management. He stated that the annual cost will be approximately \$367,000 with a 1.5% COLA adjustment annually.

Mr. Kelly stated that this program will provide increased flexibility and security with fewer IT updates needed. He stated that it will also streamline the budget process and make it more interactive.

Mr. Kelly reiterated that there are fewer manual operations and that collaboration will be enhanced. He described the many report capabilities that the program contains. He stated that the program will better track the City's fixed assets and will be helpful with project and grant accounting.

Mr. Kelly stated that the HR portion will create digital employee records, do payroll and track paid time off. He stated that the CD portion will allow the City to accept project and building plans electronically.

Mr. Kelly stated that there is also a CRM portion for the Mayor's office to track constituent engagement (*Note: consider providing this portion to the Council office to track their constituent engagement as well.*)

Mr. Kelly concluded by saying that this program will save time, consolidate costs and reduce manual inputs. He stated that it will take approximately 12 – 18 months for the complete roll-out.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the company would assist with the data upload. Mr. Kelly stated that they will assist. He stated that some will be done in City Hall and the rest will be done remotely.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the affected departments have reviewed the program. Mr. Kelly stated that those with functional use of the program have reviewed it. He stated that Council will be asked to approve the contract at its February 8 meeting.

Mr. Waltman questioned if work flows will be across departments. Mr. Jamar stated that it will.

Mr. Waltman expressed the belief that it can be difficult to put a cost on time savings. Mr. Kelly agreed and stated that this project is included in the City's Capital Plan.

Mr. Waltman stated that the project will have an upfront cost of \$600,000 and an annual cost of \$300,000. He questioned the annual savings moving forward. Mr. Kelly stated that it would be an approximate \$100,000 annual cost savings.

Mr. Waltman questioned if backups are available in case of system failure. Mr. Kelly stated that paper copies can be created as necessary.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that she is also working to digitize her processes. She questioned if other third class cities use this software. Mr. Kelly stated that Lancaster and Northampton County use these types of programs. Ms. DeFranco-Culp stated that York also uses this program. Mr. Cochran stated that Berks County and Easton also use this program.

Mr. Kelly stated that he learned about this program at a procurement event in Harrisburg. He opined that the City's current programs would soon crash as updates are no longer available.

Ms. Rodriguez questioned if training is included in the cost. Mr. Kelly stated that training is included and that staff will also assist one another.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that when the City did its own payroll in the past it was assessed penalties for submitting their taxes late. Mr. Kelly stated that he has confidence in the City's staff to transition and to file accurately. Mr. Cochran stated that 90% of the City's needs for payroll rules have already been built into the program.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked all for their work on this upgrade. She questioned if the bid process was used. Mr. Kelly stated that companies that are part of the cooperative purchasing program were reviewed so the bid process was not needed.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this is a major investment. She noted the need for all users to be onboard with the chosen company. Mr. Kelly stated that the City could have utilized the bid process but that it would have added several months to the process. He stated that staff has been working on this project for six months and he believes that due diligence was done.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the need for this upgrade was due to the large number of employees working at home due to COVID. Mr. Kelly stated that he identified the need for this upgrade very quickly after his appointment.

Ms. Kraft noted the need for Law to have access. She stated that they process right to know requests and questioned if the program will assist with requested reports. Mr. Cochran stated that users will be able to create their own reports so the program can be individualized. Mr. Kelly used Charter Board invoices as an example of items that can be searched and reports created.

Ms. Kraft questioned if all with access to the program would be able to see all information that the program contains. Mr. Kelly stated that users would only have access to the information they need to perform their duties.

Mr. Denbowski thanked the team for their work. He stated that the Mayor has previewed the program. He questioned the lifetime of the new system. Ms. DeFranco-Culp stated that it has a lifetime of 5 – 10 years. Mr. Cochran stated that the company will automatically update the system as updates become available.

Mr. Kelly stated that a five year contract will be procured with renewal options.

Mr. Denbowski stated that the new program should increase staff productivity. He questioned if there was cost avoidance to help offset the cost of the new system. Mr. Kelly stated that this information will be included in the agenda memo to Council requesting their approval of the purchase.

Ms. Rodriguez questioned if the payroll portion would submit the City's taxes and other requirements automatically. Mr. Kelly stated that the HR portal would not be installed initially.

II. RPA Ordinance Review

- Amending 576-416 adjusting parking fines and penalties

There were no questions. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that action can be taken at this evening's meeting.

- Amending 212-144 reducing the booting fee and modifying the daily parking permit fees and parking meter fee

There were no questions. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that action can be taken at this evening's meeting.

- Amending 576-502 establishing new parking meter zones

Mr. Denbowski stated that the Administration requests that the 800 block of Washington St in front of City Hall remain free parking for those who have City business. He requested an amendment and stated that there will be no financial impact.

