

December 29, 2008 Special Council Meeting

The Ashby City Council held a Special Council Meeting on December 29, 2008 at Ashby City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss 2009 budgets, Final Levy, Fee Ordinance and Federal economic stimulus package. Mayor Thomas Grover called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with council members Carl Ulrich, Kristyn Fick, Peter Hoff and Lynn Jensen present. Also present was Val Martin – Clerk, Richard Walton, City Attorney, Alan Cassavant, Public Works Supt.; Thor Tollefson, Police Chief, George Jordan and Ronnie Jaenisch. Visitors were Al Boe, Paul Ellingson, Dwight Walvatne, Dennis Anderson, Kim Anderson, Mark Koefod, Marcia Koefod and Lonnie Rylander.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2008 and 2009 LGA Distributions from the State were discussed. Ashby was exempt from 2008 cuts to LGA and the total amount was received but it is unknown what the state will do for 2009.

E-mails from Torrey Westrom and Bill Ingebrigtsen were distributed. These e-mails were in response to ones that they had received regarding LGA cuts.

Several visitors were in attendance and voiced their concern over the current levy amount set by the City. The largest portion of the increase was due to bond payments for Country View Estates. The lots have not sold fast enough to make the bond payment due. The visitors made comments and suggestions for possible cuts to the General Fund such as:

- Elimination of the Police Department
- Elimination of part-time police position
- Wage freeze for all employees
- Reduction/elimination of part-time staff for the office and public works
- Cost-sharing for health insurance

All items were looked at individually and because the levy had to be set in today, time was a factor for many of the listed items including the wage negotiations and insurance benefits. Negotiations have been settled and there would not be enough time to renegotiate and because the Council moved to a Step/Grade Plan, we could become out of compliance for Pay Equity. Council members said that there may need to be a discussion on future health insurance benefits.

The council felt that cuts needed to be made to help reduce the levy. Cuts that were made to the General Fund:

- \$3600 for police squad equipment replacement
- \$1500 for part-time police
- \$500 for office staff
- \$700 General Fund technology equipment replacement
- \$2500 Fund balance improvement
- \$1500 General fund capital improvement
- \$500 General Fund – misc. fuels
- \$5000 Initial budget changes/cuts

Total cuts to the levy made were \$15,800. It was also decided that time worked by all part-time staff will be cut by 20% - 30%. It was noted that our city attorney does not charge for attending council meetings and also donates his time on a number of projects such as the new development and the fire department grant from Rural Development. The Check Diversion Program has also saved the City a lot of money in attorney fees.

Ulrich moved to approve the budgets for General Fund (with changes), Water Fund, Sewer Fund, Storm Sewer Fund, Ambulance, Fire Department, and Garbage Fund. Fick seconded. MCU

Fick moved to approve **Resolution 2008-23 Resolution Approving 2008 Tax Levy, Collectible in 2009**. Hoff seconded. Roll call vote: Hoff-yes, Ulrich-yes, Grover-yes, Fick-yes and Jensen-yes. Motion carried.

Fick moved to approve the Fee Ordinance for 2009. Ulrich seconded. MCU

Information was distributed to the council on the possible Federal economic stimulus package. Staff had met with WSN and came up with a “wish list” of items that could be turned over to West Central Initiative. It appears that there may be some substantial grant money for public works projects, some projects may be funded at 100%. The City is not obligated to do these projects but we needed to get our information out there. They are looking for projects that can start in the spring and summer. WSN did not charge the City for their time putting this information together. Projects were: street repairs, watermain loop, lining of the sanitary sewer and a public works shop.

Adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

Valerie Martin, Clerk/Treasurer