

# REGULAR MEETING COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL

April 19, 2006

## OPEN FORUM – 7:15 p.m.

Open forum provides a person an opportunity to inform the Council of a problem or to request information related to City business not scheduled for Council action and on the Agenda. Mayor Shiely encouraged persons to limit their remarks to two (2) minutes per issue.

Ron Reiman, 6120 Hadley Avenue, stated that he, along with ten of the twelve families living along Hadley Avenue, are present tonight with the hopes to have a voice in certain aspects of the development. He referenced a letter sent to Council stating that none of the families oppose the development but they do believe that their suggestions, as laid out by the task force, could be applied. He noted that the Mayor had acknowledged that the residents' recommendations and suggestions to the task force have not been followed as it was expected. He indicated that the letter presented to council reviews five major points: sewer and water, zoning, appropriate buffering for the area behind the homes on the east side of Hadley Avenue, and that Hadley Avenue not be upgraded. He explained that the residents believe that their suggestions would help to preserve the semi-rural character of the area. He stated that they also want to shield families from the imposition of costly and unnecessary upgrades. He stated that they are disappointed as they have come to realize, while working through this process, that they really don't have an influence on the process, that it is actually guided by the developers. He stated that they have worked closely with Staff throughout the process and assured Council that they would continue to offer their services as a part of the development process. He stated that they would appreciate Council's assistance in keeping this as a model for future neighborhoods.

Mayor Shiely acknowledged the Hadley Avenue residents' concerns adding that Council has a copy of the letter referenced that includes their signatures. She thanked them for work and presence at the meeting and for sharing their concerns with Council.

Eric Nelson, 9396 Indian Boulevard Court South, stated that his concern is with an item on the agenda. He stated that it is his hope that the Council would consider all facts as it deals with the 103<sup>rd</sup> Street Bridge. He noted that moving gravel from a mile away and making the bridge an overpass versus an underpass could save the City a tremendous amount of money. He indicated that this would be a more logical solution for the intersection.

Mayor Shiely stated that this is on the agenda and asked residents to wait until that time to make their comments.

## CALL TO ORDER

The City Council of the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, Minnesota held a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 19, 2006, at the Cottage Grove City Hall, 7516 80<sup>th</sup> Street South. Mayor Sandy Shiely called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

### ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Sandy Shiely  
Council Member Myron Bailey  
Council Member Karla Bigham  
Council Member Mark Grossklaus  
Council Member Pat Rice

Also Present: Ryan Schroeder, City Administrator  
Ron Hedberg, Finance and Administrative Services Director  
Howard Blin, Community Development Director  
Michael Zurbey, Interim Public Safety Director  
Les Burshten, Public Works Director  
Corrine Thomson, City Attorney

### ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION BY BAILEY, SECONDED BY BIGHAM, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

### PRESENTATIONS

#### A. Arbor Day Presentation

Brian Voelker, Public Works, stated that the citywide Arbor Day event is scheduled for Saturday, April 29, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Oakwood Park, located north of 80<sup>th</sup> Street off Hardwood and Harkness Avenue. He stated that parking would be provided in the Kohls parking lot and the empty lot west of Oakwood Park. He provided Council with an overview of the planned events noting that a tent would be setup at the park that would provide areas for ten environmental groups and landscaping companies. He reviewed the list of organizations involved with the Council. He stated that the events would include a chain saw artist, Peaceful Methodist would be giving away flower seeds, four trees that had been donated by Bailey's Nursery would be given away through the course of the event, Public Works Department plans to have a recycling and stormwater information table, and Freckles the Frog would also be in attendance. He stated that the plan is to promote the parks and provide information regarding the work that is planned for the season.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### A. March 1, 2006 Regular Meeting

Mayor Shiely stated that the minutes stand approved as presented.

## CONSENT CALENDAR

Council Member Bailey pulled Item's 4J and 4K for discussion.

Council Member Bailey referenced Item 4J and explained that this is a resolution accepting a donation of trees from Bailey Nurseries for the Arbor Day event. He stated that on behalf of the Council he would like to thank Bailey Nurseries for their donation of trees for the Arbor Day event.

