

LOWELL TOWN COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION  
OCTOBER 25, 2021

A Work Session of the Lowell Town Council was called to order on Monday, October 25, 2021, at 5:37 P.M., by Vice-President John Yelkich. Members present were John Alessia, John Yelkich, and Mike Gruszka. President Todd Angerman and Councilman Shane Tucker were absent. Also present were Clerk-Treasurer Judith Walters, Town Manager Craig Hendrix, Town Attorney David Westland via Zoom, Police Chief Jim Woestman, and GIS Director Greg White. Also present were Tri Creek Ambulance Director Corey Wietbrock and LVFD Chief Nick Hydelek and two representatives from Etica Group. The purpose of the work session was general town business.

Discussion of Fire and Police Department Facilities - Jim Biggs and Toby Weninger of Etica Group were present to propose a study of the Fire Station and Police Station. Mr. Biggs speciality is Public Service Buildings, and he had walked though both buildings. He said the Police Station is in good shape but if designed today would have bigger rooms, but said the Fire Station is busting at the seams and they don't have room for their expensive equipment. The Fire Station is not ADA compliant and needs separate sleeping areas for men and women. There are a number of maintenance items that need to be addressed. Discussion followed. The building is owned by the Town of Lowell and houses both the volunteer fire department and Tri-Creek Ambulance. Mr. Biggs stated it is as if you are the landlord to two entities that are not part of the Town of Lowell. Councilman Gruszka agreed and stated we are not charging enough as Tri-Creek Ambulance has paid the same annual fee for years. Mr. Weninger went over the general scope of services they provide, site analysis and planning; existing facility analysis; and facility study. He listed other municipalities they have worked for. Council members asked for a list of all fire and ambulance calls and response times and their location in Eagle, West Creek and Cedar Creek. This information will help with the site study to determine if the fire station is in the correct location or if a second station is needed. Discussion followed on planning for now and future needs. Mr. Biggs stated you may consider moving the Police Station and turning their building into the administrative offices of the fire station, or the study may show to move both facilities and sell off that property. Mr. Biggs will provide an estimate for providing a feasibility study and site assessment for the next work session. Chief Hydelek stated he will have the call volume from 911 available by the next meeting.

Discussion of Human Resources - Kristen Deutsch, New Focus HR, via Zoom, explained her company and the services they provide in regard to hiring process, HR compliance, employee relations, training, compensation and terminations. She was recommending the Town update the employee handbook and job descriptions. Ms. Deutsch recommended Stage 1 - update employee handbook, and review personnel file audit/maintenance; Form I-9 Employment Verification and Eligibility Audit; Fair Labor Standards Act Audit; and update employment application. In Stage 2 she would

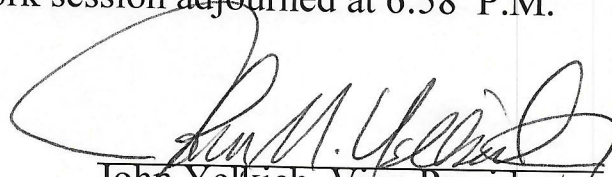


recommend updating job descriptions, compensation analysis/salary administration plan, and performance of management program. Discussion followed. The employee personnel handbook is outdated and needs to be reviewed for compliance with state and federal labor laws. The project to update the employee handbook would be \$4800 and the job description/compensation analysis plan cost would depend on the number of job titles and would be billed at an hourly rate of \$150.00. Ms. Deutsch stated the police department has a separate SOP, but stated that should be reflected in your current employee handbook. Council members asked at this time for a proposal to just do the employee handbook and job descriptions. Ms. Deutsch stated she would have a proposal by the end of the week.

Garden Center - Town Manager Hendrix stated a counter offer has been received back from the owner of the property, Sonia Mercado, for \$115,000. The Town had initially offered them \$65,000 + \$5,000 administrative costs for a total of \$70,000 based on the appraisals that were done on the property. The owners originally wanted \$170,000 for the property. The property is in a floodway and is not buildable and they can't be issued a building permit. Discussion followed. Council members agreed their original offer of \$75,000 stands and they have seen nothing that justifies paying more. It was noted they could rescind their original offer, and the owners won't be able to do anything to the property. Attorney Westland stated that if you rescind the original offer then you can't exercise your eminent domain powers over the next two years, and would have to wait five years before you can move forward with eminent domain again. Councilman Alessia said he believes they will come back with another offer because they can't do anything with the property.

Westmeadow parcel - Mike Austgen had submitted a revised site plan for the parcel that is owned by the Town of Lowell and is for sale. They are offering \$240,000., which is the price paid by the town back in 2016. The property is zoned R-1 and R-3 but would require a lift station, which may be the reason that no offer had been received for the property. Mr. Austgen had originally proposed some light industry and residential, but now has revised to light industrial, such as outdoor storage facilities. It would have to be rezoned to Light Industry. Council will review his revised site plan.

No further discussion, the work session adjourned at 6:58 P.M.

  
John Yelkich, Vice-President

Attest:

  
Judith Walters, Clerk-Treasurer