CITY OF NORTON SHORES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
September 22, 2020

A regular work session of the Norton Shores City Council was held remotely on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Nelund, Council Members Beecham, Flanders, Hylland, Morgenstern and Moulatsiotis; also, Mark Meyers, Anthony Chandler, Shelly Stibitz, Doug Hughes, Jim Murphy, Bob Gagnon, Jon Gale, Joe Kinnucan, and Mike Huston

1. Parks and Recreation Division Reorganization

City Administrator Mark Meyers announced that Finance/Parks and Recreation Director Mike Huston will formally retire effective on December 31, 2020. Mr. Meyers and Council members thanked and congratulated Mr. Huston.

Mr. Huston proposed a reorganization plan for the Parks and Recreation Division to be implemented when he retires as he believes Finance Director candidates would not be interested or experienced in managing a parks and recreation division. His recommendation is to move parks and recreation oversight back under Administrative Services and reinstate a Superintendent position. Mr. Huston believes that the superintendent position should be filled by the current Parks Supervisor and the supervisor position combined with the previous coordinator's duties as a new hybrid Supervisor/Coordinator position. A cost analysis of the proposed reorganization was included that showed a potential cost savings of $57,675 and expectation that activities will be streamlined and could enhance the impact on the community. Administrative Services Director Anthony Chandler explained further that the division had originally been managed by the Community Development Department which was eliminated in 2009 and was under the Administrative Services Department for a short time before the Finance Director requested that it be moved under his management. Mr. Chandler looks forward to overseeing parks and recreation and supports the proposed reorganization plan finding the current Supervisor a good fit for the promotion to Superintendent and recruitment for a Supervisor/Coordinator appropriate.

Council Member Flanders asked about recruitment for both positions and what the City's regular procedure is. Council Member Hylland questioned whether the Superintendent position's added duties justified the wage increase and adding staff when recent budget revisions called for freezing or eliminating positions. Mr. Meyers said that revenue sharing did not decrease as predicted and updated information will be provided. In answer to Council Member Flanders, Mr. Meyers stated that municipalities with parks maintenance under public works likely don't have recreation programs. Council Member Moulatsiotis asked what activities a Parks Superintendent would perform in the winter and why a parks position was just eliminated and now a new, higher paid position is being introduced and a person named to the position instead of being posted. Council Member Beecham stated that the distinction is hiring versus promoting and feels that employees should be

rewarded with promotion. Mayor Nelund felt since there was not strong opposition to the proposal it should move forward. Council members would like a better financial comparison to the old structure. Mr. Meyers said, with Council's consensus, amendments to the Ordinance will be drafted to move the division back under the management of Administrative Services and add the positions to the pay plan.

Mr. Meyers informed Council that artwork was being made available to the City for installation at the Norton Branch Library. Fundraising efforts had already resulted in $1,200 in funding and the Friends of the Library are prepared to donate $500 towards the $3,500 needed. Council members were in complete support.

Mr. Meyers shared that two recent election grants are available and, likely, additional CDBG/COVID funding, to purchase a high-speed ballot tabulator. City Clerk Shelly Stibitz provided additional details including the increased number of absentee ballots requiring tabulation due to recent changes in election law and voting from home as a precaution during the pandemic. The grants and a small window of opportunity for the manufacturer to provide required training before November has presented itself. The cost of the equipment, training and initial maintenance fees is approximately $95,000 and Council Member Hylland is concerned about the expense and wanted to know the life expectancy of the machine. Mrs. Stibitz responded that it is typical to replace voting equipment on a ten-year cycle and, although equipment is usually still in working order, technology has usually advanced beyond the equipment's capacity. The vendor offered to assist the Clerk in locating municipalities interested in purchasing the tabulators that the new machine would replace. The Mayor commented on the rise in numbers of ballots to count due to no reason absentee voting and he and Council Member Morgenstern remarked that investing in upgraded equipment is inevitable.

General Comments

Mr. Meyers reminded everyone that there is a fifth Tuesday this month and there will be no meeting next week.

Meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Shelly Stibitz

Shelly Stibitz, City Clerk