Ms. Reed stated that she will propose this amendment. She stated that she will request no meters in the 800 block of Washington St between N 8th and Cedar Sts.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the School District has visitor parking in the 000 block of N 8th St and questioned if this could also be included in the amendment. Mr. Denbowski stated that the Administration would support this. Ms. Reed stated that she will include this in her proposed amendment.

Mr. Marmarou thanked all for their hard work on the computer system.

- Amending 576-413 and 576-514 allowing the Police Chief to void parking tickets and to require temporary changes be communicated between the Police Chief and the Parking Authority Executive Director

Police Chief Tornielli stated that historically the Police Chief has had this ability. He stated that this is not a separate appeals process and that tickets are voided only if they are issued in error.

Mr. Marmarou agreed that it is appropriate for the Chief to have this ability.

Ms. Reed noted her understanding that this was done in the past. She stated that there are logical reasons for the Chief to have this ability but noted that she feels that the public would not support this. She questioned the rules used to void tickets and stated that honest people are not always in power.

Ms. Kraft suggested amending the language to define designee as the Deputy Police Chief only and to change the notice language to include why the ticket was voided. She suggested creating a document in case of right to know requests.

Chief Tornielli stated that he prefers removing the designee and stated that this is not an urgent matter and can wait until he returns to the office.

Mr. Waltman stated that this has been City policy for many years and he is not aware of any past issues.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Ms. Kraft for her suggested amendments. She noted the need to create a clear record of tickets that have been voided. She expressed the belief that those who are corrupt will find a way to get around any rules. She suggested providing the Chief with this ability and addressing it again in the future if problems arise.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the types of tickets that are voided. Chief Tornielli stated that it is tickets that are issued in error such as a utility not properly posting signs. He stated that he has not voided any tickets to date.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if there have been any requests. Chief Tornielli again stated that this is not a separate appeal process. It is only for tickets that have been issued in error.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz voiced her support of amending the language described by Ms. Kraft.

Ms. Reed agreed. She requested that this ordinance be tabled this evening and Ms. Kraft have the amended language prepared for the February 8 meeting.

III. Agenda Review

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including the following:

- Public Comment

Ms. Kelleher stated that there is one individual who provided written comment which Ms. Reed will read at the meeting.

- Resolution authorizing the sewage planning module for the 810 Windsor St apartments

Mr. Jones stated that he does not have information on this project.

Mr. Abodalo stated that the project requires additional sewage flows.

- Resolution hiring 12 firefighters/paramedics for the 2021 Fire Academy class

Fire Chief Stoudt stated that no paramedics will be in this class.

- Award of Contract for the purchase of 38 sets of PPE for the Academy class and the required equipment replacement to Reading Fire Equipment for \$122,030.54

Chief Stoudt stated that this is part of the City's 10 year replacement cycle.

- Award of Contract for the Downtown Plus Strategic Master Plan to Stantect for \$272,725

Mr. Abodalo stated that the City received 28 proposals. He thanked the review committee. He stated that three firms were interviewed and Stantect was chosen. He stated that Stantect has a worldwide presence and Reading's project will be based from their Philadelphia office. He stated that this Plan will coordinate with the Parking Study. He stated that Stantect has won several awards and will also be able to assist with grant applications to help offset costs.

Ms. Reed questioned if Stantect has done work for other cities similar to Reading. Mr. Abodalo stated that they have worked with York and Arlington, VA.

- Ordinance amending Chapter 62 Pensions by replacing Administrative Services to Finance and by allowing the Mayor to appoint a designee on the Fire and O & E Pension boards

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this is an important role of the Mayor and questioned the use of a designee. Mr. Kelly stated that the Mayor's time is used in other ways and that the Mayor requested this change. He stated that many agenda items are routine. He stated that the Mayor will still participate as needed for important topics.

Mr. Denbowski stated that the Police and Aggregated Pension boards already allow a designee. He stated that this is being done for consistency.

- Ordinance amending the Quality of Life Ticketing Program regarding solid waste

Mr. Denbowski stated that Mr. Lugo made a presentation to Council at their last Committee of the Whole meeting on this amendment. He stated that the language needed to be updated to reflect the single hauler system and the definitions were amended to reflect the new Clean City program.

- Ordinance amending City Code Chapter 496 Part II regarding waste collection from mixed use properties

Mr. Denbowski stated that approximately 600 properties will be affected.

- Ordinance increasing the salary range of the CD Director to \$110,000 contingent on the \$20,000 contribution from the Reading Redevelopment Authority, retroactive to January 1, 2021

Ms. Reed expressed the belief that it is important to tell the public that this is not City funding but that it is tied to funding being paid to the City by the Redevelopment Authority (RRA). She stated that this is a large increase and many families are struggling due to COVID unemployment.

