

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF CROSSLAKE
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2003
9:00 A.M. - CITY HALL

Pursuant to due notice and call, the Council for the City of Crosslake met on Tuesday, May 20, 2003 at 9:00 A.M. at City Hall. The following Councilmembers were present: Mayor Darrell Swanson, Dean Eggena, Chuck Miller, Dick Phillips and Irene Schultz. Also present was City Administrator Tom Swenson, Clerk/Treasurer Darlene Roach and one individual in the audience.

Mayor Swanson called the special meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. and stated that there were two items on the agenda for Council consideration.

City Administrator Tom Swenson stated that a tentative agreement has been reached between AFSCME and the City. Council approval of the Contract was requested. A red-lined copy of the Union Contract was available for Council review along with a press release which was prepared by Labor Attorney Steve Fecker. This red-lined copy shows language changes and the final wage settlement. The settlement calls for wage increases of 1% in 2003, 1% in 2004 and 2% in 2005; change from 85% to 80% City health and dental insurance contributions effective December 2005; and addition of two steps to the pay plan progression. The City and the Union also agreed to form a labor management committee to explore cost effective changes in group health insurance coverages. Mayor Swanson stated that the purpose of the committee is to take a look at various options for insurance coverage. He stated that when the City saves money, so do the employees. Councilmember Schultz inquired whether the Committee includes a mix of all employees and Mayor Swanson stated that the Union will be represented as well as the Police Department and Management. Councilmember Phillips will represent the Personnel Committee. MOTION 05S2-01-03 WAS MADE BY CHUCK MILLER AND SECONDED BY IRENE SCHULTZ TO APPROVE THE 2003 - 2005 CONTRACT BETWEEN AFSCME AND THE CITY. MOTION CARRIED WITH ALL AYES.

A letter dated May 19, 2003 from Consultant Sherrie Le reviewed options the Council has for filling the position of Community Development Director. A very comprehensive search was conducted by Sherrie Le with over 100 recruiting letters sent directly to Community Development professionals. Advertisements were placed in the League of Minnesota Cities Bulletin, the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, trade journals and in local area newspapers. Very few applications were received from qualified individuals. After interviews were held with four individuals, the candidates were narrowed down to two qualified individuals. Both of these individuals indicated the starting salary was lower than what they felt was needed in order to find local housing.

Sherrie Le presented three options which the Council could consider. The first option is to hire a consulting firm to do the work of the Community Development Director, however with the volume and complexity of the work, this would be cost-prohibitive. The second option is to increase the salary range to be more competitive and re-advertise. If this option is considered, it is the recommendation of Sherrie Le that the starting salary range be increased to at least \$55,000 - \$60,000. The third option is to offer the job to one of the individuals interviewed in hopes that he would stay even though he has

interviewed with other cities who are offering higher starting salary's. Of the three recommendations, Sherrie Le recommended option number two.

City Administrator Swenson does not believe hiring a consulting firm would work for Crosslake. He stated in other cities such as Emily and Pequot Lakes, it works fine since they don't get the number of complicated issues that Crosslake gets, but Crosslake needs a person who can work 40 hours plus per week. Swenson stated another option would be to promote from within and then hire a replacement Planner-Zoning Coordinator. If this option is selected, the job description would need to be revised. Another option would be to hire an Assistant City Administrator who would be in charge of the Planning and Zoning Department. One of the key components of this position is that the individual possess good people skills and not be black and white in dealing with issues but has the ability to find compromises which work for both the applicant and the City.

Mayor Swanson asked for comments from the Council. Councilmember Miller liked the last option of re-doing the job description, get what we need and pay appropriately.

