

MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF LA CRESCENT, MINNESOTA
MARCH 8, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the first meeting of the City Council of the City of La Crescent for the month of March was called to order by Mayor Mike Poellinger at 5:30 PM in the La Crescent City Hall, La Crescent, Minnesota, on Monday, March 8, 2021.

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.021 and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the City Council and City Staff were given the option to attend the meeting by telephone or Zoom. Upon a roll call taken and tallied by the City Administrator, the following members were present: Members Ryan Hutchinson (via Zoom), Cheryl Jostad, Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner, Dale Williams, and Mayor Mike Poellinger. Members absent: None. Also present was City Administrator Bill Waller, City Attorney Skip Wieser, City Building/Zoning Official Shawn Wetterlin, City Sustainability Coordinator Jason Ludwigson, and City Administrative Assistant Angie Boettcher.

Mayor Poellinger asked if anyone wished to take action to change the agenda as presented. There were no changes requested.

ITEM 1 – CONSENT AGENDA

At this time, the Mayor read the following items to be considered as part of the Consent Agenda for this regular meeting:

- 1.1 MINUTES – FEBRUARY 22, 2021
- 1.2 BILLS PAYABLE THROUGH MARCH 4, 2021
- 1.3 CASH BALANCE/ACTIVITY REPORT – JANUARY 2020
- 1.4 LIBRARY REPORT – JANUARY 2020

At the conclusion of the reading of the Consent Agenda, Mayor Poellinger asked if the Council wished to have any of the items removed from the Consent Agenda for further discussion. Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Member O'Donnell-Ebner, as follows:

A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cheryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

ITEM 3.1 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SALE OF BONDS

Tammy Omdal of Northland Securities (via Zoom) reviewed with City Council the finance plan for the proposed bond issue, and a resolution approving the issuance of general obligation sewer revenue refunding bonds. The purpose of the bond issue is to current refund the 2012A bond issue and reduce future interest costs. In order to proceed, it was recommended to City Council to adopt the resolution approving the issuance of general obligation sewer revenue refunding bonds. Following review and discussion, Member O'Donnell-Ebner introduced the following resolution and moved its passage and adoption

RESOLUTION NO. 03-21-11

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ISSUANCE OF
GENERAL OBLIGATION SEWER REVENUE REFUNDING BONDS, SERIES 2021A**

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of La Crescent, Minnesota (herein, the “City”), as follows:

1. The City Council hereby finds and declares that it is necessary and expedient for the City to sell and issue its fully registered general obligation sewer revenue refunding bonds in the total aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$800,000 (herein, the “Bonds”). The proceeds of the Bonds will be used to finance a current refunding of all or a portion of the December 1, 2021 through 2031 maturities, aggregating up to \$735,000 in principal amount, of the City’s General Obligation Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2012A, dated March 1, 2012 as date of original issue, and the costs of issuing the Bonds.
2. The City Council desires to proceed with the sale of the Bonds by direct negotiation with Northland Securities, Inc. (herein, “NSI”). NSI will purchase the Bonds in an arm’s-length commercial transaction with the City.
3. The Mayor and City Administrator are hereby authorized to approve the sale of the Bonds in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$800,000 and to execute a bond purchase agreement for the purchase of the Bonds with NSI, provided the net present value savings is at least 4.70%.
4. Upon approval of the sale of the Bonds by the Mayor and the City Administrator the City Council will take action at its next regularly scheduled or special meeting thereafter to adopt the necessary approving resolutions as prepared by the City's bond counsel.
5. NSI is authorized to prepare an Official Statement related to the sale of the Bonds.
6. If the Mayor and the City Administrator have not approved the sale of the bonds to NSI and executed the related bond purchase agreement by August 31, 2021, this resolution shall expire.

ADOPTED this 8th day of March, 2021.

SIGNED:

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Administrator

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Member Jostad and upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, all Members present voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried and the resolution duly passed and adopted.

