



WATONGA CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 28, 2021

*In accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Law, this Agenda was posted
October 26, 2021 Prior to 4:00 PM at the Main Street Entrance of Watonga City Hall,
located at 410 West Main Street, Watonga, Oklahoma.*

**The City Council of the City of Watonga will did at 4:00 PM on Thursday, October 28, 2021
in the Conference Room of Watonga City Hall, located at 410 W. Main Street, Watonga, Oklahoma
for a scheduled meeting.**

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance:

Council Present: Travis Bradt, Allen Cowan, Lindsey Doyel, Ladina Willis and Mayor Bill Seitter. Also present, City Manger Karrie Beth Little and City Clerk Verlen Bills. City Attorney Jared Harrison absent.

Declaration of a Quorum: at 4:01 PM.

AGENDA

1. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** To approve an agreement CivicPlus to build and maintain the Web Site for the City of Watonga.

City Manager Ms. Little: Mrs. Crawford and myself have been working on this for some time. We had four proposed bids. We have narrowed that down to two, they are what's in front of you now. One of the proposals is from a company called PixelMongers out of Edmond, Oklahoma. There is a lot in their presentation document, but page eight has the pricing details you may be interested in.

Ms. Little noted that web page design is a whole different world. Mrs. Crawford and I have both set through several meetings with PixelMongers and Civic Plus.

On page twelve of Civic Plus's proposal we can can compare apples to apples with PixelMongers. To level the playing field we had asked both companies to present proposals based on the same services. We have done several workshops, virtual meetings, and phone calls and we would like to recommend Civic Plus to design and maintain the City 's Web Site.

They have the lower quote and they are a reputable company that we feel could meet the needs of the City now and in the future as the City grows. This is our recommendation to the City Council.

Mr. Bradt asked where is this company out of?

Library Director Mrs. Crawford replied, Manhattan Kansas.

Ms Little: this company does a lot of business with Oklahoma entities. We have researched a number of websites done by this company. We looked for user friendly functions, layout and design and overall appeal and how easy it is to find what your looking for. We also looked at their designs from the point of administration and maintenance.

Another thing to mention, is that Civic Plus recently purchased MuniCode, the company we have contracted with to maintain our online Ordinance Book. MuniCode will be a part of Civic Plus and this will be an advantage for us in the future.

Mayor Bill Seitter asked, who will Civic Plus work with in our organization?

Ms. Little replied, to start, I will assign a team or task force. Mrs. Crawford has been at the forefront of this in the past and I think she should be at the front of this team.

This is a major project and will require several people. It is estimated that it will take 8 to 12 weeks of work before we can go live. This is why we are asking Council to approve this now, this is not an overnight project but will take time.

Mayor Seitter asked, who are we using now?

Mrs. Crawford: Our current website was built by a company called Back to U Marketing. I know you are aware that our website disappeared recently and this company was no help at all getting us back up. That is when we started having conversations about a new website company.

Mayor Seitter asked, as we update the website, how long will it take for the updates to appear live?

Mrs. Crawford: Once things are up and running, they will train three of our people. We will do our own updates. They will maintain the backside of the web pages.

Ms. Little: There are still a lot of conversations we need to have. This will be one of the details we will work out. At this point we only think we know what we want; I am certain they will have suggestions for us to help us along. They have experience helping municipalities.

Mayor Seitter asked, this will be hosted on their (Civic Plus) servers?

Mrs Crawford answered yes, and I have seen a demonstration of how the pages are maintained. It will be much more user-friendly that what we using now.

Ms. Willis suggested that we need to get our community familiar with our website and teach them how to use this new tool.

Ms. Little agreed, we should do an awareness campaign and even have a computer setup in the lobby so we can demonstrate this new resource. It is not possible to put a price on a website, with the public relations and awareness it provides.

Mayor Seitter asked, who owns the data?

It was determined that we own our data.

City Clerk Bills noted that we should be keeping a copy of everything we post.

There was discussion of possible problems arising as we switch web services and site hosting to a new company and later when we change our name to watongaok.gov.

Mayor Seitter: Do we have any recourse in this contract with Civic Plus if they should default on the contract?

Ms. Willis and Ms. Little noted that there is a paragraph at the end of the proposal that covers this concern.

There was discussion of other Oklahoma communities that use this company.

Mr Bradt commented that we will have people trained to maintain and update this website, but how often does this need to be done?

Ms. Little explained about how the update process might work for us. We will always be making changes, probably daily to start with. Upcoming events will posted on a community calendar for one thing. There is an emergency alert section to this website, for example, if we need to issue a water boil order. She commented that we need more personnel to work on this other than Mrs. Crawford. It will be to much for one person to keep up with. There are multiple facets to this website that we can take advantage of.

