



City of Lambertville
WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2021, 6:00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING USING THE ZOOM MEETING PLATFORM
MINUTES

*Please note: A Work Session is a meeting of the Mayor and Council held for the purpose of determining the contents of the regular council session agenda.
All work sessions will be limited to one hour.*

COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Mayor Fahl called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and she asked the City clerk to read the statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act into the record.

The City Clerk read the following statement into the record:

This meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act with the meeting notice provided to the Hunterdon County Democrat, the Trenton Times, various individuals on the list serve, department heads and the City Engineer and City Attorney. The meeting agenda was posted on the City's website at www.lambertvillenj.org, the Bulletin Board at City Hall and a copy was placed in the Elevator Room at City Hall.

This meeting will be recorded using Zoom.

The meeting agenda offers the planned action items of the Governing Body to the extent known at the time of publication.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk called the roll as follows:

Present: Councilwoman Lambert, Councilman Sanders, Councilman Stegman, Council President Taylor, Mayor Fahl.

Also present: William Opel – City Attorney, Cynthia Ege – City Clerk, Kristina Majeski – Deputy Clerk.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Fahl led the members of the public in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence in honor of those serving in the United States Armed Forces in Country and Abroad and for those serving on the front lines of COVID19.

CLOSED SESSION: *Authorizing a Closed Session at the March 2, 2021 Session of the Lambertville City Council to Discuss Personnel and Attorney/Client Issues Related to Contracts Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(7&8).*

RESOLUTION

“Authorizing a Closed Session at the March 2, 2021 Lambertville City Council Meeting to Discuss Personnel and Attorney/Client Issues Related to Contracts Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(7&8).”

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Lambertville is subject to certain requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.; and

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WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, provides that a closed session, not open to the public, may be held for certain specified purposes when authorized by N.J.S.A 10:4-12(b).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Lambertville that a closed session shall be held on March 2, 2021, using the virtual meeting platform Zoom, to discuss the following matters: *Personnel and Attorney/Client Issues Related to Contracts Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(7&8)*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the deliberations conducted in closed session may be disclosed to the public upon the determination of the Lambertville Mayor and City Council.

ADOPTED: March 2, 2021

Mayor Fahl and City Council convened in closed session at 6:03 p.m. with a motion made by Councilman Sanders and seconded by Councilwoman Lambert. An affirmative voice/roll call vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Fahl and City Council re-convened in regular session at 6:59 p.m. with a motion made by Councilman Sanders and seconded by Council President Taylor. An affirmative voice/roll call vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NUMBER 50-2021: *A Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Non-Fair and Open Contract for the Studies Required for Acquisition of the Closson Property and the Relocation of the Police Department*

The Governing Body took no action on the following resolution.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 50-2020

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR THE STUDIES REQUIRED FOR ACQUISITION OF THE CLOSSON PROPERTY AND THE RELOCATION OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS, the City of Lambertville has a need to acquire professional services for the acquisition of the Closson property as a non-fair and open contract pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 or 20.5 as appropriate; and,

WHEREAS, the Purchasing Agent has determined and certified in writing that the value of the acquisition will exceed \$17,500; and,

WHEREAS, the anticipated term of this contract is 1 year; and

WHEREAS, Venders have submitted a proposal February 22, 2021 indicating they will provide professional services; and

WHEREAS, the Vendors noted below have certified that they have not made and will not make any reportable contributions pursuant to N.J.S.A. 19:44A-1 et seq. that, pursuant to P.L. 2004, c. 19 would bar the award of these contracts in the one-year period preceding

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December 8, 2020 to any of candidate committee, joint candidates committee or political party committee representing any of the currently serving members of the Governing Body of the City of Lambertville.

WHEREAS, the Certified Municipal Finance Officer has certified that funds will be available in Ordinance Number 17-2020, once authorized;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the City of Lambertville authorizes the City Clerk to enter into a contract with the following professionals with not to exceed amounts as indicated when the funds become available:

HMR Architects, LLC not to exceed \$XX,XXX, funded through Ordinance Number 17-2021, Preliminary Planning for the Alternate Site for the Police Department through the Closson Property Acquisition/Studies;

Suburban Engineering Consultants not to exceed \$XX,XXX funded through Ordinance Number 17-2021, Preliminary Planning for the Alternate site for the Police Department through the Closson Property Acquisition/Studies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Business Disclosure Entity Certification and the Determination of Value be placed on file with this resolution. and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Lambertville will provide the public notice in the next edition of the Trenton Times.

