

**CITY OF ROCK ISLAND
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
April 24, 2023 - 5:00 p.m.**

**City Council Chambers, City Hall, 3rd Floor
1528 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL**

4/24/2023 - Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Thoms called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED BY AUDIO AND VIDEO CONFERENCE WITHOUT A PHYSICALLY PRESENT QUORUM OF THE ROCK ISLAND CITY COUNCIL DUE TO THE DISASTER DECLARATION ISSUED BY GOVERNOR PRITZKER.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Thoms asked City Clerk Samantha Gange to call the roll.

Present: Mayor Mike Thoms, Alderpersons Judith Gilbert, Jenni Swanson, Dylan Parker (virtual), Mark Poulos, and Bill Healy.

Alderman Randy Hurt arrived at 5:05 p.m.

Alderman Moses Robinson arrived at 5:08 p.m.

Staff: City Manager Todd Thompson, City Attorney Dave Morrison, City Clerk Samantha Gange, and other City Staff.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Thoms asked if there was anyone in the audience or virtually that wished to comment. No residents volunteered to speak.

CITY SOFTWARE (ERP) PROJECT INTRODUCTION - PLANTE MORAN

Information Technology Director Tim Bain addressed Council regarding the City Software ERP Project. He introduced Plante Moran staff as the consultants partnering with the City to select and implement new software. Plante Moran Project Manager Nina Rajcevic and Project Director Natalie Schwarz presented an introduction of the ERP project to City Council. Ms. Rajcevic provided an overview and introduced the project team. Ms. Schwarz said she will provide support to Ms. Rajcevic and the rest of the Plante Moran team to ensure the right resources are engaged at the right time in the project. Ms. Schwarz said members of the project team specialize in financials, HCM/payroll, utility billing, and community development with many years of experience of working for county and city governments.

Ms. Schwarz said Plante Moran is an audit, tax, and consulting firm with about 3,300 staff with

offices in Illinois and surrounding Midwest region and Denver. She said Plante Moran has served clients nationwide for over 50 years and provided a list of recent clients they have assisted with an ERP replacement or implementation project. She said their staff would like to utilize the information learned while working with other organizations similar in size and demographics to assist the City in making its decisions for vendors. She said they are completely vendor independent and are fully immersed in the public sector software and marketplace through a vendor liaison program. This allows Plante Moran to meet with vendors at regular intervals to discuss new software capabilities, services offered, and trends and challenges. She said this collaboration helps Plante Moran to continue to better serve clients with continuously changing requirements and regulations.

Ms. Schwarz defined an ERP as Enterprise Resource Planning comprised of a suite of integrated applications that use a common database to share data across departments, and facilitates information flow between all functions and external stakeholders. She explained that there are a range of software programs available that would encompass human capital management (HCM), payroll, utility billing, and community development, programs that focus primarily on HCM and payroll and then there are program options that include some of both. She said it is best to evaluate future goals for processes to identify the best fit. Most people tend to think of an ERP project as mainly being about technology, but really it's about the people. The technology is the easy part, it's really changing processes, policies, and job responsibilities within the departments that set up the foundation to build and implement the technology.

Ms. Rajcevic provided several reasons why the ERP project is needed, including: inefficiencies due to system limitations, desire for greater access to information, shadow systems and work arounds exist with current ERP, and to gain operational efficiency. She said the goal is to have a more user-friendly system for everyone, to reduce manual entry and redundancy, procurement of an integrated system, and incorporate best practices throughout the process to increase efficiency, and provide residents and staff access to information through a self-service portal. She said two benefits of new ERP systems are integration and citizen engagement. Integrating systems would reconcile information between systems, provide a system of truth, and allow staff to spend more time acting on information instead of searching for it. Citizen engagement would enable residents to access information when they need it and reduce waiting time for approvals and information.

Ms. Rajcevic said the project overview consists of assessing technical infrastructure, conducting interviews with staff, developing functional requirements, developing and distributing an RFP document, participating in vendor demonstrations, and selection of the final vendor. She said project and change management will be ongoing throughout the process. She reviewed the components included in the project scope including finance, human resources, community and economic development, risk management, and citizen and customer engagement. She said staff have been very forthcoming during interviews, are resourceful, demonstrated forward thinking, and are asking great questions. Other themes were paper-based processes which creates potential risk, work arounds due to system limitations, and institutional knowledge of processes.

