

A regular meeting of the Ishpeming City Council was held on Wednesday, March 3, 2010 at the Ishpeming Senior Center. Mayor Gary Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Gary Nelson, Council Members Patricia Bureau, Claudia Demarest, Pat Scanlon and John Stone. Present: Five (5). Absent: None (0). Also present were Interim City Manager Jim Bjorne and City Attorney David Savu.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. John Thomas, Staff Representative for Michigan Council 25 AFSCME, congratulated the City Council and past City Manager for successfully navigating through a financial crisis that has the City far ahead of where it was five years ago. Mr. Thomas stated that this success came at the price of the City employees. Mr. Thomas stated that the departments are working with fewer employees, but their responsibilities have increased.

Mr. Thomas reviewed details of the changes that have been made to the employee health care coverage over the last several years.

Mr. Thomas stated that the employees feel that both sides have made efforts to control spending to a point that the City has actually seen financial growth during difficult times. Mr. Thomas stated that they do not feel that the economic conditions in the City reflect the same conditions that are in the state.

Mr. Thomas stated that the last contract negotiated in 2006 was during some of the City's worst financial conditions. Yet the City, through negotiations, was able to provide insurance premium increases as well as wage increases for all three years of that contract.

Mr. Thomas stated that the employees are not greedy; they just want a fair contract. Mr. Thomas asked that the City be as committed to the employees as its employees have been to the City of Ishpeming.

Mrs. Shana Alderton, Director of Field Services for Michigan AFSCME Council #25, spoke on behalf of the Ishpeming employees represented by AFSCME. Mrs. Alderton stated that these employees have given a number of years of service to this community and have dedicated their time to the City. Mrs. Alderton stated that it is time for the Council to step up and support the employees. Mrs. Alderton stated that negotiations have been ongoing since late September 2009. Mrs. Alderton stated that management has continually come to the table saying that they are giving a fair deal, but stated that she disagrees with that opinion. Mrs. Alderton stated that compared to other municipalities in the area, the City's employees are the lowest paid group and also pay the highest rate into the employee benefit package. These employees have made changes in the past to save the City money. Mrs. Alderton urged the City Council to take a look at these numbers and come to the table with a fair offer.

Mr. Mark Poirier, 568 Jasper Street, stated that as a taxpayer he wanted to stress the importance of a fair and final contract. Mr. Poirier stated that the City residents are fortunate to have this group of quality people maintaining our infrastructure for all of these years. Mr. Poirier stated

that it is comforting to know that this excellent, qualified crew is ready and available at all hours when the residents need them. Mr. Poirier stated that he feels the employees' wages are too low. Mr. Poirier stated that the City workers are only asking for a fair contract. Mr. Poirier stated that he hopes that this contract will get settled quickly and fairly for everyone involved.

Mr. Ernie Harsila, 394 Winthrop Street, stated that he has lived in Ishpeming for approximately 45 years. Mr. Harsila stated that he has seen a decrease in the number of employees over the years. Mr. Harsila stated that he feels there has been a lot of overspending and mentioned several projects. Mr. Harsila stated that the City needs to give the employees a fair deal.

Mr. Angelo Curcio, 902 N. 5th Street, stated that his father was a city employee for 32 years and that his uncle was a City employee for 45 years. Mr. Curcio stated that the answer to the City's financial problems is binary capitalism and stated that there are many people out there that would be willing to discuss this concept with the City Council.

Mrs. Kristi Flohe, 200 Graham Street, urged the City Council to make a fair contract with the employees. Mrs. Flohe stated that the employees work very hard and they more than deserve a fair contract.

Mr. Charlie Anderson, Chairman of the Ishpeming Business Association, stated that the Ishpeming Business Association has resolved to come to the City Council meetings and become more integrated with the City Council. Mr. Anderson stated that the IBA meets every Thursday morning and invited all interested persons to attend their meetings.

Mr. Anderson stated that he lives at 115 Cleveland Avenue. Mr. Anderson commented on the City's winter parking ordinance. Mr. Anderson stated that he does not think it is necessary to require winter parking permits in the month of April. Mr. Anderson stated that the dates printed on the parking signs do not coincide with the dates in the Ordinance.

Mr. Tim Dellangelo, DPW employee, stated that a one-year contract is not a good solution and urged the City Council to consider a three-year contract.