Council Member Bailey referenced Item 4K, a resolution to write-off Cottage Grove EMS accounts receivable, and clarified that Staff is asking Council to authorize a write-off for unpaid ambulance fees. He asked Staff to provide the Council with a complete list of all companies that are a part of the proposed write-off.

City Administrator Schroeder confirmed that Staff is asking for Council's approval and assured Council that Staff would provide them with a list that includes all companies involved in the write-off.

MOTION BY RICE, SECONDED BY BAILEY, TO:

- A. ACCEPT AND PLACE ON FILE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:
  - i. PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION OF MARCH 15, 2006.
- B. AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE OF A SINGLE-OCCASION GAMBLING PERMIT TO SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 833/DBA SOUTH WASHINGTON SENIOR CENTER, 8400 EAST POINT DOUGLAS ROAD, TO CONDUCT A RAFFLE ON OCTOBER 20, 2006.
- C. ACCEPT AND APPROVE AGREEMENT FOR THE GREATER YMCA OF ST. PAUL TO OPERATE THE COTTAGE GROVE OUTDOOR MUNICIPAL POOL IN THE SUMMER OF 2006.
- D. RATIFY THE APPOINTMENT OF ROBERT DAVY AS CHAIR OF THE PARKS, RECREATION, AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION.
- E. CLARIFY MICHAEL ZURBEY'S SERVICE AS INTERIM PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR FROM MAY 10, 2005 UNTIL THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW DIRECTOR.
- F. ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-071** APPROVING INTERFUND TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS. ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-072** AUTHORIZING CLOSING CERTAIN FUNDS. ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-073** AUTHORIZING INTERFUND LOANS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,40,000 TO THE 2005 IMPROVEMENT FUND (564) AND \$1,000,000 TO THE 2006 IMPROVEMENT FUND (565).
- G. ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-074** APPROVING BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS TO THE 2005 BUDGET.
- H. ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-075** ESTABLISHING A POLICY FOR DESIGNATING THE GENERAL FUND BALANCE AND REPEALING RESOLUTION NO. 99-122. ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-075.1** ADOPTING 2005 GENERAL FUND BALANCE DESIGNATIONS AND AUTHORIZING TRANSFERS FROM THE GENERAL FUND.
- I. APPOINT WILLIAM ROYCE TO SERVE ON THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION

COMMENCING WITH THE MAY 8, 2006 MEETING.

- J. ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-076** ACCEPTING A DONATION FOR THE CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE 2006 ARBOR DAY EVENT.
- K. ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-077** AUTHORIZING WRITE-OFFS OF THE COTTAGE GROVE EMS ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$524,467.
- L. AUTHORIZE THE APPOINTMENTS OF PAUL NARPAUL AND PAUL PONCIN TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.
- M. ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-078** APPROVING THE SUBDIVISION AGREEMENT FOR SILVERWOOD 2<sup>ND</sup> ADDITION.
- N. RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE STORM DAMAGE CLEAN UP POLICY.

MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

RESPONSE TO PREVIOUSLY RAISED OPEN FORUM ISSUES

NONE

PUBLIC HEARING

- A. Hold a Public Hearing on an Ordinance Amendment to Increase Park Dedication Fees to \$4,000 per Unit.

Community Development Director Blin explained that Park Dedication fees are reviewed and updated on an annual basis. He further explained that the fees are paid in lieu of land dedication and are based on land values. He reviewed the recommended changes with Council noting that Staff does expect to be back before Council again next year for another update. He stated that the \$4,000 per unit fee best represents the data that is available.

Mayor Shiely opened the public hearing at 7:40 p.m.

Mayor Shiely closed the public hearing at 7:41 p.m.

MOTION BY BAILEY, SECOND BY GROSSKLAUS, TO ADOPT **ORDINANCE NO. 790** FOR THE CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA, AMENDING CHAPTER 10-4-3C, SCHEDULE OF PARK DEDICATION REQUIREMENTS, OF THE COTTAGE GROVE CITY CODE RELATING TO INCREASING THE PARK DEDICATION FEES. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

BID AWARDS

- A. Consider Awarding the Contract for the 2006 Sealcoating Project to Pearson Brothers, Inc. in the Amount of \$163,583.55.

