

Finance Committee
October 19, 2020
6 p.m. - City Hall Council Chambers

Chairman Tom Ptak called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chairman Ptak, Alderman Demes, Alderman Lavieri, Alderman Jeppson, Alderman Herndon.

Absent:

Others present: Mayor Jeff Grove (Arrived at 6:15 p.m.), Finance Director John Duncan, Economic Development Director Leah Inman, Building Inspector and Fire Chief Andy Bacidore, City Attorney Jim McPhedran, City Engineer Brian Brown, City Clerk Carrie Brown, Deputy City Clerk Brent Bader

A quorum was present.

The minutes of the Finance Committee held on October 5, 2020 were unanimously approved by the Committee after a motion from Alderman Lavieri and a second from Alderman Jeppson.

Economic Development Director Leah Inman began a presentation regarding the permitting and processing software, GovPilot. Economic Development Director Inman said the software could help with some of the information Building Inspector Andy Bacidore is trying to convey and collect as discussed during the earlier Licenses Committee meeting, as well as most other departments at City Hall. She said the City's current software Caselle handles all the accounting and water billing but it is not cloud-based and doesn't take La Salle "to the next step." Economic Development Director Inman said the software will reduce downtime and ease day-to-day operations by creating a centralized database linking departments together. All permitting would be completable online and it will make the code enforcement process easier and more concise through a smart phone app, photos, and a consolidated location for information amongst departments. Work orders and permits applied for would be redirected to the appropriate departments to process the request. Economic Development Director Inman said municipalities across the nation are going from paper-based to cloud-based programs and that residents put more trust in municipalities using a cloud-based system that's easy to track rather than paper and pencil processes. She said the software will enhance the accessibility for residents and, as has been shown to be important during the COVID-19 pandemic, allow them to access City resources if City Hall has to be closed. Economic Development Director Inman said it won't take work from anyone but will free up time for staff to work on other projects.

Alderman Lavieri asked how payment would be accepted through the program, and Economic Development Director Inman said it would be through credit cards or check payments.

Alderman Demes asked about a cost and Economic Development Director Inman said the cost is \$2,000 per month. That cost includes apps that the aldermen can use to report issues to City staff as well as check updates on the issue. Economic Development Director Inman also said an

app could be made available for residents to report issues. City Attorney Jim McPhedran cautioned Economic Development Director Inman that such an app could become burdensome for City staff to keep up with. Economic Development Director Inman said she asked about that and while there is a lot of activity early, you can limit how many complaints a resident can make in a set period of time. If the City decided to not have an app available to residents, they could still apply for permits on the City's website which would be entered into the software for the City's staff to access. Economic Development Director Inman said she had done something similar at Inman Electric to update them to a cloud-based service which is why she's decided to spearhead this program. Chairman Ptak asked about the payment plans and Economic Development Director Inman said there are one-year, three-year and five-year contracts. Alderman Reynolds asked about the rate change if they do a year and to a three-year if it works out, Economic Development Director Inman recommended the three-year plan as it would give them time to get used to the system.

Economic Development Director Inman went through the resources the City would have access to as well as the other modules that are available which would cost more if they are interested in having them. Aldermen Demes and Reynolds said they liked the software and want to move forward with it. Economic Development Director Inman added it would qualify as a COVID expense and can use money given by the state towards the software. Alderman Demes said it was a "bonus" that Inman has experience in this and can guide the City with it moving forward. Alderman Reynolds asked when the system could be live and Economic Development Director Inman said she would hope to have it up by March 1, possibly even testing it in February. Economic Development Director Inman has reached out to municipalities in New Jersey and New York who use the software for their input and received positive feedback.

Chairman Ptak asked if it can identify potential revenue streams in the City and Economic Development Director Inman said that's difficult to quantify and most of their data is judged based on time freed up at City Hall. Chairman Ptak asked if all City workers would have an app or if just administrators would have access to it, and Economic Development Director Inman said that'll be up to the administrators if their workers will all have access to the system or if they want to keep the master work order list and give those out to workers as they come in. Alderman Crane said he wouldn't want someone like Superintendent of Public Works Jeff Bumgarner burdened with more paperwork when his workers could be given the app to finalize work orders themselves. City Engineer Brian Brown said it would be helpful to track water mains in the future and plot them on a GIS map, and Economic Development Director Inman said that feature should be available in the new year. Brown said tracking this information would also assist in getting grants.

Mayor Jeff Grove asked who would be making letters and sending them out in the system and Economic Development Director Inman said more options would be available, but Mayor Grove said someone is still going to have to send out letters or applications. Building Inspector Bacidore said he would still need to take pictures and write it up but it would consolidate the information. Mayor Grove said he thinks it will be a lot of work and they City won't get much benefit out of it but that he didn't want to sway the Finance Committee towards saying no.

Mayor Grove asked what the City does with GPS information now, and Alderman Crane said it's sitting somewhere but could be used more with this software. Mayor Grove asked if there was any other community using something similar and Building Inspector Bacidore said Kewanee uses something similar. Mayor Grove asked why other communities don't have something like this and Economic Development Director Inman said the City is trying to be at the forefront. Mayor Grove asked if Kewanee staff would do a presentation for us, but Building Inspector Bacidore said that would be unlikely as they aren't the sales people for the software.

Alderman Demes said since the City has the COVID relief money then it's worth investing it into this software. Chairman Ptak said it's a lot of money to commit for three years and that it wouldn't be affordable without the COVID relief money, but that he's a "tech guy" and likes the software. Mayor Grove said the COVID money isn't "extra" but replaced money for the salaries and noted the City has a deficit. Chairman Ptak said it wasn't money they had previously and he views it as extra.

The Finance Committee unanimously voted to approve the recommendation to the City Council to purchase the software.

Chairman Ptak then opened discussion about a request for a donation from the Boy Scouts of America. Chairman Ptak said he doesn't recall donating in the past to the organization and doesn't recall having been asked. No specific amount was requested. The Committee unanimously voted to approve the recommendation to the City Council to deny the request.

Alderman Lavieri questioned one item on the bills which Finance Director Duncan explained were yearly payments on bonds.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.



Carrie Brown, City Clerk by Deputy City Clerk Brent Bader