Mrs. Crawford: At this time we are being hosted on Pioneer Web Servers and I have received several notices that we are running out of server space. This is one primary reasons we need to move on this as soon as we can.

Mr. Cowan asked, how many other companies have you looked at?

Ms. Little replied, I do not know how many companies Mrs. Crawford had looked at before I came on board. When I got involved she had the list narrowed down to four possibilities. From there we eliminated down to our recommendation of Civic Plus.

Mr. Cowan asked about the logistics of maintaining the web site and there was brief discussion of this.

Mr. Cowan noted that he had been reviewing the websites of other communities and how he judged them.

Ms. Little described the standard package that will be included with our agreement.

Ms. Willis agreed, this is great, we need to update, we are a little behind the times in this area.

Mr. Seitter: Has Mr. Harrison looked at this agreement?

Ms. Little replied, not thoroughly at this time.

Mayor Seitter expressed concerns that we have no recourse should this company default on the agreement.

Ms. Little explained some of the terms of the agreement. The first year is much more expensive because of all the work involved with design, layout and forms. The second year and subsequent years are much less expensive as it becomes just a maintenance agreement.

Mayor Seitter asked about the annual automatic contract renewal.

Ms. Little noted that this company understands municipal government restrictions and limits, but it would get expensive if the City did not want to renew the agreement every year.

Mr. Cowan added that this will come back to Council for renewal every year.

Mayor Seitter: Civic Plus looks to be a good way to go with this. I would like Mr. Harrison to review this contract. I think the motion should state to approve this pending approval of the City Attorney.

There was more discussion about the terms of the agreement.

Mayor Seitter brought up training and the quality of work.

Ms. Little pointed out that we will assign a point of contact with Civic Plus.

Mr. Bradt added, I discovered a long time ago, a good web site, good stationary, good marketing is very important. That is what people see first.

Ms. Willis: I previously lived in Davis, their web site sends out alerts to my phone for live meetings and other events. I like it. I will find out who is doing this web site for them.

Mr. Cowan: Did they indicate how many hours of training we will receive?

Ms Little answered, the agreement states four hours.

Mr. Cowan asked, is that enough time?

Ms. Little: I do not doubt that they would work with us if we need more time. This web site maintenance is user friendly and the people I will assign to this are already knowledgeable in the area.

Mayor Seitter asked, did you ask them if they had the human resources available to take on new clients.

Ms Little: That is why we are presenting it to Council. These projects are not simple projects. If we continue to delay it could be it could be next year before we get this project started. I would really like to have this done by January but in order to get that timeline met we need to start now. Waiting for the New Year would just complicate things.

Mayor Seitter rephrased his question, does Civic Plus have enough staff to take on another client such as us?

Ms. Little: replied yes. And continued, what you have in front of you is a proposal, not the statement of work. We have a quote for an amount. We will receive an actual statement of work that will identify the services and what we call deliverables. It will define what is to be done and what we can hold Civic Plus accountable for. This is just the agreement so that we can proceed and move forward and get the details lined out.

Mayor Seitter asked, do we not want to put a final amount of what this would cost, because we were not sure what that will be at this time?

Ms. Little: The \$6,750 is what we are wanting at this time. If we get to a point in the project where there is additional cost, we would come back to Council before we move forward. We do not anticipate needing any of the “bells and whistles”. The standard package should be more than enough for us and it is what we are recommending. We have asked a lot of questions and we received professional answers. I feel confident recommending this company. Government websites are all they do.

Ms. Crawford echoed this same sentiment.

Allen Cowan made the motion to approve an agreement with Civic Plus to build and maintain the web site for the City of Watonga for \$6,750 pending approval of the agreement from City Attorney Jared Harrison. Motion was seconded by Ladina Willis.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote:

A. Cowan aye T. Bradt aye L. Doyel aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

2. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** To approve Resolution No. 2021-12 authorizing the application for financial assistance from the Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) Fund.

Ms. Little: We have three different applications for Council to choose from for the REAP Grant. I did a score sheet for each one to get a general idea of how the Northern Oklahoma Development Authority (NODA) will score our qualification for each application. By no means does this guarantee funding. It just gives us a sense of how we might get scored.

The first one I looked at was the traffic signal at the highway intersection. Our prescore for this project was 110. There are a couple of items about this project, I have spoken with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) and they confirmed that they will match \$15,000 for this with or without a REAP Grant. They also confirmed that there would be an additional charge to the original quote for the yellow flashing left turn arrow. I added that in so that we will receive the proper credit against the grant. This brought the quote to approximately \$47,000.

With ODOT's match of \$15,000 the grant request is \$32,000. I did not add any local contribution to this because I felt that the \$15,000 was sufficient and the total was well under the \$125,000 maximum. This is one of the proposals for Council to consider.

Mayor Seitter: Will NODA be aware of where the \$15,000 is coming from?

Ms. Little: Yes, I did put that in the grant proposal.