MOTION BY GROSSKLAUS, SECOND BY BIGHAM, TO ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-078** AWARDED BID FOR THE 2006 SEAL COAT PROJECT TO PEARSON BROTHERS, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$163,583.55. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

B. Consider Awarding the Contract for the 97<sup>th</sup> Street Extension Project to Ryan Contracting, Inc. in the Amount of \$895,890.14.

City Attorney Thomson stated that she would like to recommend an addition of verbiage to the last paragraph of the proposed resolution. She reviewed the recommended changes and suggested that the final paragraph read as follows: 'NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Cottage Grove, County of Washington, State of Minnesota, that the bid submitted by Northwest Asphalt is rejected for failure to acknowledge receipt of the bid addendum; and that the bid for the 97<sup>th</sup> Street Extension Project be awarded to Ryan Contracting Company in the amount of \$895,890.14.'

Council agreed and Mayor Shiely asked that the changes be included in the motion.

MOTION BY RICE, SECOND BY BAILEY, TO ADOPT **RESOLUTION NO. 06-079** REJECTING THE BID SUBMITTED BY NORTHWEST ASPHALT FOR FAILURE TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE BID ADDENDUM AND AWARDING THE BID FOR THE 97<sup>TH</sup> STREET EXTENSION PROJECT TO RYAN CONTRACTING CO. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$895,890.14. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

A. Consider Passing a Motion Approving Changes to the Fire Division Compensation and Organization Plan.

City Administrator Schroeder provided Council with a brief overview noting that budget dollars were allocated in the 2006 budget for an increase in compensation for firefighters. He stated that Staff discussed the goals of the Fire Division as they relate to compensating firefighters and explained that they want to provide for a system that would encourage people to be available for response during daytime hours. He stated that Staff believes they have put together a proposal that does provide the appropriate recognition and compensation and provided Council with a brief overview of the four goals and recommended increments.

City Administrator Schroeder referenced the organization chart included for the Fire Department noting that Council has not yet adopted a formal organization chart. He stated that this was also part of their discussion and Staff is recommending an authorized organizational structure.

Mayor Shiely asked if the problem is monetary or availability of firefighters during daytime hours. She asked if the recommended increments would make a difference with the availability of firefighters. City Administrator Schroeder clarified that the problem is both monetary and availability. He stated that Staff does believe that the recruitment efforts would be more favorable with the recommended pay system. He stated that Staff is not anticipating an immediate increase in responders but they do believe that there would be some impact.

Council Member Bigham asked Chief Byerly to provide Council, at some point, with an

update on the EMT quarters.

MOTION BY BIGHAM, SECOND BY RICE, TO APPROVE CHANGES TO THE FIRE DIVISION COMPENSATION. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

MOTION BY RICE, SECOND BY BIGHAM, TO APPROVE FIRE DIVISION ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND PLAN. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

MOTION BY RICE, SECOND BY BIGHAM, TO APPROVE SHIFT DIFFERENTIALS EFFECTIVE MAY 15, 2006. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

B. Consider Options for the Replacement of the BNSF Bridge over 103<sup>rd</sup> Street

Public Works Director Burshten stated that this item was first brought before the Council on March 15<sup>th</sup>. He explained that Council tabled the item and asked for additional information, which was presented on April 5, 2006. He further explained that Staff reviewed the new information and notified Council that the issue would be brought before the Public Safety and Public Works Commissions for their review. He stated that two options have been provided for Council's review. He referenced Option 1 stating that it would allow a 28-foot wide road in an S-curve configuration that would go under the center span. He stated that the bridge would be built in the same location as the existing bridge. He reviewed the spans, materials and costs with Council noting that the costs would be incurred by BNSF Railroad and that the City would incur no cost for the bridge replacement, but that the City would incur costs to conduct street improvements once the bridge replacement is complete. He referenced Option 2 stating that this option would expand the overpass and would accommodate a 34-foot wide road with the ability to construct a sidewalk adjacent to the curb. He explained that the S-curve would be removed, because with this option it would be straight through the center span. He indicated that the location of the bridge would have to be shifted to the south to get the piers in the desired location noting that this option increases the costs substantially. He reviewed the span and layout with Council noting that the estimated costs for this option would be \$2,220,000. He indicated that BNSF Railroad would be looking to the City of Cottage Grove to pick up the incremental costs of \$1,250,000. He stated that the City would also be responsible for another \$250,000 that would be used for road improvements. He stated that the issue at hand is to decide whether or not the City is interested in spending \$1.5 million dollars on this project.

