General Committee – Tuesday, July 30th 2024

Members Present: Alderman Adams (Chair), Alderwoman Savage (Vice Chair), Alderman Barbagallo, Alderwoman Tadio.

Members Absent: Alderman Heck.

Also in Attendance: Alderman Whitcomb, Alderwoman McClure, Alderman McCann, President Talbott, Mayor Doenges, City Attorney LaChance, Gordon Dritschilo.

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM (EDT)

The first topic discussed was the City's coin drop policy. The history of the coin drop policy was reviewed to better understand why it exists in its current state. It was concluded the primary concerns surrounding coin drops were safety and traffic. No one present cited any known issues with either from recollection. City Attorney LaChance confirmed coin drops must be approved individually by the Board of Aldermen through the Special Events Permit application process.

Alderwoman Tadio made a motion to update the City coin drop policy to remove the maximum number of coin drops per year per organization, and to add a stipulation that each coin drop must be approved individually.

Alderman Barbagallo expressed concern regarding availability of alternate routes since the expansion of the Farmer's Market has closed Evelyn Street on Saturday mornings, potentially forcing traffic through a coin drop. The location of coin drops as indicated in the policy was clarified as being "restricted to Merchants Row in front of Knights of Columbus." This resolved the concern of funneling traffic, but raised the issue of City policy referring to a landmark that no longer exists. It was determined that "21 Merchants Row" is the most appropriate language to use. **The original motion on the floor was repeated, voted on, and approved 4-0.**

Alderman Barbagallo then made a motion to change the wording in the coin drop policy from "...Merchants Row in front of Knights of Columbus..." to "21 Merchants Row." The motion passed 4-0.

The next two matters heard by the committee were presented by Mayor Doenges. Both were for requests for proposals (RFPs) on technology related services. Mayor Doenges indicated the reason so many RFP requests come before the Board is because "in the Charter, under Requisitions in Section 17(3) - Professional Services it states, "for contracts requiring professional services, specialization, or expertise in a particular field the Board of Aldermen shall authorize the mayor to invite proposals for such services. The mayor, after consultation with the City purchasing agent and department heads involved, shall submit that back to the board."" Mayor Doenges said he will likely suggest this process be reviewed at some point in the future, alluding to redundancies currently present.

Mayor Doenges explained our current IT Managed Service Provider (MSP), while initially meeting the City's needs, has failed to do so lately. He said the City has therefore requested termination of the contract at the end of this current term. This necessitates going back out to bid for services. These services are already budgeted. Mayor Doenges presented the proposal to be approved by the committee and sent to the Board of Aldermen for approval, to allow for proposals to be requested and reviewed as quickly as possible, to be brought to the Board of Aldermen for another approval.

Alderwoman Savage motioned to approve the RFP as dated, in substantially the form presented. The motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Doenges then presented an RFP for approval to, “refresh, update, and maintain” the Rutland City website. He clarified that we do not need a complete redesign, but our backend content management system (CMS) has been manipulated so much over time by multiple parties that simple changes have unknown and undesired impacts. Funds were previously approved and allocated for this purpose.

Alderwoman Tadio made a motion to recommend to the full Board, approval of the request for proposal for website refresh, update, and maintenance in substantially the form presented. Motion passed 4-0.

Remote participation in meetings, per the requirements set forth in VT Open Meeting Laws was the final item for the meeting. President Talbott indicated we are currently meeting most of the requirements and said, “we want to explore ways to offer remote participation to members of the public and members of the Board. It seemed like a good idea to establish policies and procedures around this- both how it will work for the public so they can understand in advance, and how it will work for Board members so that we can have efficient meetings.” The goal for this item being on the agenda was to open the topic up for broad discussion. Broad discussion was accomplished and included, but was not limited to, access via PEG-TV; specific requests to interact in the meeting being reviewed and accommodated; differentiating between remote access and remote participation; video access; muting remote participants; full Board meetings; committee meetings; disruptiveness; difficulties of maintaining order and productivity in hybrid meetings; legality; and handling of remote participation in remote meetings (meetings not held at City Hall). President Talbott and I agreed to document an outline that considered feedback from the committee and consult the City Attorney prior to submitting it to the General Committee for review.

Alderman Barbagallo recommended the topic remain in committee and the meeting was adjourned at 6:12pm.