

## Finance Committee

February 6, 2023

6:00pm - City Hall Council Chambers

Chairman Ptak Called the Meeting to order at 6:00pm

### ROLL CALL

**Present:** Chairman Ptak, Aldermen Thompson, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

**Excused Absence:** None

**Others Present:** Finance Director John Duncan, Deputy Clerk Brent Bader, Director of Public Works Patrick Watson, Fire Chief Jerry Janick, Alderman Bacidore, Alderman Reynolds, Mayor Grove, City Engineer Brian Brown, Economic Development Director Curt Bedei, Alderman Jordan Crane, City Treasurer Virginia Kochanowski

A quorum was present.

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Thompson to approve and place on file the minutes of the Finance Committee for January 23, 2023.

Each and every aldermen has a copy.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

### Review of Bills

Alderman Lavieri questioned a bill for \$6,900 for major plow repair. Director Watson confirmed that it was for a hydraulic pump on one of the city's older trucks.

Alderman Jeppson questioned an unpaid invoice for River Road gate repair for \$13,203. Director Watson confirmed that it was for a replacement on a slide gate for the sewer plant.

Director Watson then explained to the committee a little about Project #1 of the 2023 Public Works Facility Renovations project. He stated that this project would not be done all at once. He believes that doing individual bids for each part of the project will be the cheaper route to go. The first portion to the project will be to frame up the entire north wall and two doorways. This will be at the north part of the building, unheated, where the light storage will be located. Alderman Lavieri pointed out that Tieman was the low bid of two.

Moved by Alderman Lavieri and seconded by Alderman Jeppson to accept the bid from Tieman Builders for \$26,660 for Project #1 of the 2023 Public Works Facility Renovations project.

### ROLL CALL

**AYE:** Chairman Ptak, Alderman Thompson, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

**NAY:** None **Absent:** None **Abstain:** None

**MOTION CARRIED: 5-0**

Moved by Alderman Jeppson and seconded by Alderman Thompson to accept the request from Melissa Busch of Phelps Uniform for a Redevelopment Incentive Program grant totaling \$12,500 for premises located at 5 Polar Bear Drive.

**ROLL CALL**

**AYE:** Chairman Ptak, Alderman Thompson, Lavieri, Jeppson, Herndon

**NAY:** None **Absent:** None **Abstain:** None

**MOTION CARRIED: 5-0**

**Attachment A – Celebration of Lights Spreadsheet**

Finance Director Duncan began the discussion in regards to his spreadsheet pertaining to the Celebration of Lights breakdown over the last few years. Duncan mentioned that there were only a few numbers that needed to be changed and corrected under the 2022 column. They were not significant changes. Duncan stated how the Celebration of Lights started back in 2013 with about 10 displays that were run on generators and no donations were collected. The 2013 column is zeroed out due to this. In 2014, a donation box was put out at the park and the city brought in \$12,279.84 in donations. Duncan noted that displays were getting sold and purchased also starting in 2014 and they are shown under each annual column. Duncan also noted that in 2015, volunteers were out there for portions of time. By 2016, volunteers were out there at all times. Duncan listed different line items on his spreadsheet to track throughout the years, candy canes for example. Capital improvement projects were done to the park, which Duncan tracked separately, with a total of \$215,557.56. Duncan pointed out that 2020, a COVID year, was the most successful year for the Celebration of Lights. Obviously, it was a nice advantage where people didn't have to come in any contact with anyone or get out of their vehicles that were provided the most in donations. In 2022, the city started a traffic counter. There were approximately 21,600 cars that went through. Duncan also mentioned that over \$40,000 have been given back to the local schools. Maintenance of the park or the maintenance of the displays was noted on the spreadsheet for \$88,000. This number gained from the past due to the city using an outside service to take down the displays. Duncan believes that the city's hope is to migrate a fraction or a good fraction of the setup and teardown to an outside company so that the city laborers are not spending as much labor on it, potentially making the process quicker and cheaper. Advertisements through radio and newspaper ads were noted on the spreadsheet. The city also purchased some equipment with specific purposes to make set up and take down with the sponsorship signs easier and more efficient. Duncan mentioned having \$50,000 highlighted under capital improvements expenses that was to be pledged to the city by the Celebration of Lights. The city has not paid that yet from LPAC, but could be paid at any time. The city did sell some ornaments this year bringing in \$3,883.53 with the labor of the ornaments for \$1,204.00. Duncan hopes that the improvements of adding the car count could benefit the city to see what each car may be contributing to the event, where

they are coming from, and what each car may be spending. This is hoped to help everyone out with decision making for the event in the future.

