COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
City Hall Council Chambers
January 21, 2014

Council present: Aldermen Judy Stearns, Mboka Mwilambwe, Karen Schmidt, Jim Fruin, Rob Fazzini, Kevin Lower, Scott Black and David Sage, and Mayor Tari Renner.

Council absent: Alderman Jennifer McDade.

Staff present: David Hales, City Manager; Alex McElroy, Asst. to the City Manager; Jim Karch, Director of Public Works; and Tracey Covert, City Clerk.

Mayor Renner called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Renner opened the Public Comment section of the meeting. He added that there would not be a response from the Committee under the Public Comment portion of the meeting. No one came forward to address the Committee.

MINUTES

Motion by Alderman Fruin, seconded by Alderman Black to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2013 Committee of the Whole meeting as presented.

Motion carried, (viva voce).

ICMA CENTER OR PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT RECAP

Mayor Renner introduced this topic.

David Hales, City Manager, addressed the Council. Alex McElroy, Asst. to the City Manager, has had performance management assigned to him as a key responsibility. Initially, City staff had to gather data. The International City/County Management Association, (ICMA), was involved in performance management. This action had been influence by the accounting boards. These boards were requiring more information regarding service levels, what was being done, how much was spent, and what was neglected. Benchmarking provided the public with information regarding safeguarding of public funds and stewardship of infrastructure.

The City participated in a pilot program and joined the Center for Performance Management, (CPM). ICMA established consistency regarding gathering data regarding work load, productivity, efficiency, effectiveness and more. The program allows for realistic comparisons with other public entities and the opportunity to learn from same. He could not understate City staff’s involvement in this program.

Good management dictated that progress be measured from year to year. This program provided information regarding service levels, comparison with other cities and how the City had been rated. The information/data would be shared with the public.

Alex McElroy, Asst. to the City Manager, addressed the Council. A PowerPoint presentation had been prepared. He presented a brief history of the ICMA's CPM. This program started in 1994. Its purpose was to develop common measures, encourage comparisons, identify effective management practices and learn from high performers.

The CPM program measures eighteen (18) service areas. The City provided responses for fourteen (14) areas. It was a significant undertaking. City staff took on this project knowing that the City's data would be shared. Data from FY 12/13 was provided. The ICMA trained City staff in August 2013; responses were compiled in September 2013 and provided to ICMA in October. Results were received from the ICMA in December 2013. The process was involved and labor intensive. He noted the short turnaround times. A key issue was the benefit gained by participation in the program.

Thirty-nine (39) entities participated in the program. These cities ranged from 5,000 to over a million in population. He noted the variety of size, services and service levels. Eleven (11) cities were identified as comparable and used as benchmarks.

The questions were outcome oriented and were used to identify successes and/or areas needing improvement. City staff saw the benefit of participation. He cautioned that this program was not intended to be used as a disciplinary tool.

The data was important for several reasons. Most federal grants require outcome evaluations as part of the application process. Bond sales require indicators of financial condition. Local government revenues were insufficient which made effective use of resources imperative. Both GASB, (Government Accounting Standards Board), and GFOA, (Government Finance Officers Association), have indicated that performance measurement will be a future requirement. It provided a manner to quantify to citizens "the bang for their buck".

Mr. McElroy mentioned several examples of the program in action. First, a city in Wyoming that participated in the program was experiencing more fleet accidents than their peers. They examined data detailing where the accidents occurred and types of accidents. It was found that most accidents were rear end collisions within one (1) mile of city hall. Further research showed that cars were backing into pillars in the parking area. The pillars were painted bright yellow and the number of accidents decreased.

A second example was from an Atlanta, GA suburb regarding potholes. The public works director reported to council the costs: materials and manpower required for repairs. Council questioned how much this work should cost. He did not know because he had not examined data from peers.

The final example was from a metro Seattle city. The fire chief saw a nearby community with an excellent ability to confine fires to the room of origin. He contacted the high performing department chief and found that his community had a residential fire sprinkler ordinance that aided his crew.

Mr. McElroy provided data for the City and our peers for Code Enforcement; Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts; and Police & Fire Departments. It showed areas that were successful and those needing research. He noted the steps involved: collect, compare and improve services.