Mr. Abodalo stated that the City has signed an agreement with the RRA to provide \$20,000 in annual funding to offset the cost of his increased duties.

Ms. Reed questioned if the \$20,000 would be received annually. Mr. Abodalo stated that it will be.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for Councilors to separate the person from the position when considering this type of matter. She questioned if job descriptions have been updated for CD's additional responsibilities from RRA. She noted her concern about providing increases to individuals and stated that others will then also make similar requests. She noted the need to address this City-wide and requested that Mr. Abodalo not speak on this topic since it is his salary increase.

Mr. Denbowski suggested that Ms. Acevedo address the job description updates. He stated that the City has signed a contract with RRA for services.

Ms. Acevedo introduced herself as the HR Director. She stated that the RRA was making zero progress on its own. She described the functions that should have been done by the RRA and

stated that CD has already begun this work. She stated that job descriptions will be updated after Council approves the salary adjustments.

In response to a question Ms. Kraft opined that the payment of \$20,000 does not increase Mr. Abodalo's base pay so his pension should not be affected.

- Ordinance amending 576-517 Parking Meters or Kiosks Notice of Violation; Violations and Penalties; Waiver to modify the manner in which notice of a violation is provided

Mr. Matz stated that this will update the language to allow the Parking Authority to use License Plate Reader technology in the parking garages and allow violations to be mailed to vehicle owners.

Ms. Kelleher stated that language allowing the Police Chief to void tickets is included in this section and should also be updated with Ms. Kraft's language.

- Ordinance increasing the HR Director's salary by \$1,000 to \$83,000 retroactive to November 16, 2020

Mr. Denbowski stated that the Administration would like to withdraw this ordinance. He stated that a new document will be introduced in the near future.

- Ordinance amending the 2021 Position Ordinance by reclassifying one position in HR from Human Resources Assistant to Training & Employment Coordinator

Ms. Kraft questioned who is available to answer questions on this amendment. Mr. Denbowski suggested that it be reviewed at the next Committee of the Whole meeting before it is eligible for final passage.

Ms. Kraft questioned if a new job description has been developed. Mr. Denbowski stated that the new job description will be distributed to Council prior to the next business meeting and be discussed at the Committee of the Whole.

Ms. Acevedo stated that this job description has been drafted.

Ms. Kraft suggested that the job description become part of the ordinance. Ms. Acevedo stated that she would add the job description.

- Resolution relinquishing the public rights to the public walk shown on the topographical survey of the City between 1305 East Wyomissing Blvd and 1307 East Wyomissing Blvd

Ms. Kraft stated that this request asks the City to declare it has no property rights to this walkway.

Mr. Waltman questioned if there is public access. Ms. Kraft stated that there are currently no ownership rights to the strip of land.

Mr. Jones stated that this walk also borders on Museum Rd. He stated that it is a grassy area with no direct public links. He stated that it is mostly grassy with bushes and trees and is rarely used. He expressed the belief that it was owned by the developer but no further action was taken.

Ms. Kraft stated that this request is made so that quiet title can be made to a property owner to do a home improvement project.

Mr. Waltman questioned why this land is referred to as a public walk. Ms. Kraft stated that it is public since the title never transferred.

Ms. Reed stated that looking at the map this strip of land affects other property owners. Mr. Jones agreed and stated that this issue is not controversial.

Ms. Reed suggested that the other properties also be addressed in the near future.

Ms. Kelleher stated that there are other similar strips in other areas of this neighborhood.

Ms. Reed cautioned about closing a public easement.

Attorney Shollenberger stated that he has been hired by one of the property owners to clear up this situation. He expressed the belief that this is a public walkway on the survey and the topographical map only. He expressed the belief that the City never exercised its right to use the strip of land. He stated that there is case law (Rahn v Hess) stating that if a developer lays out public access but doesn't use it the land reverts to the landowners bordering the land at the center point.

Attorney Shollenberger stated that this resolution asks the City to acknowledge that it has no interest or easements in the property and that it does not maintain it. He stated that the deed will be recorded adding this property.

Mr. Waltman thanked Mr. Shollenberger for this information.

Ms. Kraft stated that Public Works has confirmed that no access is needed and that there is no record of the City having property rights.

- Resolutions ratifying the Agreement with AFSCME Local 3799 and Local 2763 regarding salary changes for employees as set forth

Ms. Kraft suggested that questions and discussion on these resolutions occur in executive session as they are personnel related.

IV. Executive Session

The five members of Council, Ms. Kelleher, Ms. Smith, Ms. Kraft, Mr. Denbowski, Ms. Acevedo, and Mr. Kelly remained in the meeting.

Council entered executive session at 6:34 pm.

Council exited executive session and the meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*