

A regular meeting of the City Commission was held in the Commission Room of the City-County building, 325 Court Street, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan on Monday, March 2, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Bosbous

Present: Mayor Bosbous, Commissioner Bauer (arrived late 7:08 p.m.),  
Burton, Gerrie, Lynn, Munsell and Stefanski

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Nebel, City Attorney Cannello, City Clerk Robin R. Troyer, and various department heads

### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Moved by Commissioner Stefanski, supported by Commissioner Lynn

That the following consent agenda items be approved:

#### **Minute Approval:**

That the minutes of the Joint Council meeting of February 11, 2009, regular City Commission meeting of February 16, 2009, and the Goal Setting Session of February 23, 2009 be approved as written and circulated and the minutes of the following boards and commissions received and placed on file:

- a. Airport Board – February 11, 2009
- b. Bayliss Public Library – January 22, 2009
- c. SSM Housing Commission – January 8, 2009

Carried: Yeas: Mayor Bosbous, Commissioner Burton, Gerrie, Lynn,  
Munsell, and Stefanski  
Nays: None

### **SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS:**

#### **2009-2010 CITY COMMISSION GOAL SETTING:**

##### **Amendment of 2020 Vision:**

##### **Adoption of Goals for the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year:**

On Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> starting at 9:00 a.m., the City Commission met in a work session to identify and prioritize goals for the time period ending June 30, 2010. The goals included in this report identify priorities that the City Administration, along with the City Commission, will be working on through the end of the next fiscal year, which will be June 30, 2010.

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As part of this Goal Setting Session, the Commission focused time on the current economic crisis facing the national and world economy. It was noted that this economic crisis is deeper and more severe than what the country has experienced in the last 50 years. It was also noted that local government, in itself, benefits the local economy when spending is maintained through either increasing revenues or drawing down reserves and expanding or accelerating local capital projects. This being said, it is also important that cities recognize that there is a typical 18 to 24 month lag between changes in economic conditions and the impact on municipal revenue collections. The City Commission wants to be cognizant of the impact this current economic crisis will have both on the City of Sault Ste. Marie as an organization and also on the residents that reside within the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

The City Commission also recognizes the significant amount of time that will be required by all City offices to facilitate the relocation of offices from the City-County Building to the Federal Building. It is very important to allow sufficient time to address the review and disposal of unnecessary records, obsolete equipment, and other housekeeping items prior to moving to the Federal Building. It will also be important to recognize that there will be a service disruption that will directly impact staff time at the time a physical move is made. Sufficient staff time will need to be allowed for these activities in the 2009-10 fiscal year.

The City Commission also reviewed a report from staff regarding responses to three separate reports that have been obtained by the City over the past 2 ½ years regarding workflow efficiencies and internal controls. These reports are broken down from the recommendations from the City's annual audit dated June 30, 2008, recommendations on workflow efficiencies and internal control from Civic dated April 8, 2008, and an internal control audit commissioned by the City from Plante & Moran dated February 15, 2007. It was an appropriate time to update the Commission on the status of these various reports. Comments were received from the Commission that will be referred back to the staff. Administration will provide an updated status on these items for the first meeting in July, 2009.

Finally, the City Commission had requested a report on the possibility of contracting out police services through the Chippewa County Sheriff's Department. This was a concept that was discussed at the August 18, 2008 City Commission meeting. It was City Manager Nebel's recommendation that the City Commission not pursue contracting with Chippewa County or other options such as consolidating police and fire services at this time. By consensus, the Commission agreed with the conclusions of this report.

The goals for the next fiscal year are identified as 2009-10 Priorities. City Manager Nebel included the "Other Suggestions" that did not have a sufficient support to be included as a goal for the coming year. The number in parentheses indicates the number of Commissioners that identified the item as a priority. If "(C)" is indicated, then

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that goal was included by consensus of the Commission as an ongoing project. City Manager Nebel also listed the other ideas that were mentioned during the Goal Setting Session that did not have support as a priority for the coming year for your information. When a status report of a goal is issued in the future, it will be based on the priority goals so identified.

Instead of incorporating the projects identified in the 2008-09 goals, City Manager Nebel believes it is better to allow those goals to stand as a separate document. At the end of the fiscal year, a report will be compiled as to the status of these goals and, at that time; the City Commission could make a decision as to whether to carryover any of these goals to the 2009-10 goal report. This will save a fair amount of redundancy in reporting items that are currently ongoing but are expected to be completed by year end.

Finally, the Commission proposed one change to the 2020 visioning document. Attached is a copy of the Vision Statement to be amended by the Commission. This consisted of one change to specifically address bike paths in the City of Sault Ste. Marie in 2020 on Page 5 of the Vision document (Item B-9.)