ITEM 3.2 – PARTNERS IN ENERGY ACTION PLAN

City Sustainability Coordinator Ludwigson, along with Deirdre Coleman and Tami Gunderzik of Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy Program (via Zoom), reviewed with City Council the Partners in Energy Action Plan. The City was selected to participate in the Partners in Energy Program in 2020. Partners in Energy is a program from Xcel Energy that supports the communities Xcel serves by helping them develop and implement energy plans. Each community has its own unique energy needs and priorities, and Partners in Energy services are tailored to complement each community's vision. Work on the Energy Action Plan began in September 2020 and was driven by a series of workshops held in the community, led by a planning team committed to representing local energy priorities in collaboration with City of La Crescent and Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy. The creation of this Partners in Energy plan was developed by characterizing the City's energy use, identifying energy related goals, and developing engaging strategies to guide change toward the City's energy future. The focus areas outlined in the plan are residents, businesses, and electric vehicles. The overarching goals of the plan are that between 2021 and 2030, the City will cumulatively save 1.6 million kilowatt hours of electricity, amounting to an estimated \$1 million saved; and that during implementation, the City will engage more than 1,500 residents and businesses across the community in energy efficiency, renewable energy, community solar, and electric vehicle outreach. If adopted, the City and the Partners in Energy team will be working over the next 18 months to implement the plan. It was recommended to City Council to approve the Partners in Energy Plan. Following discussion, Member O'Donnell-Ebner made a motion, seconded by Member Williams as follows:

MOTION TO ADOPT THE PARTNERS IN ENERGY ACTION PLAN.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, all Members present voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

ITEM 3.3 – PARTNERS IN ENERGY MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING

City Sustainability Coordinator Ludwigson reviewed with City Council the Partners in Energy Memo of Understanding between the City and Xcel Energy. The intent of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to recognize the achievement of the City of La Crescent in developing an Energy Action Plan. The MOU outlines the partnership between the City of La Crescent and Xcel Energy for the joint support of the plan implementation. The support from Xcel energy will include presentations, coordination meetings, and funding for marketing materials and other needs associated with education and outreach. The City will manage the projects in the implementation portion of the Partners in Energy plan, share the plan with the public, and share lessons learned during the implementation phase. All communications pertaining to this agreement will be directed to Jason Ludwigson on behalf of the City and Tami Gunderzik on behalf of Xcel Energy. The term of this joint support, as defined in the document, will extend from April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. Following discussion, Member O'Donnell-Ebner made a motion, seconded by Member Hutchinson as follows:

MOTION TO APPROVE THE PARTNERS IN ENERGY MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY AND XCEL ENERGY.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, all Members present voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

ITEM 3.4 – PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES – MARCH 2, 2021

City Building/Zoning Official Wetterlin reviewed with City Council the Planning Commission Minutes from the March 2, 2021 meeting. This item was informational, and no action was taken.

ITEM 3.5 – PROPOSALS TO DEMOLISH BUILDING

City Building/Zoning Official Wetterlin reviewed with City Council the three proposals to demolish the remaining Applewood Apartment building at 322 South 1st Street. The proposals were as follows: Harter Trucking - \$12,000.00; Zenke Incorporated - \$14,370.00; and Gerke Excavating - \$19,836.23. It was recommended to City Council to accept the proposal submitted by Harter Trucking and amend the 2021

general fund budget. Following discussion, Member Jostad made a motion, seconded by Member Williams, as follows:

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY HARTER TRUCKING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$12,000.00 TO DEMOLISH THE REMAINING APPLEWOOD APARTMENT BUILDING AT 322 SOUTH 1ST STREET AND TO AMEND THE 2021 GENERAL FUND BUDGET.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, all Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

ITEM 3.6 – AUTHORIZE EXPENDITURE – ANIMAL RESCUE BUILDING HEATING/COOLING

City Building/Zoning Official Wetterlin reviewed with City Council three proposals to remove and replace two heating and air conditioning units that are due for replacement in the cat room of the Animal Rescue building. The proposals were as follows: Niebuhr Plumbing and Heating - \$2,160.00; Bob's Appliance Service - \$2,570.00; and Paul's Heating Air Conditioning - \$4,550.00. It was recommended to City Council to accept the proposal submitted by Niebuhr Plumbing & Heating and to use funds in the City's 2021 general fund for this expenditure. Following discussion, Member O'Donnell-Ebner made a motion, seconded by Member Hutchinson, as follows:

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY NIEBUHR PLUMBING & HEATING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,160.00 TO REMOVE AND REPLACE TWO HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING UNITS IN THE CAT ROOM OF THE ANIMAL RESCUE BUILDING AND TO USE FUNDS IN THE CITY'S 2021 GENERAL FUND FOR THIS EXPENDITURE.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, all Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