Public Works Director Burshten stated that both the Public Works Commission and the Public Safety Commission have reviewed the options. He indicated that the Public Works Commission's main topic of discussion was how the project would be funded. He stated that there are three potential funding sources, MSA, Federal Funding or property assessment, in addition to possible General Fund sources. He stated that both the Public Works Commission and the Public Safety Commission voted unanimously for Option 2. He stated that the Public Works Commission also recommended property assessment for much of the funding. He stated that Staff agrees and also recommends Option 2. He acknowledged that Option 2 is very expensive and indicated that funding would be the biggest obstacle. He noted that Burlington Northern is not interested in shutting this bridge down.

Mayor Shiely referenced the funding and clarified that the City would be considering an area wide assessment. She asked who would be assessed, how many would be involved and how would they rationalize the assessment to a few people that this would be to their benefit. She expressed concerns stating that it would not be realistic to rely on assessments in this area. She stated that she is concerned as to how the City would come up with the required funds.

Public Works Director Burshten stated that the figures Staff received from Burlington Northern are entirely estimated costs. He stated that the actual bid package has not been prepared yet noting that Burlington Northern would not give the City a guarantee at this time. He stated that bid packages would have to be put together and the project would then go out for bids. He noted that there would be some land acquisitions on the Bailey side in order to straighten out the road.

Mayor Shiely stated that Council would like to know how Staff would identify the appropriate properties to assess for a project like this and asked that Staff develop a list of the properties for Council's review.

Public Works Director Burshten stated that the current recommendation is to assess through homestead development and assess as the property is developed.

City Administrator Schroeder stated that Staff would work to refine the assessment process and determine the impacted properties. He indicated that the assessment would probably include all properties down stream, which would include the southern portion of Cottage Grove and Grey Cloud Island. He clarified that Council has recommended pursuing an agreement with Burlington Northern and as part of the agreement the City would be seeking funding assistance.

Council Member Rice stated that he too is concerned with the funding. He stated that he does not anticipate any real development in this area any time soon and the only thing this would benefit are residents from neighboring Cities and Townships that travel through Cottage Grove. He stated that even with property assessments the City would still be looking to fund approximately \$1 million. He stated that he would vote for Option 1.

Council Member Bailey stated that he has always supported the widening of this bridge. He noted that this would be a 75-year bridge and any decision made tonight would be in effect for the next 75 years. He expressed concerns stating that the chances to be able to go back to make changes when future developments come in would be slim to none. He stated that if this were a new project Council would never allow an S-curve, that they would always go with widening a road. He stated that in considering the 75-year impact the City should do it right. He stated that he would vote for Option 2.

Council Member Bigham expressed her agreement with Council Member Bailey. She stated that the City should do it the right way now. She stated that she would vote for Option 2.

Council Member Grossklaus stated that they should exhaust all options. He noted that this would be for 75 years and the decision made has to look to the future. He stated that he is not happy about the cost but does not see anything wrong with pursuing this the right way.

Mayor Shiely asked if Council would have the ability to come back at some point in the negotiations to ask for Option 1. City Administrator Schroeder assured Council that Staff would negotiate in good faith with Burlington Northern. He explained that Staff is asking Council for their direction to go forward with the option that allows the widening of the road. He noted that property on both sides of the road would have to be purchased.

Public Works Director Burshten stated that once the project starts the major expense would be the expansion of the bridge itself. He reviewed costs with Council noting that Burlington Northern is anxious to get the project started.

Mayor Shiely expressed concerns about the costs stating that she would be more willing to vote in favor of this if the area was closer to development, as it would help to expand the tax base. She stated that at this point she does not believe that the City should be spending this amount of money.