Ms. Rajcevic said Plante Moran will be wrapping up interviews next week and developing requirements next month to go out with the RFP aimed for distribution in July. She said they will generate reports during that time to communicate findings and associated opportunities. The goal is to have a vendor selected by November and then to have contract negotiations occurring in December. She reviewed the selection process for Council and said reviewing responses will begin in the fall. The team will then be working to shortlist the top vendors to lead into the final vendor selection. She said there are tools and templates to support the process and ensure the City has the information for the best vendor selection. Ms. Rajcevic reviewed considerations for ERP implementation and the members of the project committee who would be available to answer questions.

Mr. Bain thanked Ms. Rajcevic and Ms. Schwarz and offered to answer questions. Alderperson Robinson asked if the software being considered is cloud-based. Ms. Rajcevic said the majority of vendors are offering cloud-based programs in today's marketplace. Alderperson Robinson asked if SAS or Pass as a service or platform as a service. Ms. Rajcevic responded that for the most part you pay for the implementation for the first year and ongoing software fees after that. Alderperson Robinson asked about support after implementation and if the change in software would be a lift and shift of current programs or the implementation of a brand-new system. Ms. Schwarz explained that the current software utilized by the City is completely different than what is available on the market today. Cloud-based programs are continuously updated, which would necessitate a completely new implementation and that the recommendation would likely be a cloud or vendor hosted program.

Alderperson Robinson asked if support would be provided after implementation or if it would be the responsibility of the City. Ms. Schwarz said that for cloud solutions and most of the managed services will shift managing the data center and updates to the vendor. However, some vendors charge more and some vendors provide the option for the organization to take more of the data management. She said this will be a very detailed part of the RFP. Alderperson Robinson asked about the process of authentication. Mr. Bain said the City is already pursuing multi-factor authentication and the security component of the finance software is a goal of the project.

Alderperson Robinson asked if there are considerations for an exit plan to enable the City to export information from the software in the event that something goes wrong with the software. Ms. Schwarz said there are disaster recovery plans provided by vendors in the event that there is a decision to back out but that there is not a clear answer available at this time since there hasn't been a need to end a contract and export data. She said it will be a portion of the contract and recommended the City discuss it with the selected vendor. Mr. Bain said the City is already experiencing information transfer issues with the current system. Alderperson Robinson asked if the transfer of legacy data is being considered. Mr. Bain said the timeframe for information being retained and how it will be retained is a part of what is being examined in the process of selecting software. Alderperson Robinson encouraged City staff to be mindful of who will own the data stored by the service.

Alderperson Gilbert asked if Plante Moran will continue to consult with the City after a software vendor is selected to ensure the new program works. Mr. Bain said the programs would be run parallel to ensure it meets the needs of the City. Ms. Rajcevic said Plante Moran is currently contracted to work with the City through vendor selection and contract negotiation but that their proposal included the potential to support the implementation. Alderperson Robinson recommended utilizing fluid deadlines to allow for versioning changes and project item changes without paying additional fees.

DOWNTOWN PROJECT UPDATE

Public Works Director Mike Bartels addressed Council regarding improvements for the downtown. He introduced Quad Cities Chamber Downtown Rock Island Director Jack Cullen and representatives Jason McKenzie of Veenstra and Kimm, Solani Sheth of Streamline Architects, and City Engineer Mike Kane who are available to answer specific questions. Mr. Bartels said the objectives for the evening are to provide Council with an update on the plans for improvement, seek Council support for the design, and seek Council approval for the contract for design and engineering services on the agenda for the regular Council meeting. He said the information presented tonight is not the final product and could change varyingly from public input which is included in the project timeline. Additionally, City Council will have final approval on designs and concepts.