Councilmember Eggena stated that the reason Paul Larson left was because he didn't like the enforcement part. He stated that he feels the City has created a problem over the years by creating a set of rules that places a heavy workload on the Planning and Zoning Department. He stated the workload continues to increase, but the problem isn't getting corrected. It is his opinion that Tom and Darlene need additional help. It was the recommendation of Councilmember Eggena to start looking at redoing the ordinances, which would in turn take the load off of Staff. He feels that a consultant should be hired to do this work as was done in the City of Lakeshore. He stated that CUP's and non-conforming lots are creating undue workload in the Department. He felt that Staff should work with the Planning and Zoning Commission on redefining the ordinances and that the Planning and Zoning Department should become a more user friendly place. Councilmember Eggena felt that with reasonable rules, 95% of the people will obey the ordinances.

Councilmember Schultz agreed with Councilmember Miller. She stated that administration needs help and it would be good to have someone on Staff who could be a backup for the City Administrator.

Councilmember Miller agreed with Councilmember Eggena in that we have established a requirement that every CUP comes before the Planning and Zoning Commission and maybe this needs to be looked at.

Councilmember Phillips asked if there is a need in the City for a planner type person. He wondered if it would be better to hire a consultant for now and then later on hire a planner. City Administrator Swenson stated that someone needs to rework the ordinances based on the outcome of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. Also, the City will have requests and applications from developers for projects that would not have had an interest previously due to the lack of municipal sewer. These types of developments require someone on Staff for the developer to work with.

Councilmember Schultz commented that the Council needs to be careful when not allowing developers in because these developments do help the tax base of the City.

Without development, the taxpayers are left to bear the tax burden and what she is hearing from the public is that they do not want to pay any higher taxes.

Mayor Swanson stated that he does not feel a consulting firm should supervise employees. He expressed his disappointment with applicants who apply for a position and then state that they are not interested. He stated that he was impressed with one of the applicants who interviewed but may not accept the job due to the salary that is being offered. He agreed that there are "pressure points" in the Planning and Zoning Department that require a large amount of time but felt the requirement to bring CUP's to the Planning and Zoning Commission was in reaction to commercial growth that the City was experiencing. Mayor Swanson stated that Staff needs to continue to work on adopting elements of the Comp Plan which will be finalized shortly. Mayor Swanson did express a concern in relaxing the ordinances and not having a building inspector on Staff to make sure the ordinances are being followed. Without the CUP process, Staff may find they are spending more time in the field doing inspections. Councilmember Schultz agreed that the lack of a building inspector has caused some of the problems in Planning and Zoning.

Mayor Swanson summarized the recommendations of the Council and called for motions related to these recommendations.

MOTION 05S2-02-03 WAS MADE BY DEAN EGGENA AND SECONDED BY CHUCK MILLER THAT THE COUNCIL DIRECT THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE TO RE-EVALUATE THE NEEDS IN ADMINISTRATION. MOTION CARRIED WITH ALL AYES.

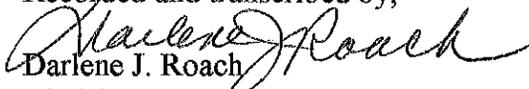
Councilmember Eggena suggested that the City not continue to advertise for the Planner position but wait until the Ordinances are re-evaluated, to have Nancy Vernon continue directing the Planning and Zoning Department and to have Staff identify pressure points to review with the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation to the Council.

MOTION 05S2-03-03 WAS MADE BY DEAN EGGENA AND SECONDED BY DICK PHILLIPS THAT THE COUNCIL DIRECTS THE PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT TO EVALUATE THEIR WORKLOAD AND FIND THE "PRESSURE POINTS" TO BRING TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR REVIEW WITH A FINAL RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL. MOTION CARRIED WITH ALL AYES.

There was some discussion regarding the use of tape recorders for all meetings. This will be discussed at a later date.

MOTION 05S2-04-03 WAS MADE BY DICK PHILLIPS AND SECONDED BY CHUCK MILLER TO ADJOURN THIS SPECIAL MEETING AT 10:02 A.M. MOTION CARRIED WITH ALL AYES.

Recorded and transcribed by,


Darlene J. Roach
Clerk/Treasurer