Alderman Bacidore asked if the city lost \$120,000 on the bottom line.

Duncan did confirm that the bottom line for 2022 is currently right a negative minus \$120,000. That is counting all labor expenses associated with the offset of what was brought in. Duncan did point out that from 2013 through half of 2020, the city did not count the labor. He also mentioned that the \$50,000 that was pledged for the Public Works building, was counted in for the 2022 deficit but not paid for yet.

Alderman Ptak feels that the city should forgive the amount that was once pledged for the Public Works building, let the city just take care of the building itself, and still allow LPAC to store the Christmas decorations. That would take \$50,000 away from the event's profits.

Chairman Ptak was overall surprised by the numbers but does believe that it is a good thing for the City of LaSalle knowing there were 21,000 cars that went through. Ptak does believe that it is a good PR thing for LaSalle, even if they are not all buying something, they are coming through the town. He does also believe that the city does need to have more control of the expenses in the future on this event with some parameters on certain items.

Alderman Bacidore feels that the bigger it is getting, the more it is costing the city. Bacidore believes that spending money on the streets, alleys, and curbs are more important for the city to look at rather than spending money on the "light show." Bacidore mentioned that the newspaper stated that Uptown Bar and Grill does more business because of the lights. Bacidore stated that he spoke with one of the owners and they mentioned picking up an extra table or two because of the lights. Alderman Bacidore did agree that the city is bringing more people into town, but the shops are not open past 5pm and how would the city know where they are going and/or spending their money. He believes most are coming in from 80 or 39 and heading right back out. He does believe the city needs to cut back on the expenses for the lights.

Chairman Ptak proposed that the city needs to cap what the city workers put into the labor portion of this event. Ptak does believe that the city should still be spending some money on the lights because it is good for the city.

Alderman Bacidore asked how much Ivan and Sons charged to take them down. Duncan confirmed that it was for \$34,000 and did not have an estimate yet for next year for set up.

Bacidore believes it will cost potentially \$100,000 to put them up and take them down next year, if they charged \$34,000 this year to take them down and that is the easier job of the two.

Duncan mentioned that it took the firm about nine days to take the displays down. Alderman Bacidore mentioned stakes still being up around the fields out at Rotary Park.

Alderman Thompson does not believe that the city should be spending that much money also on the lights but does believe that it is a good thing for LaSalle and it does put LaSalle on the map.

Alderman Crane also agrees that it is a great thing for the community. He just does not want it to be at the expense of the taxpayers. He definitely wants the city to look into how to cut the costs of this event.

Alderman Ptak mentioned that the firm hired to come in to setup and teardown should help with the argument that many have in regards to this event taking the labor away from city services.

Alderman Crane asked if the city did discuss this with the ASME union and Duncan stated that it has been discussed and approved by them.

Alderman Jeppson also agrees that it is a good thing for the city and it does put LaSalle on the map. He agrees with Ptak to scratch the \$50,000 that was originally pledged and to definitely look into capping the city's expenses on the lights.

Director Duncan did mention that the city could go back to LPAC and discuss that \$50,000 number with them.

Alderman Lavieri thought that if the city is subcontracting out the lights for setup and take down that the event could potentially run longer and bring in more money. Duncan, however, mentioned that the park is typically being used up to a certain time of the year with soccer season. Ptak doesn't think it is necessary to run it any earlier than it currently runs.

**There were no more questions or comments from the public.**

Moved by Alderman Herndon and seconded by Alderman Thompson to adjourn the meeting.

Voice vote, all ayes. Motion carried.

Chairman Ptak adjourned the meeting at 6:28pm

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Quinn, City Clerk