Moved by Commissioner Lynn, supported by Commissioner Munsell

That the City Commission amend the 2020 Vision for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan by adding under "B" Streets and Infrastructure #9, which will state: "Bike paths have been constructed that allow visitors and residents to access various parts of the community conveniently and safely."

That the City Commission adopt the goals for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010 as presented in the attachments.

Carried: Yeas: Commissioner Bauer, Burton, Gerrie, Lynn, Munsell, Stefanski, and Mayor Bosbous  
Nays: None

## **COMMUNICATIONS:**

### **FROM COMMISSIONER STEFANSKI – DISCUSSION ON THE REGULATIONS PROHIBITING THE USE OF PRIVATE SIGNS THAT PROJECT OVER THE RIGHT-OF-WAY:**

Commissioner Stefanski requested that the City Commission discuss the current regulations that prohibit the use of commercial signs that project over the right-of-way. This is specifically prohibited in the Central Business District. It is allowed in the Tourist Service District (i.e. W. Portage Avenue). This regulation has been in place for many years with the intent of keeping signage less cluttered in the downtown area. Under current ordinances, all signs must be flat to the building on Ashmun Street from the

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power canal to Portage Avenue.

It is City Manager Nebel's belief that this has served the City reasonably well; however, if the Commission would like to review this matter, it would be appropriate to refer it to both the Downtown Development Authority and the Planning and Development Commission for their review and comment.

Moved by Commissioner Stefanski, supported by Commissioner Bauer

That the City Commission refer this issue to the Downtown Development Authority and the Planning and Development Commission for their review and comment.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:**

#### **AWARD OF BIDS:**

##### **Maple Ridge Cemetery Fencing Project B-01-09:**

On February 24<sup>th</sup> bids were taken for the placement of fencing at Maple Ridge Cemetery. This has been a project that has been in the works for the past five years. The Sault Ste. Marie Historic Development Commission has been directly involved in the design of this significant fencing project that will both protect the Maple Ridge Cemetery as well as be an initial step towards the renovation of this very historic location in the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

The low bid for this project was approximately \$26,000 under the second bid for this project. The Engineering Department has discussed the project with the low bidder, L&C Enterprises-USA, Inc. DBA Delta Fence of Escanaba, Michigan, and they have indicated that they will be able to provide for the manufacturing and installation of this fencing.

The recommended bid award would be for the base bid amount plus the alternative for receiver post footings, which would bring the total award recommended to \$62,867.24. Furthermore, the City has previously used the services of L&C Enterprises on fencing jobs throughout the City with the last project being Malcolm Field ballpark fencing.

Moved by Commissioner Burton, supported by Commissioner Stefanski

That the City Commission award the bid for the Maple Ridge Cemetery fencing to L&C Enterprises-USA, Inc. DBA Delta Fence and Construction of Escanaba, Michigan in the total amount of \$62,867.24, which includes the additive alternative for receiver

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post footings.

Carried: Yeas: Commissioner Burton, Gerrie, Lynn, Munsell, Stefanski,  
Mayor Bosbous, and Commissioner Bauer  
Nays: None

2009 four-wheel drive ½ ton, pickup truck for the Water & Sewer Department:

Bids were opened on February 24<sup>th</sup> for the purchase of a 1/2 ton 4x4 pickup for use in the Water and Sewer Department. This pickup will replace a 1997 Dodge 3/4 ton 4x4 pickup that is in very poor condition and is incurring significant expenses to continue maintaining and operating. Four bids were obtained with the low bid being Soo Motors, Inc. of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan in the amount of \$20,429.30.

Moved by Commissioner Bauer, supported by Commissioner Gerrie

That the City Commission authorize the purchase of a 1/2 ton 4x4 pickup truck from Soo Motors, Inc. of Sault Ste. Marie for a cost of \$20,429.30, since the truck met all specifications and there were no bid discrepancies.

Carried: Yeas: Commissioner Gerrie, Lynn, Munsell, Stefanski, Mayor  
Bosbous, Commissioner Bauer, and Burton  
Nays: None

AUTHORIZATION OF A COASTAL ZONE GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE MICHIGAN DEQ FOR WATER STREET RESTORATION:

The City was notified in early December that the application for a Coastal Management Grant to help fund a Water Street Design and Reconstruction Plan has been approved. This \$90,000 design project (\$45,000 from Coastal Management and \$45,000 from local sources) was organized to provide for the final design and construction plan for a 3,200 foot segment along Water Street that will be impacted by the next phase of the CSO program. These funds will be utilized in a design process specifically for developing design concepts for the restoration of the streetscape, archeological survey and mitigation plan, and final design and construction drawings. This work will involve the saving and re-deployment of several sections of existing granite curbs on Water Street, the development of historic markers, and highlighting of the historic homes along the route.