ADOPTED: March 2, 2021

Mayor Fahl asked for a motion to adopt Resolution Number 51-2021 and 52-2021.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 51-2021: A Resolution to Authorize the Refund of Tax Overpayments for Block 1057, Lot 1.39 and Block 1007, Lot 1

RESOLUTION NUMBER 51-2021

A Resolution to Authorize the Refund of Tax Overpayments for Block 1057, Lot 1.39 and Block 1007, Lot 1

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has advised the City Clerk of overpayments on taxes for the following properties:

Blk-1057, Lot 1.39 : 2020 Senior Citizen Tax Deductions allowed, Check Amount \$250.00, Payable/mail to Judy Gundersheim;

Blk- 1007, Lot 1 : 2020 Veteran's Deduction Allowed, Check Amount \$250.00, John Baker

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the City of Lambertville, in the County of Hunterdon, in the State of New Jersey, that the following reimbursements of tax overpayments for block 1057, lot 1.39 in the amount of \$250.00 and block 1007, lot 1 in the amount of \$250 are hereby authorized.

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ADOPTED: March 2, 2021

RESOLUTION NUMBER 52-2021: *A Resolution to Authorize the Redemption of a Tax Lien for Block 1035, Lot 9.01 in the Amount of \$11,747.48 Plus a Premium in the Amount of \$36,700*

RESOLUTION NUMBER 52-2021

A Resolution Authorizing the Redemption of a Tax Lien for Block 1035, Lot 9.01 In the Amount of \$11,747.48 Plus a Premium in the Amount of 36,700.00.

WHEREAS, Tax Lien Certificate 20-00008 issued on Block 1035 Lot 9.01 was sold to Bala Partners LLC, PO BOX 303 Pottersville, NJ 07979 on 10-19-20 and

WHEREAS, payment has been received by the Tax Collector for redemption of the tax lien the property owner.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by Mayor and Council of the City of Lambertville, in the County of Hunterdon, in the State of New Jersey that the check is hereby authorized to Bala Partners LLC, PO BOX 303 Pottersville, NJ 07979 for the redemption of tax lien certificate #20-00008 in the amount of: \$ 11,747.48.

In addition, the City is holding a premium in the amount of \$36,700.00.

and upon redemption this is due back to the lienholder.

2 checks for the lienholder –

Check 1= \$11,747.48

Check 2= for premium= \$36,700.00

ADOPTED: March 2, 2021

Councilwoman Lambert made the motion and Councilman Stegman seconded the motion. An affirmative roll call/voice vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 45-2021: *A Resolution to Authorize the Person-to-Person Transfer of the Retail Liquor License from DeAnna's to Taverna 54.*

Mayor Fahl informed the members of the public that the public hearing for Resolution Number 45-2021 has been continued to the March 18, 2021 voting session.

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~~RESOLUTION NUMBER 45-2021~~

~~*A Resolution to Authorize the City Clerk to Sign the Person to Person Transfer of Liquor License Number 1017-33-003-003 from DeAnna's to Taverna 54 LLC*~~

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~~WHEREAS, an application has been filed by Taverna 54 LLC for a Person to Person Transfer of Plenary Retail Consumption License Number 1017-33-003-003, heretofore issued to DeAnna's of Lambertville LLC, for premises located at 54 North Franklin Street, Lambertville, New Jersey;~~

~~WHEREAS, the submitted application form is complete in all respects, the transfer fees have been paid, and the license has been properly renewed for the current license term;~~

~~WHEREAS, the applicant is qualified to be licensed according to all standards established by Title 33 of the New Jersey Statutes, regulations promulgated thereunder, as well as pertinent local ordinances and conditions consistent with Title 33;~~

~~WHEREAS, the applicant has disclosed and the issuing authority reviewed the source of all funds used in the purchase of the license and the licensed business and all additional financing obtained in connection with the license business;~~

~~NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council do hereby approve the transfer of the aforesaid Plenary Retail Consumption License to Taverna 54 LLC, and do hereby direct the City Clerk to endorse the license certificate to the new ownership as follows: "This license, subject to all its terms and conditions, is hereby transferred XXXX to Taverna 54 LLC for premises located at 54 North Franklin Street, Lambertville."~~

~~ADOPTED: —XXXX~~

NEW BUSINESS/CONSTITUENT CONCERNS

Community Advisory Team Report on the Survey for the Acquisition of the Closson Property

Sarah Gold and Paul Kuhl, Co-Chairs for the Community Advisory Team gave an overview of the survey results (attached).