ITEM 3.7 – ARBOR DAY RESOLUTION

City Administrative Assistant Boettcher reviewed with City Council the 2021 Arbor Day Proclamation for April 30, 2021. The City's 2021 Arbor Day event will include the planting of approximately 60 trees at Veteran's Park and Hickory Lane. Ms. Boettcher also updated City Council that the City's 2020 Tree City

USA application is still being processed and the City should be hearing from them within the next couple of weeks. It was recommended to City Council to adopt the Arbor Day Proclamation. Following discussion, Member O'Donnell-Ebner made a motion, seconded by Member Hutchinson, as follows:

MOTION TO ADOPT THE ARBOR DAY PROCLAMATION PROCLAIMING APRIL 30, 2021 AS ARBOR DAY IN THE CITY OF LA CRESCENT.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

ITEM 3.8 – PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

City Administrator Waller reviewed with City Council the following recommendations from the Personnel Committee regarding a tentative agreement with the AFSCME Union on a two-year contract agreement that covers the years 2021 and 2022. The agreement includes an increase in the City's contribution to insurance and an increase in wages, along with language changes to the union contract. The terms of the agreement are as follows:

1. In both 2021 and 2022, the City's contribution to the family insurance coverage would increase by \$50 per month, and the City's contribution to single insurance coverage would increase by \$30 per month.
2. The agreement includes a 3.25% wage increase in 2021, and a 3.5% wage increase in 2022.
3. Change the years from 2019 and 2020 to 2021 and 2022 where applicable in the contract.
4. Change 4 hours for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve to ½ day off after working mornings.
5. Add a sentence to the holiday language that when a holiday falls on a Friday or Saturday, and Friday is a non-workday, employees shall receive 8 hours holiday pay for that holiday at their regular rate of pay.
6. The agreement would be effective January 1, 2021.

The insurance and wage increase included in the AFSCME agreement are consistent with the increases in the LELS union contract that covers 2021 and 2022. There are funds in the general fund budget for this increase, and it was recommended to City Council to approve the tentative agreement as presented.

Also, as not part of the union contract but during the course of negotiations, it was recommended to City Council to approve the following items related to AFSCME Union employees:

1. That the City increase the yearly safety boot allowance for full-time maintenance department employees from \$75 per year to \$125 per year, and that the allowance for part-time maintenance department employees be increased from \$60 per year to \$100 per year. The current amounts have been in place for many years.

2. That the City cancel the current contract with Cintas for pants and shirts for maintenance department employees. This amounts to approximately \$867 per year.
3. That the City provide all AFSCME employees with a variety of shirts that include the City's logo and are appropriate and necessary for the performance of their various job responsibilities. The number of garments will not be equally distributed amongst all AFSCME employees, as the functions of an employee in City Hall are quite different than those of the maintenance department employees working in the field throughout the year.

Following discussion, Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Member O'Donnell-Ebner as follows:

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE AFSCME UNION TWO-YEAR CONTRACT AGREEMENT THAT COVERS THE YEARS 2021 AND 2022 AS PRESENTED.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, the following Members present voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

Member Cherryl Jostad voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried by a 4-1 vote.

Following discussion, Member Hutchinson made a motion, seconded by Member Williams as follows:

MOTION TO APPROVE AN INCREASE IN BOOT ALLOWANCE FOR THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT AS PRESENTED, TO CANCEL THE CURRENT CONTRACT WITH CINTAS FOR PANTS AND SHIRTS FOR MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEES, AND TO PROVIDE CLOTHING AS PRESENTED FOR THE AFSCME EMPLOYEES.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

ITEM 3.9 – DNR VARIANCE OBJECTION DATE

City Attorney Wieser reviewed with City Council the correspondence from the Wisconsin DNR regarding the City of La Crosse's request for a variance from the Wisconsin requirements for intermunicipal government agreements prior to receipt of Wisconsin clean water funds. The request for a variance has been denied by the Wisconsin DNR. Following discussion, Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Member O'Donnell-Ebner as follows:

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE CITY STAFF TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO AUTHORIZE MAYOR POELLINGER TO SIGN REQUEST TO THE CITY OF LA CROSSE FOR MEDIATION.

Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, the following Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried.