AGENDA COMMENT

Mrs. Carol Fulsher, Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority, reserved time for comment on Agenda Item No. 8.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilwoman Bureau and seconded by Councilman Scanlon to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- a. Minutes of Previous Meetings (February 3 and 19, 2010)
- b. Approval of Disbursements (Mayor Nelson and Councilman Stone)
- c. Monthly Financial Report
- d. Adoption of traffic control order
 - 1) Country Lane traffic stop at U.S. Highway 41
 - 2) North Road traffic to stop at U.S. Highway 41

e. Resolution for Charitable Gaming License – Bell Hospital Auxiliary

Aye: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING ON DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 630 VINE STREET

Mayor Nelson opened the public hearing at 7:28 p.m. to hear and receive comments regarding the disposal of property located at 630 Vine Street. Hearing no comments, Mayor Nelson closed the public hearing at 7:29 p.m.

IRON ORE HERITAGE TRAIL

Interim City Manager Bjorne reported that the City of Ishpeming has contributed \$500 to the Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority each year since 2008. Interim City Manager Bjorne stated that the Recreation Authority submitted a request for a \$500 contribution from all seven members of the Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority for 2010. The Interim City Manager stated that the funds would support their administrative costs.

Mrs. Carol Fulsher, Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority, thanked the City of Ishpeming for participating with the Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority. Mrs. Fulsher stated that the Iron Ore Heritage Trail brought a million dollars into this community by way of contractors, artists, sign companies and fabricating companies. Mrs. Fulsher stated that Phase II, 2 ½ miles of trail through the City of Ishpeming, will be bid in April and should be completed by the end of summer. Mrs. Fulsher stated that Phase II will go through the City of Ishpeming from the Brownstone area to Winthrop Junction. Mrs. Fulsher stated that the Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority will have a millage request of .2 mils on the August ballot.

At the recommendation of Interim City Manager Bjorne, a motion was made by Councilman Scanlon and seconded by Councilwoman Bureau to continue to support the Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority and to approve a contribution of \$500 to the Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority; funds to be paid from the Community Promotions Budget. Ayes: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

NEGAUNEE CONNECTION TO EXISTING 30" SANITARY SEWER

Interim City Manager Bjorne reported that the City of Negaunee is requesting a meeting with the City of Ishpeming regarding the connection of their sewer main into the existing 30" sanitary sewer line which leads to the Ishpeming Area Wastewater Treatment Facility. The Interim City Manager stated that the proposal would eliminate the need for Negaunee to install a line under the Carp River and stated that the connection point would utilize a portion of the City of Ishpeming's and Ishpeming Township's existing sanitary sewer system.

At the recommendation of Interim City Manager Bjorne, a motion was made by Councilman Scanlon and seconded by Councilman Stone to authorize the City Manager to research the request from the City of Negaunee and to meet with representatives of the City of Negaunee and Ishpeming Township for the purpose of discussing Negaunee's request for permission to connect to the 30" sewer main which leads to the Ishpeming Area Wastewater Treatment Facility. Ayes: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

RESOLUTION ADOPTING MASTER PLAN

A motion was made by Councilman Scanlon and seconded by Councilman Stone to adopt Resolution No. 2010-2, *Ishpeming City Council Master Plan Adoption*, and to adopt the Master Plan as presented. Ayes: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

SECOND/THIRD STREETS INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Interim City Manager Bjorne reported that the City of Ishpeming is the recipient of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) for infrastructure improvements to 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Streets, south of Division Street. Interim City Manager Bjorne stated that the project will include upgrades to the storm, sewer and water mains, will replace sidewalks and curbs, and street paving. The Interim City Manager stated that the CDBG grant covers \$720,000 of the project with a City match of \$100,000 to be paid out of the water fund.

At the recommendation of the Interim City Manager, a motion was made by Councilman Scanlon and seconded by Councilwoman Demarest to authorize Interim City Manager Bjorne to sign and submit the Community Development Block Grant Agreement for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Street Flood Control Project on behalf of the City of Ishpeming. Ayes: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

MOOSE COUNTRY SNOWMOBILE CLUB TERMINATION OF LEASE OF HOWARD OIL BUILDING

Interim City Manager Bjorne reported that the Moose Country Snowmobile Club (MCSC) has submitted a request to terminate their lease agreement with the City of Ishpeming for the Howard Oil Building. The Interim City Manager stated that the MCSC built a new storage building in the Country Village area and they no longer need the Howard Oil building.