The Community Advisory Team engaged in two different strategies to reach the members of the public. They held three separate events, office hours, using the Zoom Meeting Platform and invited the public to participate in a virtual meeting. They held the meetings at different times of the day hoping for public participation. The Zoom meeting yielded no attendees.

Survey results:

The survey was drafted by CAT Communications Team. In order to develop the survey, the communications team drafted the survey, shared it with the full governing body, and with the full CAT membership.

The survey was advertised through list serve, three editions of weekly matters email, and they did outreach through other organizations focusing on the Spanish speaking and elderly. The organizations aiding included Fisherman's Mark, and the school district. Paper copies were placed at City Hall and were completed through Fisherman's Mark to verify they were Lambertville residents.

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488 responses: 442 unique responses, 19 from business owners (separate survey to gather information on those stakeholders as well)

Open ended item analysis: 2-3 independent readers from communications team read all of the responses and independently analysis and then they met to assure they agreed.

442: 429 online, 13 through Fisherman's Mark, 19 business owners. Slides only show residents.

How important is the preservation of the Closson property to you: yellow segment, 73%, 17 – fairly, 5%

Paul Kuhl offered the following information regarding the open-ended questions:

Preservation of Closson is or is not important to you. Some touched on multiple points. They sometimes had three responses.

Top three: preserve open green space (166), Lambertville's history and historic buildings (145); prevent overdevelopment (107)

Other reasons: community and public use (68), quality of life, maintain farmers market (35), address city's facility needs (20), impact gateway into the northern part of the city (10)

7 people supported preservation without moving police site.

Concerns: cost (38); increase taxes (11), overpriced (6)

Interest for site usage: community gathering space (265); community garden (223), hiking walking trails 129, community greenhouse, 111, dog park 105, recreational space 97.

Other ideas: strong support to preserve and expand farmers market, preserve open space/hill. Move the library to the log cabin.

Engaging with the CAT: office hours 8.6, community forums 41.9, paper surveys 12.7, online surveys 88.7%

Categories are not mutually exclusive.

Summary, extremely strong public support, residents want to engage in open space.

Mayor Fahl thanked the volunteers serving on the CAT Team to help the Governing Body think through is important work. She personally thanked them for volunteering and doing it with precision, and she was impressed on the increase in the surveys. Not only due to your effort to get this out but it speaks to people who feel this is important. It has been really helpful as we consider major expenditures in the city.

The CAT Co-chairs said this was challenging but rewarding.

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Council Questions:

Councilwoman Lambert: since you did not do a mailing, what impact COVID and February's snowy weather had on your response for people who are not connected online. Sarah Gold responded that Fisherman's Mark had paper copies and worked with congregate senior housing to distribute the surveys. She felt that COVID and weather did not play huge roll. She said she did not know that it is a significant issue, that said if anyone attending ever hears of anyone who would like to participate, the CAT is more than willing to ensure they receive a copy.

Sarah Gold commented that the big two ways to do outreach was through Fisherman's Mark and the School District. The CAT members worked with two employees from Fisherman's Mark to engage the Spanish Speaking residents and the Seniors in town. Fisherman's Mark validated addressed and worked with seniors in a congregate type living or senior housing residing at Hibernia Apartments, Heritage Village, and the South Hunterdon Apartments. And the school district has relationships with many in town and they sent out the notices. The outreach did not involve distributing to every household, will note we did get responses in the open-ended questions, and they were on fixed income. I have not done an analysis to see if people filled out online, presumable some did so.

Mayor Fahl thanked Fisherman's Mark and said they were excellent partners. The decision to not do a mailing was because of the tremendous cost. Would have required a return envelope with a paid stamp and that would have doubled the cost. Almost 500 respondents is a crazy response, more than satisfactory response from the tone from the general public.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Beverly Railsback: no comments other than I would like to see the property preserved for open space, would like it to go forward.