Mr. Bartels referenced the rendering provided by Veenstra and Kimm to demonstrate what the

downtown could look like and clarified that final approval was not being sought tonight. He reviewed the project timeline for the remainder of 2023 and into 2024, highlighting the start of construction in February or March 2024, the public input period, design meetings, and approval of final design concepts in June 2023. Alderperson Hurt asked why there is a 6-month period between Council approval of the design and the approval of the final drawings. Mr. Bartels said necessary surveying takes a lot of time and the environmental impacts required to be submitted with the grant for federal funding could take three months to get approval for the project area. He said requirements for being within the Downtown Historic Area will also add to the timeframe. Alderperson Hurt asked if some of the work could be completed before June and if there may be a more streamlined approach. Alderperson Gilbert asked if the engineering portion of the project would occur and if that was included in the 6-month period from June to December. Mr. Bartels responded affirmatively. Mr. Bartels said that the plan is to present this as one project scope and bid it as alternates to allow parts of the project to be separated if desired. Alderperson Robinson asked if the timeline could be shifted up. Mr. Bartels responded affirmatively.

Mr. Bartels said the scope of the grants was submitted with 18th Street from 1st to 3rd Avenue. He provided a picture of a map that showed in red the First Avenue project that has already been approved by Council. The approval of IMEG engineering has been in progress, has been included in the Capital Improvement Plan, and will hopefully be included on a fall IDOT letting for construction in late 2024 for the start of construction in late spring of 2025. He said this project would be approximately one year behind the downtown project. He referenced the diagram and indicated the area that was included in the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district and noted the design has been completed. Alderperson Healy asked what the amount was of the previous bid. Mr. Bartels said it was approximately \$3.5 million and the yellow areas of the diagram are estimated at about \$7.3 million. Alderperson Parker clarified that the City has an alliance with the QC Chamber.

Mr. Bartels explained that the area selected included 18th Street, the area considered the core of the downtown, Schweibert Park, and the pedestrian mall. He said Arts Alley was also included with the receipt of the grant specific for that area. Many of the items included were identified by previous public input. He said proposed changes would address longtime problems for the downtown area including drainage. Mayor Thoms asked if this project included sidewalks. Mr. Bartels said this project included reconstruction from building face to building face including streetscaping, lighting, pavement, new utilities, water sewer, storm sewer, and tree scaping. He indicated these changes would be the same for the area indicated in red even though that is a separate project. Alderperson Gilbert clarified that the yellow area included street reconstruction. Mr. Bartels responded affirmatively and said previously plans included alternatives to reduce cost but this would be complete street reconstruction.

Mayor Thoms asked if the sidewalks would be widened for café seating. Mr. Bartels responded affirmatively. Mayor Thoms asked if the alley ways in the downtown were City-owned. Mr. Bartels responded affirmatively and said the only two proposed for improvement were indicated in yellow in addition to Arts Alley. Alderperson Poulos asked why the indicated alleys were selected. Mr. Bartels said the alley between 20th and 21st was selected because of the lack of drainage without a storm sewer in the area. Alderperson Poulos asked if the commercial use of the alleys would be negatively impacted during the reconstruction. Mr. Bartels said everyone would be impacted by the project and they will attempt to minimize them. He said there will be advance notices beforehand and ongoing notices during the construction. Many of the areas will be shutdown, possibly in phases, to complete work more quickly and minimize the amount of time that the area is impacted. Alderperson Poulos asked if the alleys adjacent to the Federal Courthouse would be impacted. Mr. Bartels said the Federal Courthouse ties into the sidewalk area for the new parking lot and assessment is ongoing to address additional concerns in the downtown area in future planning.

Mr. Cullen addressed Council on behalf of the Rock Island Downtown Alliance (RIDA) and

expressed gratitude for the opportunity to co-present to Council and excitement for the proposed capital improvements for the downtown. He said proposed changes will add safe dependable infrastructures, dramatic enhancements in the core of downtown to encourage more private investment, improve quality of life and increase civic pride for the City of Rock Island. He said this project is an opportunity to implement input from downtown stakeholders and the public including information from the 2015 downtown revitalization plan, which is still relevant today.

