

City of Preston  
Regular City Council Meeting  
December 23, 2019

Mayor Richard Betts called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

ROLL CALL Present: R. Peterson, A. Sullivan, P. Hoffman, T. Sieverding Absent: M. Petersen

GUEST: Nic Hockenberry, Jackson County Economic Alliance (JCEA)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented. Motion made by P. Hoffman, seconded by A. Sullivan. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Motion carried.

CITIZEN /PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

CONSENT AGENDA: P. Hoffman made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by A. Sullivan. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF DOWNTOWN INCENTIVE APPLICATION: Nic Hockenberry (JCEA, presented Don Richlen's Downtown Incentive application for the Preston Times Building. The applicant is looking at a full rehabilitation of the historically significant newspaper building in downtown Preston. The building is currently vacant due to serious structural issues. The end goal is to move the Preston Times back into the rehabilitated space. The work includes: full historic façade restoration; full rehab of historic elements in the interior; rehab of commercial space; improvement to sidewalk and building alleys. Application is contingent on award of Catalyst Grant from the State of Iowa. Don is looking at the following Downtown Incentive's: Façade, \$66,869, City Grant \$7,500; Signage \$2,000, City Grant \$1,000; Consultant Assistance \$13,192, City Grant \$5,000; Commercial Interior Program \$130, 222, City Grant \$7,500. Total estimated cost is \$277,022. The grant amount requested is \$21,000. N. Hockenberry also stated that he has reviewed the application and it meets the requirements. The Downtown Committee met and recommended approval of the application. The Mayor wondered if we are looking at the historical status. N. Hockenberry said no, however there are historical elements to the building that will be preserved. The Mayor also wondered since the basement is going to be filled, if this is going to affect the City's service lines. N. Hockenberry stated that the mechanical's (furnace etc.) are on the main level, along with the City's service lines so nothing will need to be moved. N. Hockenberry did state that one unknown is the condition of the façade. Once the steel is taken off the building, we will know how much will need to be tuckpointed. At this time 70% is built into the cost estimate for tuckpointing. Hopefully it will be less than that. R. Petersen wondered what the fundamental discrepancies are with the basement. N. Hockenberry stated that the floor has dropped and in some places as much as 6 inches. T. Sieverding wondered what Don's plans are if he doesn't get the Catalyst Grant. N. Hockenberry stated he didn't know. N. Hockenberry will let the state know that the rehabilitation of the building is contingent on the Catalyst Grant award. T. Sieverding made a motion for the City supporting in putting together the application for the Preston Times. Seconded by P. Hoffman. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Motion carried.

CITY SUPPORT OF PRESTON TIMES FOR A CATALYST GRANT PREAPPLICATION: N. Hockenberry provided information on the Catalyst Grant. This is a newer grant program; this is the third year. It is the Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program (Grant). This grant is focused on challenged buildings mostly in the downtown. This grant assists rural communities since the City only competes with other communities of under 1500. The timeline is a two-stage process. The preapplication process which is simple. P. Hoffman will be putting together the preapplication. The narrative tells the story on how the rehabilitation of the building will have an impact on the downtown. The unique thing about the

Preston Times building is that it has always been a newspaper building and that it is a complete rehabilitation. The next stage is the application process. JCEA can help with this but most cities get the assistance of ECIA. JCEA and ECIA work together. The City of Preston is fortunate to have two interested property owners. The City Council needs to look at which one would be more likely to be awarded the Grant. Lori Fey's project is basically an upper story transformation which is an upside. However, the façade is not really getting a transformation. The Preston Times is doing a full rehabilitation, however; does not have an upper story. The Preston Times is a vacant building, will have the retention of jobs, increase in assessed value, historic value of the project both interior and exterior and the story of which the building has always been a newspaper building. N. Hockenberry went onto express that all these elements are why the Preston Times would have a better chance of being awarded. The City Council needs to decide which project should move forward for the preapplication process. T. Sieverding likes the idea of getting the steel off of the Preston Times. There was other council discussion. P. Hoffman made a motion for the City to proceed with the preapplication with the Preston Times. Seconded by A. Sullivan. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Motion carried.

ADDITIONAL MATCH FOR PRESTON TIMES: N. Hockenberry is suggesting that the City Council approve an additional \$7500 match for the Preston Times Building. The additional \$7500 would make the application more competitive. That would put the City's match dollars at \$28,500. This is not money that would be given upfront, it is reimbursed once the work is completed. P. Hoffman stated this would be a good return on investment since the assessed value of the building will go up which will mean more dollars in property taxes. T. Sieverding wondered if the additional \$7500 would come from TIF? N. Hockenberry stated that yes it would. P. Hoffman made a motion for the City to give an additional \$7500 towards the Preston Times Building contingent on being awarded the Catalyst Grant. T. Sieverding. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Motion carried.

OATH OF OFFICE: The oath of office was administered by T. Weinschenk for Richard Betts, Patricia Hoffman and Richard Petersen.

WORK SESSION FOR CITY COUNCIL: Work session council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 6 p.m. Dave Heiar will be presenting the roles of Mayor and Council and process and procedures.

ESTABLISH 150<sup>TH</sup> PRESTON COMMITTEE: It was decided by the City Council to form a committee for Preston's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Mayor will ask for volunteer's in the Mayor's perspective and it will go in as a stuffer in the January utility billing. A budget will be established at the next council meeting. The Fire Department will also be celebrating 125 years. The Fire Department will put together their celebration.

REMAINING WPPI FUNDS TO PEPPERMINT PARK: P. Hoffman stated that she likes the idea of the remaining \$1900 in funds going to Peppermint Park. The park is a community park and everyone can benefit from it. A motion was made by P. Hoffman and seconded by A. Sullivan to have the remaining WPPI funds go toward the Peppermint Park renovation. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Motion carried. T. Sieverding thanked the Council on behalf of the Park Committee.

EASTON VALLEY ATHLETIC BOOSTERS CAKE AUCTION: P. Hoffman made a motion to have Andrea Rueter make a cake for \$35 for the Easton Valley Athletic Boosters with the 150<sup>th</sup> theme. R. Petersen seconded the motion. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Motion carried.

WPPI BOARD MEETING UPDATE: The Mayor informed Council that he has been encouraged to emphasize the importance of the Electrical Infrastructure and putting money in the budget in order to continue replacing unsafe poles, etc. We may need to raise rates in order to do this. The Mayor also stated that there are not a lot of changes with the WPPI budget and further reminded council of WPPI being a nonprofit organization which keeps our electric costs lower than for profit electric companies.

Mayor Betts requested a motion to adjourn. Motion made by P. Hoffman, seconded by T. Sullivan. Ayes 4, Nays 0. Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

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Mayor Richard Betts

ATTEST:

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Teresa Weinschenk, City Clerk/Administrator