MOTION BY BIGHAM, SECOND BY BAILEY, TO AUTHORIZE STAFF TO PURSUE AN AGREEMENT WITH BNSF RAILROAD FOR OPTION 2 AND THE WIDENING OF THE 103<sup>RD</sup> STREET BRIDGE. MOTION CARRIED 3-2 (AYE-BAILEY/BIGHAM/GROSSKLAUS; NAY-RICE/SHIELY).

Council Member Rice stated that the bridge would be closed for approximately three months with this option and asked that the residents on the island be notified about the closure.

C. Review 800 MHz Radio/Dispatch Update Information and Provide Direction to Staff.

Mayor Shiely clarified that the discussion tonight is not about doing away with the ambulance service or 911 services to the residents. She stated that it is about moving the radio system to the system used by County and about closing the local communication center and going with the County Service Center. She assured the residents that the City would still have the area emergency support and that residents would still be able to use 911 for emergencies.

Captain Craig Woolery provided Council with a brief overview of the 800 MHz Radio Dispatch. He explained the differences between the VHF bandwidth and 800 MHz. He noted that the number one failure during the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack was communications adding that Minnesota implemented an anti-terrorism bill in 2002. He explained that it would be a six phase plan beginning in the metro area and eventually expanding to the outstate regions. He stated that Phase One and Two for the seven-county metro area is basically done except for Washington County. He explained that Washington County has a lot of rural and urban areas and does not have a lot of the infrastructure available that is necessary for this system. He reviewed the objectives with Council and assured Council that the intent is to improve the safety of the emergency responders, to ensure standardization and interoperability, and to develop partnerships and to encourage shared use of the resources.

Captain Woolery stated that the City of Cottage Grove has had a dispatch center for over 30 years noting that the City began to provide a dispatch service in the 1970's. He provided a brief history and explained that the communications equipment is old and difficult to support. He stated that the City can no longer afford to be an island they must be efficient in the service provided to the residents. He explained the process and how Cottage Grove dispatch is done today between police, fire and public works noting that the current dispatch center is understaffed and there is a need to be able to provide the proper coverage.

Captain Woolery reviewed costs with Council noting that the County Board passed their 800 Mhz system on April 18, 2006. He stated that implementation could begin in late 2007. He provided Council with examples of the percentages the City of Cottage Grove would pay for the Communications Center and reviewed Metro Area PSAP Survey results. He assured Council that all Counties view this as a proactive means of delivering an efficient model for public safety. He explained that a single service dispatch center would have a deeper pool for an employee base adding that emergency training would be provided to all dispatchers. He indicated that Directors are in place and user group meetings have started. He stated that surveys were sent to all Washington County users asking for feedback on the services provided noting that all of the responses received indicated that users are satisfied with the services provided. He stated that there is a need to find a better way to handle emergency situations due to all of the changes over the last ten years. He explained that the system is capable of providing GPS, sharing information between Cities, pre-fire plans would be available, it would provide in-car field reporting, and electronic citation and incident reporting. He acknowledged that it is hard to make changes noting that it is a different time with a different technology and the City should provide their officers with the right tools that allow them to do their jobs the right way. He assured Council that this is a consolidation and an effort to bring two systems together. He stated that employees would not be laid-off noting that the current dispatch center has two vacancies. He assured Council that all employees who want a job would have a job with Washington County.

Mayor Shiely expressed concerns stating that she does not want to give residents the impression that the only way the City could get this new technology is by physically closing the local communications center. She asked if it would be impossible or too expensive to upgrade the local communications center noting that the City of Edina has elected to maintain a local communication center. She stated that she does not believe that the City has to be compatible with Washington County and the State with 800 Mhz in order to provide efficient emergency services. She referenced the costs and reviewed with Council noting that she is not clear on what the City's costs would be. She referenced the annual costs for the communication center stating that she did not see, anywhere in the report, what the costs would look like twenty years from now. She stated that she would have felt better had this information been included. She stated that she does not feel that there was adequate information provided on the costs between a local communication center and migrating to a centralized dispatch center. She clarified that the City is actually paying Washington County for the County Communication Center even though the City is not using it. Captain Woolery confirmed that the City is making payments to Washington County for the Communication Center.