Mr. Cullen said Illinois Causality Company would donate their part of the property and match \$100,000 for development of a dog park. Elements in the development of the dog park would include fencing, shade shelters, benches, dog waste bags, trash receptacles, turf grass, string lights, a camera, and signage to include murals. He said this development would enhance the streetscape to include proper curb and parking facilities. Mr. Cullen said the development of the alley way to the south of the proposed dog park would address drainage issues and support private investment on 20th street and the area around the dog park. He said this is an opportunity to develop a pedestrian friendly thoroughfare between those two parts of the downtown. He said the next closest dog park is about 7 miles away from the downtown area in the southwest section of the City.

Mr. Cullen referenced a potential visual rendering of the development of Arts Alley located at the 1700 block of 2nd Avenue. He said it was created in 1994 by the City as a form of infill after a building was demolished, which is why it is much wider than a typical alley way. He said this project is supported by state funding as a potential tourist attraction. Large scale murals, string lighting – enhanced lighting is a priority, frames to display local interchangeable art, dedicated entertainment/performance space, temporary rentable vendor space for use in popup programs, and visually appealing, and movable closures of bollards for pedestrian safety. Mr. Cullen said this development would positively impact tourism as 68 percent of that is driven by the arts and culture according to Americans for the Arts, and they spend twice as much as other tourists.

He reviewed the proposed pedestrian mall as the core of the downtown capital improvement project with the other components radiating from this project. The proposal includes components of underground infrastructure as well as above ground, which includes a shared street or festival street, 25 to 30-foot-wide sidewalks at street level, and two lanes for traffic separated from pedestrian areas by bollards. This would prioritize pedestrian foot traffic in the downtown and enhance accessibility for maintenance. He said the wide sidewalks would support business retention and attraction through dedicated outdoor dining structures and spaces with the opportunity to create the spaces uniformly throughout the downtown. This would support modernization and support businesses recovering from the pandemic through increased foot traffic and enhanced footprints. Alderperson Swanson said there would be no parking on this street. Mr. Cullen responded affirmatively and explained parking discussions will be ongoing and that there may be temporary parking to accommodate for the increase in restaurant carryout and delivery orders.

Mr. Cullen said closures of the street for festivals and events would also be maintained for programming the space. Alderperson Robinson asked if more issues would occur by allowing vehicles through for deliveries but not having parking available. Mr. Cullen said traffic flow, enhanced accessibility for maintenance and emergency vehicles, and width of the sidewalks were considerations in the design. He said parking would cut down the sidewalks. Alderperson Robinson said it is confusing to allow for traffic to drive through without having the ability to park. Mr. Bartels said short term parking and parking on both sides were discussed with downtown business owners impacted most and the consensus was a desire for space for outdoor dining. Mayor Thoms said this kind of format is advantageous for quickly picking up elderly or handicapped patrons from businesses to provide ADA accessibility. Alderperson Swanson said outdoor dining is not desirable next to parked vehicles. Mr. Bartels said this design supports access for emergency vehicles and Public Works vehicles for staff to perform maintenance. Alderperson Healy asked how wide the area would be to accommodate two lanes of traffic and

50 feet for sidewalks. Mr. Bartels said it is approximately 60 feet.

City Manager Todd Thompson asked if the area to the west of the plaza was larger in the photo and indicated that north of the area in the design image has two lanes of traffic, parking, and sidewalks. Alderperson Hurt said the proposed plan is the best way to redesign the area. Mr. Cullen said the alleyway that connects 2nd and 3rd Avenue would create a welcoming pedestrian thoroughfare and support continuity of the same atmosphere of the core of downtown. Alderperson Gilbert asked if this was a final design for the pedestrian mall. Mr. Cullen said it is a proposal that considers accessibility needs for emergency vehicles, maintenance vehicles, and patrons. Mr. Bartels said this proposal is the product of previous public input. Mayor Thoms said that empty conduit would allow for underground wiring for sound and music in the downtown. Mr. Cullen said electrical hookups are available with the lighting structures and would be available in the streets. Mayor Thoms said he would like wi-fi to be an amenity in the downtown.