The next steps involved further analyzing results, refining and selecting benchmarks, networking with high performing organizations, utilizing best practices, incorporating CPM measures into a monthly reporting system and sharing progress with Council and public. The purpose of these actions was basic quality municipal services.

Performance data was shared in the City Manager's Monthly Report and the City's Annual Budget. The City had received several awards: 2012 ICMA CPM Certificate of Distinction, 2013 ICMA CPM Certificate of Distinction, AMCP Hermes Gold Award Enhancing Communications Between Citizens and Government and the GFOA Distinguished Budget Award 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Mr. Hales stated that the ICMA's CPM went hand in hand with revitalizing City government and the Baldridge Performance Excellence Program. The City must look for efficiencies, direct outcomes and provide effective superior customer service. Mr. Hales noted City staff's involvement. These working managers would identify those cities which would help the City improve. The information gathered should be shared with the employees. He thanked Mr. McElroy for his efforts and the efforts of the department directors.

Mayor Renner noted that this program was important for the Council, City Manager, department heads, staff and citizens. The data would impact budget decisions.

Alderman Black was curious about metrics. He questioned if the City was considered a leader. Mr. McElroy said that the data needed further analysis. He cited Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts' revenues as highlight.

Alderman Schmidt thanked Mr. McElroy for his efforts. She asked if the data would compare the City with other communities of similar financial structure and unions. She noted benchmarks and cost for services. Mr. McElroy answered that ICMA recommended demographics as a basis for determining peers. He restated eleven (11) communities were identified and noted the challenge of finding a Fire Department that also served an airport.

Alderman Fazzini had attended two (2) IML, (Illinois Municipal League), Conferences and visited six (6) other Central IL council meetings. In some communities, council members with expertise were assigned to specific departments where they lend expertise and experience. It was critical for a policy making board to have sufficient data that was consistent over the years. This data would be used as a policy making tool.

Alderman Sage thanked Mr. McElroy for his efforts. He understood the scope of this plan and that it supported a decision making system. The City responded to fourteen (14) areas and the report addressed only four (4). Mr. McElroy noted that the City did not offer all of the services/departments included in the CPM.

Alderman Sage questioned MUNIS' role in data gathering. Mr. McElroy stated that MUNIS has the ability to track data and could be a future resource. Alderman Sage cited the benefits of enterprise software. He noted outcome based information which positively impacted federal grants, bond rating agencies, etc.

Alderman Stearns questioned the data's statistical significance. She noted scientific research. She was concerned about the concept of performance management and benchmarking. Comparable cities were based upon size. She cited other important factors such as location, culture, economy, government structure, etc. She wanted to see meaningful comparisons. The City was unique. She noted that this data would be presented to the citizens. She questioned the validity of the data and total cost of program participation, (ICMA membership, staff time and program software).

Mr. McElroy noted that the ICMA addressed standard deviation.

Mayor Renner added that eleven (11) participants were not sufficient.

Mr. Hales cited ICMA's membership cost. He believed that there was a cost to not participating. The program provided good value. The City would determine the cost of services. The City must provide results. The goal was service improvements. The City must collect data and look inward. The data addressed basic workload information. The City would have the ability to measure progress and efficiency in order to provide effective services.

Mayor Renner recognized good points made by Alderman Stearns. The information provided a good reference point. Comparisons with other cities may vary due to unique differences, (departments/services). The meaning of the numbers should not be overstated.

Alderman Stearns stated that the City has no idea of the program's cost. She cited the staff time involved. The cost of not doing was not understood. In financial reporting, the benchmarks were known. She questioned the validity of comparisons with other cities.

Alderman Fruin believed that population was key to metrics. He was interested in demographics of peer cities. Data was becoming a compliance issue. The City needed to start somewhere. He appreciated the work done to date. He was glad that the City had started in a process of continuous improvement.

Alderman Mwilambwe thanked Mr. McElroy for his efforts. This was a large undertaking. He expressed concern about the meaning of the data. However, it provided a foundation and a guide for improvement. He questioned program implementation, (staff's ability to complete the near-term work, use of committees, etc.).

Alderman Lower stated that the ICMA was a great organization but it offered a narrow view point. The City should consider other groups, (CATO Institute or the IL Policy Institute, etc.). The City must look within and accept feedback from staff working in the trenches.