Acting Public Safety Director Zurbey noted that the cost for CSO officers was not built in and suggested including this if the Council wants to extend coverage to evening hours.

Jack Nicolay, 9144 91<sup>st</sup> Street, stated that he has been a resident of Cottage Grove for 28 years, and as a member of the East Suburban Chaplains has supported many local police departments. He discussed the value of a local dispatch center to the City with Council noting that it is important and valuable because they have a focus on this city only. He stated that a local focus is important because the men and women, who have dispatched here for so long, have a familiarity with the area and past incidents, which is something that cannot be developed in a centralized center. He stated that this knowledge and familiarity provides safety to both the citizens and officers in Cottage Grove. He stated that familiarity of the area and past incidents is a service to City of Cottage Grove and definitely relates to safety issues, as it is not available through a centralized communication center. He urged Council to take these concerns into consideration when weighing the value of this service.

Kathy Buss, resident of St. Paul Park, supervisor for Cottage Grove Communication Center, stated she would like to clarify three items: first, the equipment located in the main room of the dispatch center was purchased brand new, not used, in 1982; second, Cottage Grove worked as backup for the City of Newport through the 1990's until Newport built their communication center; third, while it would be nice to have two dispatchers on night shift, the call load does not justify two. She provided Council with a review of the history and services provided to the citizens noting that the local communications center does provide a valuable service to citizens of Cottage Grove. She noted that the citizens of Cottage Grove voted, by a 73-percent margin, to retain the communications center in Cottage Grove. She stated that the center provides citizens with a level of personalized service that is unmatched and could not be matched or maintained if provided through the Washington County Communications Center. She asked Council if they want to sacrifice local autonomy and service. She provided Council with an overview of the Cities who opted not to participate noting that their decision was based on the fact that the Cities did not believe that the level of service would continue as it does today.

Lyle Puppy, 3525 Nokomis Avenue, St. Paul, stated that he was a resident of Cottage Grove for 18 years and during those years he served the City as a member of the Planning Commission, a member of City Council and as a Reserve Officer. He stated that he also performed voluntary dispatch services during emergency situations and asked how many of the Council Members have sat in and observed the workings of the dispatch center during the time of an emergency. He stated that a Council Member should not be able to vote on this issue unless they can answer yes to that question and show that there is an understanding of what a dispatcher is responsible for. He acknowledged the expenses to maintain a local dispatch center noting that funds should be made available to the cities if the Federal government is requiring that all cities convert to the 800 Mhz System. He asked if the Cottage Grove dispatch is being farmed out to the County in order for the City to be able to fund a new City Hall. He reviewed the survey results referenced by Captain Woolery with Council and expressed concerns regarding the potential loss of familiarity with the area if the City converts to the County operated communications center.

Paul Dier, 170 Valley Side Drive, St. Paul, Dispatcher for the City of Cottage Grove, stated that Council is faced with making a big decision about the future of its communications center noting that the radio center system has not been upgraded for a long time. He agreed that the cost to upgrade would be high noting this is not what is in dispute. He explained that the decision should be based on the quality of customer service noting that the communications center services hundreds of customers every month. He expressed concerns regarding the possibility of job cuts noting that the center currently has five full time dispatchers that have a combined 67 years of experience with the City of Cottage Grove. He stated that while on vacation this past week he asked Washington County for an opportunity to sit in and observe and was told that it was not a good time due to the fact that they were in the process of training at the time. He provided Council with several examples of the work done by the local dispatchers and urged Council to carefully consider all the facts and options. He stated that most of the dispatchers are members of the community and expressed concerns about the potential loss of knowledge and familiarity if the Council decides to merge with the County Communications Center. He asked Council to consider carefully and urged them to do the right thing.

Sami Gabriel, Teamsters Representative for the Dispatchers, asked Council to take everything into consideration before making a decision. She stated that the Communications Center needs new equipment to provide better service for public safety and reviewed the choices Council has before them. She stated that this should be an easy choice to make noting that the dispatch center has been part of the City of Cottage Grove's public safety for over 30 years and the dispatchers have a strong dedication to the City. She expressed concerns stating that the citizens have not been given enough time to consider the impact and asked that Council provide them with the time to think through all of the options. She asked Council to base their choice on continuity and service. She stated that Council has two options, they could put their decision on hold and to allow the citizens time to consider the impacts or Council could make the decision to upgrade the equipment that is needed to maintain public safety.

