

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Dennis Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present were: President Dennis Johnson, Commissioners Joe Frenzel, Shirley Dukart and Carson Steiner

Absent were: Gene Jackson

**STANDARD MOTIONS****1. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

MOTION BY: Joe Frenzel

SECONDED BY: Carson Steiner

To approve the January 19, 2010 Order of Business as presented with the addition to the Consent Agenda of approval of Kirkwood Bank and Trust for financing of the snow blower.

DISPOSITION: Motion carried unanimously.

**2. CONSENT AGENDA**

MOTION BY: Joe Frenzel

SECONDED BY: Shirley Dukart

A. Approval of minutes of regular meeting dated January 4, 2010;

B. Approval of Extended Service Contract with Vanguard Appraisals, Inc.;

C. Approval of Financing with Kirkwood Bank and Trust for the Snow Blower:

Roll call vote...Aye 4, Nay 0, Absent 1.

Motion declared duly passed.

**TIMETABLE AGENDA**

5:30 PM - None

**NON-TIMETABLE AGENDA****4. GENERAL ISSUES/FINANCE**

A. None

**5. PUBLIC SAFETY****A. REPORTS:****1. Fire Department Monthly Report – December, 2009**

Fire Chief Robert Sivak reports on the December, 2009 Fire Department Monthly report which showed 24 incidents. Sivak is pleased to say although there was some very bitter cold weather only two incidents were reported for improper ash disposal. This report also includes one general alarm and one incident of frozen sprinkler piping. Although the weather was very cold the City got through it in a very good fashion.

**2. Police Department Monthly Report – December, 2009**

Police Chief Chuck Rummel reports the total of 148 accidents for the month of December. This is quite a spike in accidents. Rummel states some visibility problems at intersections have contributed to accidents as well. The report shows four reported injury accidents which were weather related. It also shows 11 school contacts; nine citations and two warnings. The year end report shows accidents up over 36% from 2008 to 2009. Rummel states the Dickinson Police Department continues to ensure a safe community. The Police Department will

provide high visibility enforcement; utilize radar surveys and extra patrol during busy times along with using the speed board displays.

Police Chief Chuck Rummel would like to announce the retirement of Stewart Stenberg. Stewart has been with the Dickinson Police Department for 20 years and has done a fantastic job and will be greatly missed.

Rummel reports reorganization will begin with the promotion of captains.

President Johnson still notices, especially right after the heavy snow when the streets were most hazardous a number of people talking on cell phones and driving. This continues to be an unsafe practice. When the street crews clean the snow off the streets the streets are still hazardous enough without citizens talking on cell phones when driving.

Rummel states this is very true and he and the Police Department really try to encourage people to pull off to the side of the road to talk and text. A safety message on Channel 19 is aired and it shows the dangers of talking and texting while driving. This practice seems to be a main contributor of accidents at this time. This practice is equivalent to driving under the influence for distraction. Rummel feels the legislature will possibly address this issue the next time they come into session. Rummel states more and more states are looking at a cell phone policy. This practice is being addressed with City employees as well particularly texting as this takes all of your attention from driving.

Commissioner Steiner states that he has heard of cases where young drivers have been texting or talking on the telephone and injured someone else and they are being sued for this action. Steiner believes that some course of action needs to be taken on texting and talking while driving.

## **6. PUBLIC WORKS – ENGINEERING**

### **A. REPORTS:**

#### **1. Snow Gates Report**

City Engineer Shawn Soehren informed the Commission of the information he has received in regards to snow gates. Soehren reports on the pros and cons of the addition of snow gates to the City's snow removal equipment. Soehren states that the snow gates are used mostly in clearing parking lots where you can push straight ahead and are not used much for blading streets or to keep the snow out of the driveways. The life expectancy is approximately 2 years or a substantial amount of repair work will be needed after 2 years. Snow gates are a very high maintenance piece of equipment according to the manufacturer. The total amount of snow for the snow gates to remain effective is no more than 4"-6". There is a substantial loss of production according to Bismarck, ND street department when adding snow gates. Bismarck has added more employees and more equipment in order to continue clearing the streets in a timely manner. Soehren also spoke with Jamestown, ND street department and they removed the snow gates as they were not effective for them. Dickinson would ask contractors we use to assist in snow removal to purchase snow gates for their equipment. The snow gates range from \$10-25,000 for each piece of equipment. It also takes approximately 8+ hours to install the gates. Soehren's research comes with concerns of cost benefit, high maintenance, and the loss of production is an obvious concern. He states the hourly rate for contractors is approximately \$110.

Commissioner Frenzel reminds everyone to keep in mind the time it takes to clean the streets. Snow gates will increase the time to clear streets 50%, it could take 3-4 days to get the streets plowed out instead of 2 days like it takes now. Frenzel

states if citizens are snowed in for 3-4 days they may reconsider using the snow gates to keep their driveways cleaned.

Commissioner Dukart states she feels the citizens of Dickinson feel very strong about not getting their driveways blocked in. She has spoke with Tracy Tooze of Tooze Construction and to Bruce Schneider from Big K and their cost would be approximately \$9,000 to install the snow gates on their equipment. Dukart feels that the elderly population cleans their driveway and then the snow plow comes by and fills their driveway in and it is very difficult to remove the snow again. Dukart states that the citizens of Dickinson do not like the way the snow removal is handled. Dukart states that in earlier storms if a driveway was plowed in they would call the City and then the City crew would come back and clean their driveway out. During this past storm, citizens called Ms. Dukart on Monday as their street had not been cleared yet.