Matthew Hanson: I think appraisal is warranted and needed. If police station moved to Closson site, would we need to pave a two road to accommodate the cars and traffic and how does that if we are preserving the site? Mayor Fahl responded to the appraisal question. The City spoke to two of the foremost experts in November when the Council was initially considering the purchase and the recommendation was to not get an appraisal. We looked at tax maps, previous land acquisition information, and engaged members of our community for free to walk through the property to ensure it was usable. We also had the tax assessor make a valuation on the property, we worked with those preservation experts to compile direct comps. Appraisals are opinions based on comparisons of land that is similar and the reason when you condemn property you get various appraisals is because they differ. We chose to take the advice of expertise. Regarding the Police site: the road that currently exist would need to be expanded to accommodate parking.

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Jody Struve: echo the thanks to the CA T committee. Asked where she could find information on the property; what is the timeline for continuing to weigh in as community members; what are some other ways we can weigh in if the property is purchased; is there an opportunity to gage youth and civic? Mayor Fahl responded that there are serious of overhead shots of the property at large as well as some maps that the City has provided, so if you are interested go to the Zillow App. Second: the CAT and council intend to continue to have conversations deep into the rest of this year as we debate moving the police to log cabin, put market up for bid, and what to do with the outside site, and historic home. Like idea of engaging with youth, will strive to do.

Judy Gleason: 11% although great effort, 11% is not enough information to make a decision. To another point, we seem to be moving ahead with a fairly large financial commitment, without doing all the things we will not be doing with some of the expenditures, how much debt the city is in? I am not clear on whether all of the grants are coming through, we are going to have this release of this debt obligation. Mayor Fahl deferred to Sarah and Paul regards to survey. The data point, not what the council is basing their decision on. I have been an advocate and this and it is in direct conflict with that, but this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to preserve land and I think this survey conveys that people feel strongly about this purchase, this is a key policy shift to reduce the amount of borrowing that we do, but it is important because of once in a lifetime.

Judy: not sure, decisions that have to be made, if it is true that the Library is falling apart, all of our historic stuff is falling apart, are we just going to say this is once in a lifetime, I spent a lot of time in the city, nobody is talking about what are we going to do about the things we agreed that are falling apart. Mayor Fahl responded that the charge of the CAT is to work with Councilman Stegman on a Facilities review but it won't before the purchase of the Closson property Sarah Goldman responded to the question regarding the survey and stated she has a PhD in social work, and one of the things we learned was typically when you have an unsolicited survey, if you got a return rate of 5 – 10% it was really strong, we viewed this as a good sample, we will continue to strive to do more outreach.

Elycia Lerman commented that it was prudent to get a professional commercial real estate proposal, this should have been on referendum. I think it is the wrong site for the police station relocation. Back when we had the meeting at the ACME, I raised an issue about looking about the implications about the things the school is going to do, and you responded that you are not in charge of the school budget, but as taxpayers we have to pay the tax bill, who knows what is going to happen between Lambertville and West Amwell folks. The city does not have the infrastructure, cannot get snow removed, cannot get garbage picked up, and now we are thinking about buying a new property but not sure we are poised to handle it.

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Paul Stevens: disappointment in survey, it asked just basically straight on about the Closson property and did not address or rank other issues. The fact that the debt service is gone and additional revenue is going to need to be brought on. Question: does that mean we are not going to be able to renovate City Hall? Mayor Fahl responded no and the idea that there is an implication that the acquisition of the Closson property in no way creates a snowball affect where we will be divesting from buildings. The city is going to have a first hearing on the bond ordinance to acquire the Closson property on March 25 and the public hearing will be the last voting session in April, we will have already heard the intro of the budget prior to that, the larger facilities conversation will not be heard at that time.

Bill Neeley: as a resident I wholeheartedly support this, just look at what is happening in Stockton to realize that opportunities to preserve historic sites for public wellbeing are important and left to the private sector there is not a lot of support. Urge you to think about public/private partnership especially for the market. How will you portion of the site for accessibility? Mayor Fahl responded that the city does not want to take on the administration side of the market or the historic home. The goal is to bid out leases for those sites to private owners or other public entity who want to use the site and maintain them. We are already strapped for maintaining historic buildings. The City has no interest in running a farm market, we will lease building.

Louis Toboz: the is probably the most significant property in the area (Delaware Township and West Amwell), once lost its forever. I think 11% response is absolutely phenomenal. Survey should consider highest and best use for this area and that will be town houses and there goes the history of Lambertville.