At the recommendation of the Interim City Manager and at the request of the Moose Country Snowmobile Club, a motion was made by Councilman Scanlon and seconded by Councilwoman Demarest to terminate the Moose Country Snowmobile Lease for the Howard Oil Building effective March 4, 2010. Ayes: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

UPDATE ON COSTS TO MAINTAIN SKI TRAILS ON PROPERTY OWNED BY ISHPEMING TOWNSHIP AND THE TUBE SLIDE

Interim City Manager Bjorne stated that the Deer Lake Trail is located on property that was recently donated by Cleveland Cliffs to the Township of Ishpeming. The Interim City Manager stated that as a follow-up to the City Council's previous discussions about the issue, Public Works Director Jon Kangas has prepared a maintenance expense report for the Teal Lake trail and has also prepared a tube slide expense report.

Public Works Director Kangas presented the reports to the City Council and stated that the total cost to groom the Deer Lake Trail from 10/2/2009 to 2/24/2010 was \$1,832.53, including equipment, wages & fringes. Public Works Director Kangas reviewed the revenue report for the cross country trails. To date, the City has collected \$654.00 for cross country trail passes and another \$4,160.00 for special event trail rentals.

Public Works Director Kangas presented a project report for the Al Quaal tube slide and downhill ski area. Public Works Director Kangas reviewed the expenses and revenue and stated that there was a deficit of approximately \$10,000.00 for the 2009/2010 season. Public Works Director Kangas recommended that the group rates be reviewed and that the City consider an increase in the group rates. Public Works Director Kangas stated that only 12 downhill ski passes were sold for the entire season. Public Works Director Kangas stated that it may be prudent to not run the south ski tow next season.

OLD BUSINESS

At the recommendation of the Interim City Manager, a motion was made by Councilman Scanlon and seconded by Councilman Stone to authorize the Interim City Manager and the City Clerk to submit a grant application in the amount of \$20,000 to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan to cover the engineering costs of the Safe Routes to School Project. Ayes: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

At the recommendation of the Interim City Manager, a motion was made by Councilman Scanlon and seconded by Councilwoman Bureau to authorize an additional \$100 from the Community Promotions Budget for the welcome reception for the new City Manager to be held on March 25, 2010 at the Ishpeming Senior Center. The DDA will be asked to share in the total cost of the event. Ayes: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilman Stone commented on the City Council's earlier discussion concerning the City of Negaunee's request to connect to the 30" sewer main leading to the Wastewater Treatment Facility. Councilman Stone recommended that a meeting between the Ishpeming City Manager and the Ishpeming Township Supervisor be scheduled prior to the meeting with the City of Negaunee. Councilman Stone stated that it is important that the City of Ishpeming and Ishpeming Township are in agreement before the City of Negaunee's request is considered.

Interim City Manager Bjorne stated that he will make the necessary arrangements for the meetings.

Councilman Scanlon commented on the Recycling Center. Councilman Scanlon stated that reports from the previous Public Works Director had indicated that the Recycling Center was operating in a deficit. Councilman Scanlon requested that a financial report for the Recycling Center be presented at the next City Council meeting.

Councilman Scanlon commented on the winter parking ordinance. Councilman Scanlon stated that the ordinance was revised to include the month of April because it is common to have one or two significant snow events in the month of April.

City Manager Bjorne responded to Mr. Anderson's public comment and stated that during the months of November and April, the parking ban is not actively enforced unless there is a significant snowfall.

COUNCILWOMAN DEMAREST

Councilwoman Demarest reported that she was unable to attend the EMS meeting and stated that no Cemetery Board meeting was scheduled last month.

COUNCILWOMAN BUREAU

Councilwoman Bureau reported that she attended the CUPPAD meeting in Escanaba last Friday and learned that MDOT will be cutting 240 road projects in the State of Michigan over the next five years; 11 of those projects were scheduled for the Upper Peninsula. Councilwoman Bureau reported that it was also announced that the State of Michigan is considering a gas tax increase of 6 cents and an increase of 12 cents in the diesel tax.

Councilwoman Bureau reported that she attended the District Library Committee meeting and stated that the Committee reviewed and compared library expenses, income, staffing numbers, technology, and services. Councilwoman Bureau stated that at their next meeting, they will develop a budget and an outline of services for the future district library.

Councilwoman Bureau reported that she attended an open house at the Negaunee City Library.

Councilwoman Bureau reported that she attended the Planning Commission meeting and stated that they reviewed the City Council's list of goals and objectives.

Councilwoman Bureau stated that the NMU ski race held at Al Quaal was very well-attended and stated that it was nice to see all the activity in the park.