There was comments about how the scoring is done. It seems to put some at a disadvantage.

Ms. Little: The second option is the drying beds for the sewer treatment plant with a prescore of 107. This total project was estimated to be \$510,000 and we are asking to do this as a two tier project. The needed work can be tiered with out much problem. We are asking for \$125,000 and we will match the \$125,000. Next year we will ask for another \$125,000 which we will match again at that time.

This is a project that Light & Water Superintendent Warren Rice has been working on for some time. These drying beds will be built where the shooting range is now. Currently we are disposing of our sludge at the 80 acre park east of town and we have about met the allowed limit of disposal for that area. We will have to find and alternate area to dispose our sludge. This a capital project that must be done. Maybe not this year but with the next few years.

The third application to recommend is for the streets. This application had a pr-score of 102. This is planned to be a \$200,000 project. The application is for \$125,000 and we will match with the other \$75,000.

One of the things that we can do for the City is better our streets. Street maintenance and repair is very expensive and I do not think the average layperson understands how expensive. Funding has to be requested and planned for.

To be fair, we looked at the north, south, east, and west sections of town to determine where this could be the best benefit and were it is most needed.

Ms. Little: I considered all departments for this REAP grant. These three proposals are what we thought was a fair representation of the the needs of the City and we tried not to be swayed one way or the other.

Ms. Little: I learned of this grant last Thursday and the application is due tomorrow. (Friday October 29, 2021) There has been a lot of rushing to get this put together in time.

Mr. Bradt asked, we are to pick one of these applications?

Ms. Little: Yes, I wanted Council to have several option to choose from. All of the projects are needed, but I thought Council should make this decision.

Be aware that this is only an application, it still needs to go through the process and can be denied. I have talked with an individual at NODA. I was told that Watonga was very close to being awarded a grant last year, they just ran out of money. So, I feel confident we will get more consideration this year because we were so close last year. But I did want to make sure that we present the correct application that's best for the City.

Mayor Seitter noted, NODA will re-score this application themselves.

Ms. Little agreed: This is just a way for us to see approximately where we are at within the process.

Ms. Little continued, I think one of the things Council should consider is what project we can afford to match the funds with. The other prospective is, should we just pay for all of the traffic signal ourselves and eliminate that from the choices? On the other hand, if we are awarded the larger grant, it will be difficult for us to match the \$125,000.

Ms. Little described the details of the REAP Grant process and how the scoring works. We are only competing against smaller communities in northwest Oklahoma. And, the U.S. Census from 2010 is no longer an issue.

Mr. Cowan commented, I think the sewer system is most critical but, it was mentioned earlier that the drying beds will require using the property to the east of the treatment plant. The neighboring property owner has questioned the accuracy of the property line in that area. This could be something we need to look at.

Mayor Seitter: Did we budget for this sewer project this year?

Ms. Little: I did check with Meacham and Dacia Phillips reported that we had allowed money for the de-watering project as Capital Improvements and the drying beds are a part of that overall project. It will get paid as Capital Improvements. This would not come from our regular budget.

There was more discussion of the budget. How and why points are awarded or subtracted in the scoring system were also discussed. Council talked back and forth of the pros and cons of the different projects.

Mr. Seitter asked, what was our score last year and how close were we?

Ms. Little: It was for the culvert at Workman and A street and we scored a 94 on that application.

It was noted that even with the low score of 94 last year we were close.

Ms. Little added, there are still points to be had with the justification of needs and NODA will need to score that part.

Mayor Seitter thought we should score well on the justification of needs. He asked, what is the difference between a CIP Project and a Consent Order? (From the score sheet.)

Ms. Little: CIP is Capital Improvements and I not sure how those points should be awarded given the wording. A Consent Order is of course a mandatory order from an authority that must be resolved. We are under a DEQ Consent Order, but not for the projects listed here.

Discussion about the budget continued. Terminology was clarified and it was noted that the grant application and Capital Items in the budget were actually the same thing.

Ms. Little noted that none of this was from Cares Act Funding. Overall we have budgeted \$400,000 for this project but, should we be awarded this grant, then we will only need to spend \$125,000 this year and next year.

Ms. Willis reported of a survey recently of people coming to or through Watonga and most reported poor and uninviting views of the highway areas around the primary highway intersection of Watonga. The lack of a proper traffic signal was consider a major contributing factor.

Mayor Seitter talked in general about growing and promoting Watonga.

Discussion returned to the topic of determining the right grant application for Watonga.

Mayor Seitter thanked Ms. Little for all the work she had put into this. He asked if we knew how low of a score did get funded last year?

Ms. Little: They did not disclose that information, but I do not think the score is as much a factor as the amount of money they have to be awarded and that is just the unfortunate part of this.

