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City Clerk
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CITY OF MT. VERNON, ILLINOIS
CITY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION
Monday, February 5, 2024

The Mt. Vernon City Council met in Executive Session on Monday February 5, 2024 at 7:23 p.m. in the City Council Chamber at City Hall, 1100 Main Street, Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

Mayor John Lewis opened the Executive Session.

Roll call showed present: Council Member Ray Botch, Council Member Joe Gliosci, Council Member Donte Moore, Council Member Mike Young, and Mayor John Lewis. Also present were City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel, City Attorney David Leggans, and Deputy City Clerk Becky Barbour.

Mayor John Lewis requested an Executive Session under 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(5) – The Purchase or Lease of Real Property for the Use of the City; 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6) – Setting of a Price for Sale or Lease of Real Property Owned by the City; 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) – The Appointment and Employment of Personnel; and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) – Litigation.

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel gave a status report from Barber Murphy regarding the Muni-West Building. Barber Murphy suggested that the City may want to demolish the building and just sell the lot, however, the City may want to hold off for a couple of months if that is a consideration. The Council agreed to hold off for six months and then reconsider the option to demolish the building if not sold by that time.

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel next spoke to the Council regarding parks and recreation. The City had a study done regarding purchasing additional acreage for parks and recreation. There is a 69-acre tract owned by Erin Beal that is for sale for $1.4 million dollars located by the Aquatic Zoo and the ballfields. There is an Outdoor Spaces Acquisition Grant through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and it will pay up to $1.7 million dollars for the acquisition of parks and recreation property. It would be a 100% grant with no match. The City would not be able to apply for the grant until September or October of this year and then it would be February or March of 2025 before the City would know if they would receive the grant. City Manager Bechtel has spoken to Ms. Beal, and she would be willing to work with the City. City Manager Bechtel wanted to find out which direction the Council would want to go in if moving forward with the purchase of the property. The Council was in agreement that the City Manager should go forward working with Ms. Beal in purchasing the property.

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel stated the next item is regarding employment of personnel. She stated that she is planning to retire in June, 2025. She stated the reason for announcing this at this time is to plan for her replacement. If Assistant City Manager Nathan McKenna is considered for City Manager as City Manager Bechtel retires, the Council needs to put that in place. There was a discussion regarding Assistant City Manager McKenna and his future with the City and going forward when hiring a new City Manager. If that is the plan, Attorney Leggans stated the City should do an Agreement stating that as City Manager Bechtel retires, the City has the intention to hire Assistant City Manager McKenna as City Manager, however if the City would change their mind, he would be entitled to compensation. An Agreement would have to be approved in open session. The Council agreed that Attorney Leggans should draft an Agreement for the Council to review and approve.

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel stated the next item on the agenda is possible litigation regarding the Ferrara Fire Truck. The truck was delivered in December, 2022, and it has never been in service. There were 45 things wrong with the truck when it was received. The truck is still in Chicago and there are at least 3 things still wrong with it. Ferrara is not communicating with the company that is making improvements on the truck. City Manager Bechtel has spoken with Attorney Courtney Cox, who believes the City may have a federal case. She has information to send to Attorney Cox to review if the Council is in agreement. The City would want to sue for the purchase price plus interest, and then would have to go out for bids again for a new truck. The Council Members were in agreement that City Manager Bechtel should go forward with sending the information to Attorney Cox and pursuing litigation.

Council Member Joe Gliosci made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: Botch, Gliosci, Moore, Young, and Lewis.

The Executive Session adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Barbour

Becky Barbour, Deputy City Clerk