Moved by Commissioner Gerrie, supported by Commissioner Burton

That the City Commission authorize the City Manager to execute the Michigan Coastal Management Program Grant Contract between the Department of Environmental Quality and the City of Sault Ste. Marie for a project total of \$90,000 and a grant amount of \$45,000 for the Water Street Design and Reconstruction Plan.

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Carried: Yeas: Commissioner Lynn, Munsell, Stefanski, Mayor Bosbous,  
Commissioner Bauer, Burton, and Gerrie  
Nays: None

REPORT ON THE POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM:

Last spring, there were a number of discussions both from Commissioners and the Michigan State Extension Service about the possible benefit of establishing community gardens within the City of Sault Ste. Marie. While it was not possible to proceed with this for the 2008 growing season, the committee has met this winter to discuss the possibility of establishing community gardens. Community gardens are important for residents that may not have suitable land for the growing of vegetables and flowers at their home sites.

The committee has identified four possible areas for the development of community gardens within the City. A map was attached showing those possible locations. At the Kaine's Rink location, the committee is considering the development of raised beds to facilitate gardening by those who may have physical limitations. It is the committee's suggestion to the Commission that these four sites be tentatively identified but that the actual area developed for gardening be based on actual commitments from residents to enter into a community garden agreement with the City. Based on these agreements, the City would know specifically the area that would need to be developed for establishing the community gardens.

If the City Commission is supportive of this concept, the committee is scheduling a public meeting for Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 p.m. in City Hall for those individuals that would be interested in obtaining a community garden plot to express their interest in doing so and to obtain any ideas, thoughts, or concerns from residents that would like to participate by utilizing a community garden for the growing of vegetables and flowers. There would be a rental fee of \$15.00 for the plot and users would have to sign a user agreement that would permit them to maintain the garden plot through the growing season. An April 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for signing up for garden plots would be utilized.

The committee does not have any idea what the level of interest would be in community gardens, but if the entire four areas were developed, it is estimated that there would be a cost of \$7,000 for topsoil, testing of City compost, and providing water to all four sites. If the interest is considerably less than what would be needed through the development of the four sites, then these costs would be proportionately reduced.

Community gardens can be an opportunity for local residents to reduce family food budgets and participate in a community event that will beautify and preserve green space within the community. City Manager Nebel thinks it is appropriate that the City of

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Sault Ste. Marie proceed with the establishment of community gardens subject to commitments from residents to utilize the garden space.

City Manager Nebel thanked Eric Buttil who is doing an internship with the Parks and Recreation Department. Eric has provided great support in researching various issues relating to community gardens and providing direction to the community garden committee.

Moved by Commissioner Stefanski, supported by Commissioner Bauer

That the City Commission endorse the establishment of community gardens and appropriate \$7,000 from the City Contingency Fund for this purpose.

Carried: Yeas: Commissioner Munsell, Stefanski, Mayor Bosbous,  
Commissioner Bauer, Burton, Gerrie, and Lynn  
Nays: None

#### REPORT ON THE WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AMBULANCE TRANSFER AGREEMENT:

The City of Sault Ste. Marie had agreed to go forward with a contract with War Memorial Hospital to provide transfer services from War Memorial Hospital to other hospitals in conjunction with the Kinross Township Ambulance Service.

Administration has, in particular, taken a closer look at the transfers that occurred through September 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. Based on these services, the City has billed \$45,658 for ambulance transfer services. The total expenses through this time, including the pager pay, bridge fare, meals, overtime, fringe benefits, maintenance and depreciation on the ambulance, and fuel have equaled \$20,781.13. To date, the City has collected a total of \$21,588.71 of the amount that has been billed for these services. Based on the projected write-off rate, the City would estimate that we would collect for this period of time a total of \$28,307.96, which is 62% of the revenue charges. As the payments continue to be received for these initial transfers, administration will continue to update this report to determine how close the estimated collections are as reflected as a percentage of the revenue charges. Based on this initial analysis, City Manager Nebel believes that the ambulance transfers are, minimally, paying for themselves and could result in a net gain to the ambulance system.