Greg Rinzel, Cottage Grove Police Sergeant, stated that the current system is inefficient and ineffective and something should be done. He expressed concerns stating that nothing has been done over the last ten years to ensure that the service is done properly. He stated that if Council decides to go with the County it should be due to the efficiency of system. He suggested investing money in the organization by adding officers, CSO's and staff. He stated that service for walk-ins is important and they deserve the attention that is needed. He expressed concerns stating that he does not want to see anyone lose their job noting that it would be fiscally irresponsible to spend money on a system when there is no money in the bank. He stated that Council is now in the position where they have to make a decision as to what is best for public safety noting that fiscally, the only way to do this would be to go to the County. He acknowledged that this is an unpopular stance but it is something that has to be considered. He stated that as an administrator, Captain Woolery has been put under the gun and he expressed concerns that this situation shows that dispatchers are also under the gun.

Council Member Bailey stated that a question was raised earlier regarding the availability of

grant funds and asked staff to research and provide Council with an update.

Interim Public Safety Director Zurbey stated that Captain Woolery covered the grant availability noting that grant monies are pretty much gone. He indicated that asking for grant money at this point is not an option.

Council Member Bailey asked if their intent all along has been to consolidate the dispatch services throughout the county. Interim Public Safety Director Zurbey stated that this appears to be the history adding that cost is one of the factors.

Council Member Grossklaus acknowledged that the dispatcher center is a great public service noting that every year it is a part of the budget discussion. He stated that his concern has always been for the employees noting that part of his decision tonight would be based on protection of the employees. He stated that he believes the City could help the employees remain employees noting that down the road Washington County would not have to take Cottage Grove employees. He stated that he would agree with moving the dispatch function to Washington County.

Mayor Shiely stated that her number one concern is not the job of the dispatchers but is the service available to the citizens of Cottage Grove. She referenced a survey that was done in 1993 for the communications center noting that it has been a value that the community has consistently identified that they are willing to pay for. She acknowledged the expenses and agreed with Captain Woolery that the City has to invest money for the new technology. She stated that the City has spent too much time ignoring this and it has to change noting that the bottom line here is that she is concerned about the service provided to the citizens of Cottage Grove. She stated that she could not vote to close the communication center in Cottage Grove, as she does not feel that closing it would be the right thing to do for the citizens. She stated that the City is currently spending approximately \$50 more a year per household to keep the communications center and most citizens have said they are willing to spend this money to keep it open. She urged the Council to consider upgrading the technology and keeping the communications center open.

Council Member Bailey stated that he has had the opportunity to observe the dispatchers at work and wants to make sure that the dispatchers are given every opportunity to have a job with the County. He noted that there has been talk to delay this decision stating that to delay the decision could cause a situation where none of dispatchers would be given jobs. He stated that Staff has indicated that anyone, at this time, that wants to move to the County would have the opportunity to do so, but this might not be the case if the decision is delayed. He stated that he believes that Council should consider moving to the County system. He stated that he would also like to be sure that if the City decides to go forward with the County System that any monies saved would be used to upgrade technology and the canine vehicles. He stated that at this point he would support moving the dispatch to the County.

Council Member Biggam stated there is no doubt that the City needs the 800 MHz and agrees, to a point, adding that she is concerned about the kind of service that would be offered. She stated that she is also concerned about availability noting that her first priority is

the safety of residents. She stated that she does feel that keeping the dispatch center here is important and agreed that the City does need the technology but should try to keep it in Cottage Grove. She stated that she would vote against the move to the County.

Council Member Rice reviewed the history and growth of the dispatch center with Council stating that the need for the dispatchers and for public safety dictates that the employees are first and foremost to consider during this process. He stated that the system is old and would be expensive to upgrade noting that Washington County has the ability to take over the Cottage Grove communications center now, which would provide the City with the opportunity to place a very fine group of dispatchers and ensure their jobs with Washington County. He stated that the first priority is to take care of the employees first adding that he would vote to move the dispatchers to Washington County.