Evan Lide commented that regarding preserving the land, he is supportive. I have significant concerns about preserving the land and then building the police site. How can you do both, taxes have gone up, over \$1,000 in past 3 years. Mayor Fahl responded that the normal commercial sale is 90 days, we negotiated a six-month agreement to consider financial, environmental, adaptive reuse of these buildings so as to not over develop but maintain view shed. We are bound by a contract to consider those things; we gave it half a year. And this survey is one of those options.

Bart Thurber asked when will be have those hard numbers for the relocation of the police site. Mayor Fahl responded that she takes full responsibility for the delay, she thought it was possible in December, we were unable to appoint one until late January which put us a month behind schedule. Experts have been appointed, they are working diligently on alternative ideas, adaptive reuse, and we expect to received plans this evening. They are going out to a cost assessor this week and we will have this info by March 18.

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Matt Hanson asked Councilman Stegman and Council President Taylor how we address the current facility's needs, will that mean more bonding, how do we deal with that. Mayor Fahl said of course they are welcome to respond, and she noted that the public tax impact graph assumes a \$350 - \$450,000 capital expenditure. We expected not only this bond but 30 years of tax impact of ongoing capital expenditures, she shared the financial advisor screen, projections of our total outstanding debt, payments year over year, assuming a 4-million-dollar acquisition as well as an over a million investment in the police site and you will note those numbers continue to go down. As long as it does not go above 1.3 million. We do have the capacity to continue to borrow responsibly and continue to invest in repairs and facility needs.

Councilman Stegman: have not started looking at the building, had concerns about the must haves and the needs of these buildings and so we are going to be looking at it again but we will not know how much the needs will cost part of the charge is to determine what those figures are going to be and then address how we are going to pay for it. He cannot project how long it is going to take but it depends on how much it cost and how many years it is spread out. The plan is to start scheduling some of these repairs incrementally. Will know more when we finish going through the buildings and get a handle on what these buildings need going forward.

Council President Taylor said she had nothing to add and is eager to get the facilities review done, would have made the comment you made mayor.

Stephanie Moss congratulated the CAT on the response rate. Lambertville had 3,822 residents so that is your sample size, you got almost 500 of those and 18% are under 19 years of age. To the point of asking about having the schools and the kids answer that would increase your response rate. I would rather see that Closson property purchased by the City than see a development.

Michelle Harris is a member of the CAT. The property when on the market when the Closson's decided to list it and the city had to act in the context of the timeline. This was a private seller putting this on the market. Look at what is happening in our river towns, this site will be developed in a way that the city will not be able to control. Is big development what you want to look at forever. She agrees with Lou Toboz and the need to preserve it agree with bad debt with a good investment; she likes the public/private partnership. The idea of the appraisal has come up, remind us please about the cost of the appraisal. Mayor Fahl responded that the City is planning on multiple appraisals to secure the open space grants. This is not market value of the site. Council President Taylor commented that open space grants require 2 appraisals, and for a purchase of the property we are not required to get any. Is it actionable, appraisals in general, are based on end use? We may have wanted to get multiple appraisals. I understand the concerns but I do not know that having an appraisal now is a useful thing to spend money on.

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Gina Fischetti: echo what others have said, thank you CAT and council. Preservation sounds great, a lot in support of it. How will you decide whether to use the site for the police station, how will that be decided? Have not heard anything about alternate sites. What other avenues has the CAT has taken to reach the public. Sarah Gold responding that in addition to the survey we hosted three office hours, evening, weekend, during the day and had no attendees. We also have a website with information and with email address. They have received emails over the last couple of months, office hours over the summer, a public design vetting day where it was 2- or 3-hour meeting one Saturday morning over zoom, with breakout rooms to have more community-based discussion on mixed housing on police site. Mayor Fahl commented that as it stands now, we do not have an alternate site, pursued other sites of privately owned property to little avail over the course of a year of significant grunt work of members of council and consultants. We have been working within the council to vet out potential options of how this is going to play out, we are required with our agreement with COAH working towards introducing this to the public but not ready for the public yet. Affordable housing overlay is an issue that Council President Taylor requested we work on as a part of our retreat and policy goals. We have some questions about how that will affect our affordable housing agreement.

Councilwoman Lambert commented that since we did not get any responses to our RFP can we talk about what that means, how will that impact our date with the court in mid-May? Mayor Fahl responded that it does not impact our date with the court, we have to move forward as we discussed in closed session. Goal was to do as q request for proposals to provide more power and choice to the community. This site has not yet come for sale which may change the interest in the market.