ITEM 3.10 – INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL PROJECT

Mayor Poellinger reviewed with City Council a Resolution in support of the MnDOT State Rail Plan which includes a proposed 2nd Passenger Train frequency between the Twin Cities and Chicago. Following discussion, Member Jostad introduced the following resolution and moved its passage and adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 03-21-12

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL PROJECT

WHEREAS, the MnDOT State Rail Plan includes a proposed 2nd Passenger Train frequency (2nd train) between the Twin Cities and Chicago for which design planning is completed. This new service between the Twin Cities, Milwaukee and Chicago utilizes the current route of Amtrak's Empire Builder at speeds up to 79 miles an hour; and

WHEREAS, the state of Minnesota was awarded a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grant in 2020 totaling \$31.8M for infrastructure improvements along the existing freight railroad's right of way to enable the 2nd train; and

WHEREAS, the state of Minnesota needs to provide \$10M in matching funds to receive the CRISI grant; and

WHEREAS, \$20.9M of these funds will be invested in La Crescent for infrastructure railroad improvements that will not only enable the 2nd train but improve freight operations which will prevent stopped and delayed freight trains, which now tremendously impede citizens of La Crescent; and (summary list of proposed improvements in La Crescent. See Addendum 1 for full project description):

\$5.1 million	La Crescent - Mississippi River Bridge Additional track, switches and signaling.
\$15.8 million	La Crescent - River Junction Additional track, switches and signaling,

WHEREAS, freight railroads will benefit from the capital investment needed for the 2nd train, enabling greater freight train speeds, reducing railroad congestion, and providing crossing improvements making auto and truck travel safer; and

WHEREAS, La Crescent citizens are mainly reliant upon highways today for travel and the Amtrak train station where the 2nd train would stop is only six miles from La Crescent, and would improve transportation options for our citizens who cannot or don't want to drive or fly; and

WHEREAS, the 2nd train would offer greater reliability to points east than Amtrak's Empire Builder which originates its eastbound trip from the west coast, and offer greater frequency and travel choices for our residents; and

WHEREAS, the 2nd train will benefit Minnesota's economy by about \$25M annually, by supporting and increasing jobs, tourism, and creating a more economical travel choice; and

WHEREAS, many states in the mid-west and around the country are investing in more passenger rail service as they realize the economic and mobility benefits of such services. Some of these states include but are not limited to: Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Virginia, California, Oregon, Maine, North Carolina.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of La Crescent Minnesota, that it hereby supports funding the proposed 2nd Passenger Train Frequency between the Twin Cities and Chicago, and requests that the Minnesota Legislature approve a minimum of \$10M to provide matching funds to secure the CRISI Grant Award as described above.

Adopted this 8th day of March, 2021.

Mike Poellinger, Mayor

Attest:

Bill Waller, City Administrator

Addendum 1 - La Crescent project description. Source – CRISI Grant Application

Improvement	Location	Improvement Description	Details
Mississippi River Bridge (75% rural)	La Crescent, MN	Realign the track approaches at both the west and east ends, replace the west bridge switch and replace the bridge	1,500 ft of track work Update switch and movable track points on bridge

River Junction (55% rural)	La Crescent, MN	special trackwork at the moveable points of the bridge. These improvements will increase the freight speed across the bridge from 10 MPH to 15 MPH.	5,612 track-feet of new mainline 2,162 track-feet of new wye connection track Upgrade of 1,470 track-feet of yard track 14 new turnouts New signals and communications
		Convert unsignalized yard track to a signaled second main track to allow for increased speeds through the River Junction switch. The alignment of the Bridge Switch would be modified to allow main track speeds to increase to 25 mph. Additionally, work is needed to construct new mainline track, turnouts and connection track, and upgrading yard track.	

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Member Hutchinson and upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, all Members voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried and the resolution duly passed and adopted.

ITEM 8 – CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Eric Miner of the La Crescent Chamber of Commerce (via Zoom) stated that the Chamber would not be having a Block Party this year and they did not have any other updates.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, Member O'Donnell-Ebner made a motion, seconded by Member Williams, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a roll call vote taken and tallied by the City Administrator, the following Members present voted in favor thereof, viz;

Ryan Hutchinson	Yes
Cherryl Jostad	Yes
Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner	Yes
Dale Williams	Yes
Mike Poellinger	Yes

and none voted against the same. The motion was declared duly carried and the meeting duly adjourned at 6:13 PM.

APPROVAL DATE: _____

SIGNED:

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Administrator