Council Member Bigham stated that currently the cost to citizens is \$21 and asked if this would change with the move to the County system. She stated that she would like this clarified further and would also like to know the intent of Staff as to what the savings would be used for and how it would be incorporated into the department.

City Administrator Schroeder stated that Staff could come back with a plan and proposal from Interim Public Safety Director Zurbey that would address their issues and concerns.

Interim Public Safety Director Zurbey stated that it would be difficult to say how they would spend the money without knowing what they would get. He stated that Cottage Grove was the last City in the metro area to receive computers for the squads. He stated that there is a need for a new philosophy adding that this move would free up some funds that would allow the City to move forward into the new technology.

MOTION BY GROSSKLAUS, SECOND BY RICE, TO AUTHORIZE OPTION 3, MIGRATION OF DISPATCH OPERATIONS TO WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND TO DIRECT STAFF TO PREPARE A TRANSITION PLAN. MOTION CARRIED 3-2 (AYE-BAILEY/GROSSKLAUS/RICE; NAY-BIGHAM/SHIELY).

#### RESPONSE TO PREVIOUSLY RAISED COUNCIL COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

NONE

#### COUNCIL COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

Council Member Bigham thanked Police Departments for the City of Cottage Grove and St. Paul Park with their help at the Park and Ride.

Mayor Shiely reminded everyone that the Citywide Arbor Day event is scheduled for April 29, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Oakwood Park. She urged everyone to come out and help celebrate the day.

Council Member Bailey stated that the Business Showcase is scheduled for April 20, 2006,

from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Armory. He stated that admission to the event is free and urged everyone to come out and attend. He stated that the Strawberry Festival Committee is wrapping up with a meeting scheduled for April 24, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. He stated that Caron Stransky could be contacted at City Hall with any questions.

Council Member Grossklaus stated that City Clean Up Day is scheduled for May 6, 2006 from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Public Works building.

### PAY BILLS

MOTION BY BIGHAM, SECONDED BY BAILEY, TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF CHECK NUMBERS 144468 THROUGH 144735 TOTALING \$607,096.26 (CHECKS 144468 – 144522 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$287,980.83 ISSUED PRIOR TO COUNCIL APPROVAL.)  
MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Mayor Shiely called a break at 9:51 p.m.

Mayor Shiely called the meeting back to order at 10:03 p.m.

### WORKSHOP SESSION – OPEN

#### A. East Ravine Design Standards

Community Development Director Blin provided Council with an update on the proposed design standards for the East Ravine. He stated that the Planning Commission has been working on these standards for the past several months and plans to hear the proposed standards at their next meeting on April 24, 2006. He stated that Council would hear any actions from this hearing in May. He explained that the proposed design standards would amend many parts of the zoning ordinance and would be recommended for adoption as amendments to the sub division and zoning codes. He further explained that all of the proposed standards are related to the basic house and lot size issues adding that a series of the standards would be incorporated into private protective covenants that would be enforced by privately owned associations. He reviewed the proposed standards with Council noting that the Planning Commission would also review the optional guidelines, which are items that cannot be put into the ordinance but could be strongly suggested for incorporation in protective covenants for enforcement. He indicated that a new series of districts would be created that would encompass single-family homes and townhomes adding that it would also provide a means for developers to apply design standards that include detailed statements of what Cities would get for additional amenities.

Council Member Bailey referenced the proposed fencing guidelines and asked if the final draft would be more specific in outlining the requirements. Community Development Director Blin agreed stating that the proposed guidelines should include two to three clear options or set forth a detailed standard that is clearly defined and documented.

Council Member Bigam asked if the standard lot size would continue to be 85 feet.

Community Development Director Blin confirmed that the plan is to continue with 85 feet as the standard lot size for single-family homes built in the East Ravine. He stated that the plan is to present the proposal to Council at the second City Council meeting in May 2006.

WORKSHOP SESSION – CLOSED

NONE

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY BIGHAM, SECONDED BY BAILEY, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 10:15 P.M. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonita Sullivan  
*Timesavers Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*