Tracy Tooze states he is willing to add the snow gates to his snow equipment but he does agree with City Engineer Soehren that the efficiency rate is definitely going to be less. Mr. Tooze states it will cost him about \$11,000 to add the snow gates to each piece of equipment. He also states that he would add one snow gate to his angle plow which would cost approximately \$8,500. He does state they seem to be high maintenance and it does slow down the process of snow removal. Tooze Construction has been helping the City out with snow removal for 13 years and he would have only used the snow gates the last two years. Tooze feels that this would not be cost effective at this time. Tooze feels there maybe damage from the snow gates to curbs and the property left on the curbs. Tooze does feel that it would take up to 50% more time to clean the streets as the snow gates would have to be picked up and put down at every driveway. After research Tooze states the life expectancy of the snow gates is only three years. Tooze does elaborate on the importance of people moving their vehicles off the streets during a snow storm. He also elaborates about people driving during snow storms and getting stuck and then when an emergency occurs it is very difficult to get to the area where the emergency is as there are many cars in the middle of the street. Tooze states that all of the snow and ice could be removed but the damage to the equipment would be extensive and to what cost is all the snow removal of importance. Mr. Tooze also states that after a certain amount of snow the snow gates are useless. He feels that it is quite expensive to gear up for snow removal and provides a moderate return. In Mr. Tooze's opinion he would not add this piece of equipment to his inventory.

President Johnson feels the City is continuing to improve the situation with widening the streets and to get them cleaned up to the best that we can. This will continue to be an ongoing fight. The street widening is done only with the City's employees and equipment. Johnson feels that it may be in the City's best interest to spend a little more money and continue using the contracted labor to widen the streets instead of buying snow gates. The streets would probably get widened at a quicker pace in order to be prepared for the next snow storm.

City Engineer Soehren will be reviewing the City's policy and procedure on snow removal. The City will continue to review other options of snow removal and contract labor. Soehren states that while talking with Bismarck personnel that the citizens did vote for snow gates but this did not lessen the phone calls complaining about the snow removal. Soehren states we need to weigh the cost and if we desire bare streets it is possible to obtain this but the cost would be high.

President Johnson feels that we should continue to use outside contractors for a longer period of time. Johnson feels that it would not be justified to hire more employees for snow removal and then have those employees not have a position in the off season. Johnson states that we need to take a more modern approach with city staff and to utilize outside vendors when needed. At the Board of Equalization meetings citizens feel property taxes are too high and would like to have lower property taxes so he feels that citizens could probably manage with a little more snow on the streets rather than pay higher taxes. More City staff from other departments have been helping the street department in the removal of snow. Johnson states that with the 2011 budget this item will be reviewed in further depth.

7. **PUBLIC WORKS – MAINTENANCE AND UTILITIES**

A. None:

8. **ADMINISTRATION:**

A. **City Administrator Report**

1. **Transit Building Update:**

Administrator Kessel updates the Commission on the progress of the new transit building. The City is working with North Dakota Department of Transportation on the building. This project will be funded with stimulus dollars. This building will be located on the north side of Dickinson just east of the water tower. SRF Consulting out of Fargo received the bid to design the facility. Construction bid opening is expected to be in mid June, 2010.

- **Elder Care:** Elder Care needed to vacate their building (Baker Building) and are now located in the Public Works Building located on the south side of Dickinson. Colleen Rodakowski is very thankful for the relocation and feels like they are in a “four star hotel”. Administrator Kessel would like to thank Public Works Director Skip Rapp and his staff for making the transition and relocating some City staff to accommodate Elder Care.

2. **Comparable Taxable Valuations/Mills**

Administrator Kessel provides a 2009 Taxable Valuation sheet for information purposes to the Commissioners. The citizens of Dickinson show a great deal of interest in the mills that are levied to fund the City’s operation. This report is released from the ND League of Cities annually. This abbreviated version of the report shows the ten most populated cities in North Dakota and their relationship between high taxable valuations and low mills. The more populated areas have higher tax valuations and their mills are worth more so there are fewer mills. In regards to Dickinson’s peer group the City is doing very well and is very efficient in our mills.

The Peer Group Ranking shows the higher populated cities tend to have higher valuations and lower mills. The gap between the highest tax valuation and the City of Dickinson is very small with less than \$1.5 million. The City of Dickinson has done very well in the past and we are currently doing very well.

3. **Thank you note – SW Community Service and Restitution Program**

Administrator Kessel received a thank you note from SW Community Service and Restitution Program for the financial support the City provided to the program.

9. **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

MOTION BY: Shirley Dukart

SECONDED BY: Carson Steiner

To approve the accounts payable list as presented along with the additional accounts payable list from 2009, numbers 71408 to 71556. Said list is available in the Accounting Office.

DISPOSITION: Roll call vote... Dukart, Aye; Frenzel, Aye; Carson, Aye and Johnson Aye, Nay 0, Absent 1.  
Motion declared duly passed.

**10. CITY COMMISSION:**

N/A

**11. PUBLIC ISSUES OF CITY CONCERN NOT ON THE AGENDA:**

N/A

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION BY: Joe Frenzel

SECONDED BY: Shirley Dukart

For adjournment of the meeting at approximately 6:08 PM.

**DISPOSITION:** Roll call vote...Aye 4, Nay 0, Absent 1.

Motion declared duly passed.

OFFICIAL MINUTES PREPARED BY:

Rita Binstock, Assistant to City Administrator

APPROVED BY:

Shawn Kessel, City Administrator

Dennis W. Johnson, President

Board of City Commissioners

Date: \_\_\_\_\_