Ms. Little: My recommendation is that I encourage the Council to make a decision based on the equalization of your money. If you are wanting a return on your investment, and willing to put up \$125,000 of match money, then we should consider the drying beds at the sewer treatment plant. We had already planned for some of this anyway as a Capital Improvements Project.

Mr. Cowan pointed out that the traffic light does not make any income for the City where the treatment plan does make some income as part of our utilities.

Mayor Seitter debated, A properly working traffic signal could help make the community more attractive and help draw people in.

Ms. Little suggested again: If needed, we could repair the traffic light without a grant verses the \$400,000 for the treatment plant. We could fund the traffic signal project ourselves if Council so choose.

Mayor Seitter agreed with that but asked, where the money would come from for the traffic signal.

Ms. Little: We do have some unrestricted funds that could be used for this. We have some Cares Act funds that are unrestricted.

This brought on discussion of the different types of funds and grants, how this money is being tracked and allocated. Some Cares act money is no longer restricted but ARPA funds currently are. City Treasurer Rodney Jacks does show this on his reports and Meacham does keep up with it. These monies are not budgeted at this time because we did not know we were to receive this these funds.

Mayor Seitter: Ms. Little did not mention it, but the traffic signal was actually my idea. Since I have been on the Counsel, we have done some really, really good things. But, we are not doing anything to make our City look better and until we start doing some of these things, people are not going to look at our City differently.

Ms. Wills agreed of the need to approve the appearance of our Community.

Ms. Willis, Mayor Sitter and others continued to talk of the need to improve the perception we present to the public. We have the community, infrastructure and housing, we just need to “look” more inviting to outsiders.

Mr. Cowan, going back to the topic at hand, asked the group to look at the total contributions needed for the City's match, what is the best return on investment for the City. The traffic light will cost the City \$15,000 out of pocket. The drying beds at the treatment plant will cost the City \$125,000 out of pocket and the street paving project will cost us \$75,000.

Mayor Seitter noted, and that is just for four blocks.

Mr. Cowan; Why would we not reach for the “biggest apple”?

Mayor Seitter and Mr. Cowan debated how to determine the “biggest apple”. From his point of view the drying beds are not spending out of pocket because this is already budgeted for.

Mayor Seitter noted, this is all complicated by the fact that in the end, we do not know exactly how NODA will rate or score these applications.

Council debated the needs of one project over another. It was determined, with some help from ODOT, that the City could pay for the traffic light ourselves.

Ms. Little agreed to get the Traffic Light Project on an upcoming Council Agenda.

Mr. Bradt brought up the funding restraints for NODA and how many grants can they fund from that.

Ms. Little countered that this was just for northwest Oklahoma and then for only the communities that apply.

Council discussed again some of the issues and unknowns of the application scoring system.

Travis Bradt made the motion to approve Resolution No. 2021-12 authorizing the application for financial assistance from the Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) Fund for drying beds as part of the de-watering project at Watonga Waste Water Treatment Plant. Motion was seconded by Lindsey Doyel.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote:

A. Cowan aye T. Bradt aye L. Doyel aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

3. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** To enter into executive session to discuss hiring for the position of Watonga Police Chief as authorized under Title 25 O. S. 307 § (B)(1).

Motion To enter into executive session to discuss hiring for the position of Watonga Police Chief as authorized under Title 25 O. S. 307 § (B)(1) was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Travis Bradt.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote:

A. Cowan aye T. Bradt aye L. Doyel aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried at 5:28 PM.

Mayor Seitter declared termination of executive session at 6:06 PM.

4. **Consideration, Discussion and Action:** To accept the recommendation of City Manager Karrie Beth Little to fill the position of Watonga Police Chief.

Motion to accept the recommendation of City Manager Karrie Beth Little to fill the position of Watonga Police Chief was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Ladina Willis.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote:

A. Cowan aye T. Bradt aye L. Doyel aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried.

5. **Comments:**

Mr. Bradt asked, how do I explain the Power Cost Adjustment Factor on the Light & Water billing to my neighbor?

Ms. Little; It is just a pass through charge we get from our supplier, Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority (OMPA). I did receive just this week, some public relations information from OMPA about what they are doing to help keep the electricity rates down and part of that includes information about the Power Cost Adjustment Factor. I intend to publicize and maybe do a mailing with this information.

Mayor Seitter noted that sometimes that charge is an addition and sometimes a minus.

Ms. Little agreed, it is based on the supply and demand.

Ms. Willis complimented Ms. Little on all her work and accomplishments in the short time she has been here.

Motion to adjourn was made by Allen Cowan and seconded by Lindsey Doyel.

Mayor Seitter, hearing no further comment, called for a vote:

A. Cowan aye T. Bradt aye L. Doyel aye L. Willis aye B. Seitter aye

Motion carried at 6:11 PM.

Mayor Bill Seitter

City Clerk, Verlen Bills