$10 MILLION STREET RESURFACING PROJECT UPDATE

Mayor Renner introduced this item.

Mr. Hales addressed the Committee. There has been a large investment in this project. City staff had been reassigned. The Council would have to approve the related contracts. The Committee would be informed what to expect in the near term.

Jim Karch, Public Works Director, addressed the Committee. He planned to present a resurfacing update. He noted that $10 million was significant. Looking at City sewers was complex. The project was on schedule.

Work started with street ratings followed by a master list and then field inspections. The list was subject to change as work continued. The focus was on major streets but City staff was also examining residential streets.

Sewers must also be evaluated prior to resurfacing as they were located under the payment. Televising the sewers helped the City to know what was there. This provided structural information and needed repairs were identified. Sewer repairs must be coordinated with underground utility work and completed before resurfacing. Many main line sewers were clay and could be lined to extend their useful life. There were a number of sewers which were good candidates for lining. He described this work as a best practice.

City staff was in the final stages of prioritizing work within budget restraints. This evaluation must be completed by February 20, 2014. City staff held weekly project meetings. Issues with sewer laterals have been seen.

Mr. Hales questioned past sewer televising. Mr. Karch offered to provide the information. The practice had changed. Televising had been used only in specific instances. It had not been used to gather citywide data.

Mr. Karch compared brick versus pipe sewers. He pointed out that there were many problems with brick sewers. Other issues could be discovered once streets were milled. Quantities would be determined after the final assessment. The project was on schedule. Staff intended to present a contract to Council for approval at their March 24, 2014 meeting.

Alderman Fruin questioned if the bond issue would be broken down into components and would different contractors be used on separate phases. Mr. Karch stated that it would be difficult based upon the contract’s size. He noted the large scale of the bid. He hoped that multiple contractors would submit bids.

Alderman Black noted the winter weather. He cited the impact upon City streets. He questioned if the bond dollars would be directed towards same. Mr. Karch stated that the bond issue was for arterial and some residential streets. Pothole repairs were different. He noted that this year there appeared to be fewer potholes but they were deeper. The City had hot asphalt boxes and the proper equipment which resulted in better repairs. The bond issue would help but permanent pothole patching and preservation treatment were key.

CURB & GUTTER POLICY

Mayor Renner introduced this item.

Mr. Hales addressed the Council. He noted that the Public Works Department's Engineering Division had a program for repair and replacement of curbs & gutters. Citizens had voiced concerns and he anticipated additional feedback from same once repairs begin. Residents did not want new streets with old existing curbs & gutters. Due to costs, Council guidance was needed.

Mr. Karch stated that a preliminary plan was brought before the Infrastructure Committee. Cost figures were analyzed. Cost was the driving force. He noted the cost to add curb & gutter to a street project. The cost of resurfacing plus full curb & gutter replacement was over twice the cost for resurfacing plus spot curb & gutter repair. The tipping point was when forty percent, (40%), of the curb & gutter needed to be replaced. The function of curbs & gutters were to serve as a barrier and to carry storm water.

Past overlay practices have filled the curb & gutter. This practice had saved the City money. Streets were overlaid not milled as part of the street resurfacing program. Standard curb height was six inches (6"). Serviceable curb height was two inches (2").

City staff considered the neighborhood character. Curb & gutter replacement required that a portion of the parkway be removed. This work impacted trees. Sandstone curbs were major issues. These curbs held the street bricks in place. City staff did not want to remove these curbs.

Mr. Hales referred to Alderman Stearns comments regarding the Locust/Colton Combined Sewer Overflow project. The City resurfaced streets and citizens expected new curbs & gutters. Some solutions were provided. New curbs also addressed drainage issues. The City needed to consider citizens' expectations.

Alderman Fazzini stated that the cost of repair versus replacement needed to be shared with the public. The cost estimated would double resurfacing costs. Mr. Karch informed the Council that the City had 800 lane miles of streets. Alderman Fazzini added that there were forty-three (43) miles of private streets. He believed that citizens wanted perfect curbs. He did believe that the City could afford same.

Mr. Karch stated that information would be placed on the City's web site in an effort to educate and communicate with citizens.

Alderman Fazzini requested a map indicating which streets need new curbs & gutters. Mr. Hales noted that there were a couple of streets which will have new curbs & gutters.