Mr. Bartels said electrical vehicle charging stations in certain areas are also a part of the proposed project and may be in collaboration with Metro Link. In response to a question from Alderperson Healy, Mr. Cullen said the ability to program the area and hold events, such as concerts, is being preserved. Alderperson Hurt said he is in support of the proposal and asked if there has been discussion regarding a gate system or movable concepts for blocking vehicle access. Mr. Bartels said we would likely not use the previous gate system but hydraulic, movable bollards have been assessed. Alderperson Hurt asked who would maintain the dog park. Mr. Cullen said that would be discussed potentially as an enhanced services contract between the City and the RIDA. The turf product has a higher initial cost but is comprised of odor and bacteria fighting material which would require flushing a few times a year depending on use. Alderperson Hurt asked who would be responsible for littering and dog waste specifically. Mr. Cullen said dog waste bags and receptacles would be added and other aspects are still being worked out.

Alderperson Gilbert expressed concern for maintenance of the dog park with limited parks and public works staff to maintain current facilities. Alderperson Hurt said the park would likely require daily maintenance. Mr. Cullen said some patrons would cleanup after their pets and that controls would be necessary for individuals who would not. He said one of the goals of the downtown alliance is to encourage private investment, improve quality of life, and the benefit of potentially enhanced beautification in the downtown, which may be consistent with tasking the RIDA with maintaining the dog park. Mr. Cullen said the Downtown Davenport Partnership has a separate contract for cleaning services to maintain the skybridge and parking garages. He said Arts Alley, the dog park, and other identified spaces could be identified areas of focus for the downtown alliance for cleaning and maintenance.

Alderperson Gilbert said events, concert, festivals, and programming for the pedestrian mall are necessary to bring people to the downtown space outside of Schweibert Park. Mayor Thoms said 1st Avenue will be undergoing a diet in the next year or two to make it more pedestrian friendly. Mr. Cullen said the 1st Avenue project is an extension of the improvement being made in the downtown. Alderperson Healy asked how much of the available \$7.3 million are being utilized for the 1st Avenue project and expressed concern of the amount of work needed under the surface. Mr. Bartels said the 1st Avenue project is about \$3.5 million of which there are grants funds of \$2.6 million available from a surface transportation block grant (STBG), and the remaining \$800,000 is included in the CIP and funded with motor/fuel tax funds. Alderperson Healy said the more funds available for use in the downtown will increase and improve the services available, which will elevate the City. Mr. Bartels said there is a total investment of over \$10 million dollars over the next three years.

Alderperson Parker said that Council calls for more strategic thinking, more aligning of plans and budgets to inform the actions of the City and he is impressed by the use of planning that has

informed the scope of this proposed project. He said he is delighted to see nine different recommendations from the 2015 downtown revitalization included in the proposed project and the use of strategic planning of Public Works, Jack Cullen, the RIDA, and City Council. Mr. Cullen reviewed the sources of funding including \$1.5 million in downtown TIF funds, \$2.5 million in Federal ARPA funds, \$3 million in State of Illinois Rebuild Downtowns and Main Streets Capital Grant Program funds, \$267,181 in State of Illinois Tourism Attraction and Festivals Grant Program funds, and \$112,730 in private donations for a total of \$7,379,911.

Aldersperson Gilbert asked who is paying for the lighting service of the WHBF tower. Mr. Bartels said that putting up the lights is part of the proposed project. Mayor Thoms said the station would pay for the electricity. Mr. Cullen said there are discussions with the WHBF general manager to explore the feasibility of lighting the tower. Mayor Thoms announced that RIDA board member John Chow was in attendance and thanked him for attending. Aldersperson Healy asked if an alliance meeting was scheduled for the following day. Mr. Cullen responded affirmatively and said the meeting would be held at the Illinois Casualty Company from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. He said Mr. Thompson is on the board with 12 other board members. Mr. Cullen invited the public to attend the meeting and directed participants to sign in at the front desk.

MOTION TO ADJOURN.

MOTION:

Aldersperson Poulos moved to adjourn; Aldersperson Gilbert seconded.

VOTE:

Motion PASSED on a 7-0-0 roll call vote. Aye: Poulos, Healy, Robinson, Hurt, Gilbert, Swanson and Parker. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Meeting ended at 6:22 p.m.

Naomi Torrence_____

Naomi Torrence, Deputy City Clerk