Nancy & Jeff Campbell echo what Lou and Michelle said, about the importance of the site, and historical value. With regard to the survey, 11% is a huge response and cannot be dismissed, 64% of those respondents strongly support the city's support, almost 2/3s you do not get that in anything. Prioritizing issues, 64% strongly support the purchase of this property. To me that speaks for itself. Commitment to open space, broad based in this community, 33% identified as important, desire to prevent over development. They applaud CATS work and City Council for creating an opportunity for all of us to hear what is going on.

Elycia Lerman asked if there was a timeline and she asked if the Council already decided on the relocation of the police station at the Closson property and she mentioned her idea of moving the Library to the Closson site and the Police to the Library. Mayor fahl responded that the city is right in the lock step of our agreed timeline with the court. The request for proposals had to go out in first quarter and the council has some responsibility to make decision on how we move to sell this property and they are considering private sale verses broker. Putting up for sale is eminent. We have a commitment to the Police and with the public to have an answer to the final home. Ms.

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Lerman asked about the status of hiring a project manager? Mayor Fahl responded that we have not hired but we have managed to do it on budget and on time.

Paul Stevens asked if using the library building as the police station and moving the library up was being considered? Mayor Fahl responded that we have not considered because the library has a significant amount of square footage and the library wants to increase their space. This would be a direct contradiction to what the Library is looking for.

Gina Fischetti: based on the answer before, seems like this is the only site that is available for the police station, how will the existence of the police station impact availability for other uses, continuation of a Farmers Market? Mayor Fahl responded that the log cabin is tucked away is where we are looking to do an adaptive reuse project, does not impact use of property for outdoor space, farm market, historic home for any potential uses. The goal is to have almost no impact on historic view shed.

Council President Taylor commented that at the last meeting special session, I made a comment about shared folders, I stated that I was sure Lambert had access and she did not have access to all of the files, and she wanted to publicly apologize. Councilwoman Lambert thanked her. Mayor Fahl too apologized and commented that she called Councilwoman Lambert after the meeting and apologized.

Councilman Sanders commented about the tax rate and said if you look at a dollar 16% or 16 cents go to pay the City, we are the collector of the tax, but we are only responsible for a small portion. The collection includes county, fire, school, county open space and city open space are all a part of what people pay. I want to make sure we are not too cavalier, trying to be mindful of overall cost. Irony is that this is all put in motion by a difficult court decision, if we raise taxes too much it will make housing more unaffordable for more resident and we control a small portion.

Councilman Stegman commented that he did not have access until I asked for it and he appreciates the opportunity for Councilwoman Lambert to also have that access. For the CAT did you put anything in the survey that referred to the cost at all or was it promoted as what people thought we should use it for, were they aware? Sarah Gold responded that background information was included, with links to all of the info about the financial. Councilman Stegman asked the City Attorney if we pursued the appraisal, is there any restriction with the agreement with the Closson? The City Attorney responded that there is a section to materials to be kept confidential and any of the environmental studies would fall into that category. This is proprietary information and is exempt from public disclosure. The appraisal would not become a public document until after the closing and is exempt because it is advisory and deliberative material. Proprietary information cannot disclose market decision or bid, if we released appraisal, and something happened, it could potentially cause issues with valuation. Discussion matters like sale or acquisition of property and it is for these exact purposes a lot of materials are exempt from disclosure and are attorney/client privileged. Councilman

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Sanders will work with Mayor Fahl to put together a document for the public so that they understand the reasons behind exemptions in the OPRA law as it applied to the acquisition of property.

Councilman Stegman asked if we were to get appraisals, and since they cannot be made public until after the closing, perhaps the taxpayers would want to make sure the council had as much info as possible on the price of the property and that is where I think there is frustration on the side of appraise or not appraise. Mayor Fahl responded that the agreed upon price is the agreed upon price, contract bound. The City Attorney commented that there is information avail to council prepared by the Tax Assessor that sets forth some methods of valuation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m. with a motion made by Council President Taylor and seconded by Councilwoman Lambert. An affirmative voice vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia L. Ege
Cynthia L. Ege, CMR, RMC, City Clerk

The March 2, 2021 Working Session Minutes were approved at the March 18, 2021 Voting Session.