Mr. Karch noted McArthur and Linden St. as there were no curbs remaining. These were collector streets which would also be widened. He added that there were also were sewer concerns on Linden St.

Alderman Stearns believed that there was a curb issue. She understood that curbs could not be replaced for appearance only. Curbs served an important function: a drainage tool.

Alderman Mwilambwe questioned the science behind planting trees in the parkway. Their roots damaged curbs. Mr. Karch added that although beautiful, tree roots also destroy sewers and sidewalks. It was an issue of balance.

FY 2014 ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Mayor Renner introduced this item.

Mr. Hales addressed the Committee. He stated there were twenty-four (24) projects. This was the City Manager's Action Plan. Priorities came from Council. The City faced funding and resource issues. The list was provided as background to the FY 2015 Plan. He welcomed the Council's questions.

Alderman Fazzini requested that the Visitor's Center being added to the plan. Mr. Hales agreed that this was a high priority. It would be placed in the five (5) year Capital Improvement Plan. It would require a contribution from the City but be located in a County facility.

Mayor Renner expressed his concern that too many items were placed on the Action Plan. He believed that only large items should be listed. He cited a top ten (10) priorities list. The Visitor's Center was important. The City was waiting to hear about state funding.

Alderman Black agreed that it should be a high level list. He expressed concerned with the format, percentage completed and subtasks. He wanted to see more detail: percentages included on FY 14 and clearer guidelines for FY 15.

DRAFT FY15 ACTION PLAN

Mayor Renner introduced this item.

Mr. Hales addressed the Committee. FY 15 was heavy on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). He addressed a twenty (20) year master plan which would include financial feasibility. Items would be prioritized. He noted the Sewer and Storm Water Master Plan which had not been presented to the Council. City staff was reviewing the 900 pages of material in this plan. The goal was to start with a five (5) year Capital Improvement Plan approved by the Council that outlined prioritized projects with revenue sources identified. This five (5) year plan would include political and financial challenges. The estimated cost of the twenty (20) year plan was over $400 million. The City needed to address key elements. The City has struggled with General Fund projects such as streets, sidewalks and facilities. He restated that the FY 15 Plan had a heavy emphasis on infrastructure. A realistic five (5) year CIP required the assessment of condition/inventory, setting priorities and determining funding sources. The City's purchasing/procurement policies need to be updated. General Fund revenue audits would indicate if the City was collecting all that was owed. He believed that this plan was doable. This plan would pull together separate studies. The focus was on infrastructure. Only a small number of items were listed. He welcomed the Council's input.

Mayor Renner stated that Mr. Hales would continue to work on revitalizing City government. The Council needed to establish action sets, i.e. the top priorities for FY 2015.

Alderman Fazzini noted that there are forty-three (43) miles of private streets. The issue was citizens wanting to turn them over to the City. He suggested that a Private Street Master Plan was needed or it could be incorporated into another one. Mayor Renner suggested this be included in smart future growth. Alderman Fazzini restated that a Master Plan was needed.

Alderman Sage expressed his support for Alderman Fazzini's comments. This was a legacy issue which needed a policy statement. Alderman Fazzini agreed that it did not have to be a Master Plan but guidance was needed.

Alderman Black addressed execution for FY 14 and FY 15. Items needed to be measurable and definable. As an example he cited City culture change/revitalizing City government.

Mayor Renner questioned Council sentiment regarding private streets.

Alderman Fruin expressed his concern regarding simply reacting to something. The Council was recommending adding items to the list. He thought the goal was to reduce the list. He believed that each Council member wanted to add something.

Mayor Renner suggested that the Council schedule a follow up Work Session as this was not a good time to address this item. The Committee's thoughts about same should be emailed to Mr. Hales. A Work Session would be scheduled before this list was finalized.

Mr. Hales welcomed the Council's input. Revitalizing City government would be added. The focus must be on items with majority support. He was working with City staff. He had the list from the Council's retreat. The Council needed to define open and transparent government. New things would come up. The Council must be willing to allow for updates and changes. He believed that the City had the ability to accomplish priorities. Everything was contingent upon financial resources being available and budget approval. The list may need to be modified.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS: None.

The meeting adjourned. Time: 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey Covert
City Clerk