#### REPORT ON OBTAINING TREE CITY USA STATUS – REQUIREMENTS FOR SAULT STE. MARIE:

As part of the 2008-09 goal setting process, the City Commission identified as a secondary goal seeking Tree City USA Status to increase the focus on street trees within the City of Sault Ste. Marie. The City Engineering Department has reviewed the requirements necessary to become part of this program. The four standard

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requirements are as follows:

1. The City must designate a Tree Board or department
2. The City Commission must adopt a Tree Care Ordinance
3. The City Commission must fund a Forestry Program with an annual budget of at least \$2.00 per capita
4. The City must participate in Arbor Day Observations and Proclamation

The attached report from Alicia Askwith outlines the options that the City Commission would have in regards to these four standards. It would be beneficial for the Commission to discuss each of these four standards and how the Commission would envision meeting those requirements. Probably the two most significant items would relate to whether the Commission would establish a Tree Board or utilize a City department for that purpose. The second significant obligation is a commitment of an annual budget of at least \$2.00 per capita. The City may already meet that requirement with the combination of the cost intended for dead tree removal, leaf pick-up, biomass recycling, and other eligible costs. This would also include any grant money obtained by the City for this purpose.

It is City Manager Nebel's thought that if the City wants to give this proper attention, it would probably be most appropriate for the establishment of a tree committee that would meet on a quarterly basis (or more often if needed) that would have the specific purpose of developing a tree ordinance for the City of Sault Ste. Marie; this board could serve as out adjudicating board when requests to remove trees in the right-of-way are made to determine whether the trees should be removed or not; and this board could also play a function in developing a tree budget and a plan for each year.

Moved by Commissioner Stefanski, supported by Commissioner Lynn

That the City Commission appoint a small citizens committee charged with developing a comprehensive report on implementation of Tree City USA requirements for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, including development of a draft ordinance, developing an annual budget for various eligible tree activities within the City of Sault Ste. Marie, developing a plan to recognize Arbor Day, and make a recommendation on a permanent committee structure for meeting the obligations of Tree City USA in the future with that committee being appointed at the March 2<sup>nd</sup> City Commission meeting with the report being due for the June 15<sup>th</sup> City Commission meeting.

Carried: Yeas: Commissioner Stefanski, Mayor Bosbous, Commissioner Bauer, Burton, Gerrie, Lynn, and Munsell  
Nays: None

REPORT ON SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS GRANT APPLICATION:

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City staff has been working with the JKL Bahweting Public School Academy located at 1301 Marquette Avenue for the past couple of years in regards to the Safe Routes to School Program (SR2S). City staff has participated at the request of Bahweting School in these meetings and as part of the grant application, there will be dollars for various public improvements to facilitate biking and walking to school in a safer environment, programs to address traffic congestion, and to encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school. The grant could provide infrastructure dollars that would be utilized to improve City streets and create sidewalks or walkways where none currently exist. These would be done within City right-of-way and it would be the responsibility of the City to maintain them in the future as is the case with any street and sidewalk development.

There are currently four different construction projects that have been proposed that would impact City roads and right-of-ways. These projects are relatively basic from a design standpoint, and the grant would have the City Engineering Department involved in the design and preparation of plans and bidding proposals for the proposed sidewalks, pedestrian signals, crosswalk markings, bike lanes, and signing. Any sidewalks built to facilitate walking to and from the Bahweting School would be maintained as part of the City's sidewalk clearing efforts during the winter months. In addition, the City Police Department has agreed to assist in the planning and implementation of a bike and pedestrian safety rodeo.

The City would be a participant in this project in that the street and sidewalk improvements around the Bahweting School paid for by the grant would be construction improvements on City property.

Overall, this is a pro-active program that could result in the City receiving funding for various improvements within the public right-of-ways within the vicinity of the Bahweting School. The City's contribution would be the staff time to help facilitate design, bidding, and supervision of construction of these infrastructure improvements at this location.

Moved by Commissioner Gerrie, supported by Commissioner Lynn

That the City Commission support the Safe Routes to School Program SR2S Grant Application and provide as part of this grant a commitment for in-kind services and future maintenance responsibilities for specific improvements for walking and bicycling facilities within the City right-of-ways on routes leading to the Bahweting School and authorize a Letter of Intent from the City to participate in this community effort.

Carried:       Yeas: Mayor Bosbous, Commissioner Bauer, Burton, Gerrie, Lynn,  
                      Munsell, and Stefanski  
                      Nays: None

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Status Reports:

City Manager Nebel informed the City Commission and the public that the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Vintage Snowmobile race will be held March 15<sup>th</sup> at the I-500 snowmobile track. City Manager Nebel also informed the City Commission that the River of History Museum accepted the City's offer to modify and terminate the existing lease with the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

**MATTERS PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC:**

None

**MATTERS PRESENTED BY THE CITY COMMISSION:**

None

Moved by Commissioner Lynn, supported by Commissioner Stefanski

That the meeting adjourn at 7:54 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.

**ANTHONY G. BOSBOUS, MAYOR**

**ROBIN R. TROYER, CITY CLERK**

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