Councilwoman Bureau reported that she attended the Neighborhood Watch meeting and stated that the meetings have been rescheduled for the last Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Ishpeming Senior Center.

COUNCILMAN STONE

Councilman Stone reported that he attended the Central Dispatch meeting and the Library Board meeting.

Councilman Stone reported that at the Region VII meeting last year, he won a free registration for the MML Capital Conference to be held in Lansing, April 13-14, 2010. Councilman Stone stated that if there are no objections, he will attend the conference at his own expense.

Councilwoman Bureau stated that she will also attend the Capital Conference and will attend at her own expense.

COUNCILMAN SCANLON

Councilman Scanlon requested an update on the Senior Center bathroom repairs. Public Works Director Kangas stated that the women's bathroom is done and the carpenter has started working on the men's bathroom.

Councilman Scanlon stated that he would like to see a wide-spread, community clean up day in conjunction with our annual spring clean up. Councilman Scanlon suggested that the IBA and

the DDA be asked to participate and that all residents be encouraged to get involved. Councilman Scanlon stated that it is important that we instill a sense of community pride back into our City.

MAYOR NELSON

Mayor Nelson reported that he attended the DDA meeting. Mayor Nelson stated that the DDA continues to work on their goals. Mayor Nelson stated that he did recommend that the DDA and the City move forward with the Malton Road extension.

Mayor Nelson responded to comments made during public comment regarding the ongoing union negotiations. Mayor Nelson stated that last year alone, the City had a \$107,000 decrease in State Revenue Sharing. Mayor Nelson stated that about ten years ago, the City received approximately \$1.4 million in State Revenue Sharing and currently the City receives \$900,000; equating to a \$500,000 reduction. Mayor Nelson stated that at one time, State Revenue Sharing covered 1/3 of the City's budget.

Mayor Nelson stated that several years ago, the City paid \$300,000 in annual health care premiums and at one point the premiums had increased up to \$750,000 annually.

Mayor Nelson stated that the City must look at what they can afford; the City Council is trying to find the balance between being fair to the employees and being fair to the taxpayers. Mayor Nelson stated that other neighboring communities like the City of Negaunee and Tilden Township have other revenue sources that our City does not have.

Mayor Nelson stated that some of our income is designated millage and cannot be used for salaries and benefits.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Interim City Manager Bjorne reported that in December 2009, he advised the City Council about some snowplowing issues that the City had encountered. Interim City Manager Bjorne stated that the snowplowing issues resulted in changes to the City Ordinance. The Interim City Manager stated that he will be scheduling meetings with area business owners and City staff to evaluate the problems and come up with an agreeable course of action.

Interim City Manager Bjorne reported that NMU is expanding their WiMAX internet service into the west-end of Marquette County. The Interim City Manager stated that he will meet with NMU representatives tomorrow to discuss the installation of an antenna on the City's water tower.

Interim City Manager Bjorne reported that the DDA office was closed in December 2009. The Interim City Manager stated that because the Small Business Association had utilized the DDA offices, the SBA will now use the 2nd floor office at City Hall.

Interim City Manager Bjorne reported that he attended a grade inspection of the Greenwood Street Bridge replacement project. The Interim City Manager stated that the bid letting for this project will go out on May 7, 2010 and construction will follow shortly thereafter. Interim City

Manager Bjorne stated that the goal is to have the project completed before school starts in September 2010.

Interim City Manager Bjorne reported that the City Council received a letter from Fire Chief Ed Anderson regarding the acquisition of the new 4WD transport vehicle for the Fire Department. The Interim City Manager reported that the vehicle was purchased with grant assistance from the USDA Rural Development and commended Fire Chief Anderson for his efforts to obtain these funds.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR / CITY ENGINEER REPORT

Public Works Director Jon Kangas reported that the snow has been melting rapidly and stated that the DPW is responding as quickly as possible to the areas where there are blocked storm drains.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

None.

CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS STATUS OF UNION NEGOTIATIONS

A motion was made by Councilwoman Bureau and seconded by Councilwoman Demarest to enter into closed session at 8:32 p.m. to discuss the status of labor negotiations. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Councilwoman Bureau, Councilwoman Demarest, Councilman Scanlon, Councilman Stone and Mayor Nelson. Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried

A motion was made by Councilman Scanlon and seconded by Councilwoman Demarest to return to open session at 9:40 p.m. Ayes: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Scanlon and seconded by Councilwoman Bureau to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 p.m. Ayes: Five (5). Nays: None (0). Motion carried.

Jenifer M. Rajala
City Clerk