

Committee of the Whole
November 27, 2018

Present: Mayor Vulich; Councilmembers Gassman, Seeley, McGraw, Allesee, Connell, Schemers, and Odor, City Attorney, City Administrator, City Clerk, Press and interested citizens.

1. Student Loan Repayment Program – CRDC Existing Industry Manager Andy Sokolovich and County Auditor Eric Van Lancker

CRDC (Clinton Regional Development Corporation) Existing Industry Manager Andy Sokolovich stated approximately six months ago discussions had begun with County Auditor Eric Van Lancker regarding a possible student loan repayment program. Manager Sokolovich stated Peanut Butter Company, based in Chicago, administered a student loan repayment program. Manager Sokolovich stated such a program could attract talented individuals to the County.

Manager Sokolovich stated the initial proposal would be a commitment of \$1.00/day per resident paid directly toward a resident's student loans if the resident lived in the County. Manager Sokolovich stated if the resident's employer participated, along with the County and the City, the contribution could be \$3.00/day toward the resident's student loans. Manager Sokolovich stated student loan debt could be an impediment to a resident purchasing a home or making other financial obligations. Manager Sokolovich stated by assisting in reducing the resident's student loan debt, the resident would have more income available to invest in the community.

Manager Sokolovich stated the County Auditor would vet potential applicants and funds would be applied directly to the principal of the resident's student loan balance. Manager Sokolovich stated the program administered by Peanut Butter would be entirely online and would include messages informing the resident about payments made toward their student loan principal, as well as thanking the resident for choosing the Clinton community. Manager Sokolovich stated the County had proposed offering the incentive for a five-year period for eligible participants.

Councilmember Seeley stated the program could have a multiplier effect if local companies were willing to also participate. Councilmember Seeley stated it was an exciting opportunity and the City could be one the first to offer such a program in Iowa. Councilmember Seeley stated the program would attract talented individuals to the City. Administrator Brooke stated many individuals already traveled to work in Clinton and the program could encourage them to reside in Clinton.

Manager Sokolovich stated if the program was found to be a sustainable retention tool, a review could be made to determine if the program could be expanded to existing residents. Manager Sokolovich stated businesses followed qualified workforce and incentives needed to be available to attract a qualified workforce. Manager Sokolovich stated the program would have a massive public relations roll-out and the Iowa Economic Development Authority ("IEDA") would promote the program as well.

Manager Sokolovich stated Peanut Butter would administer and manage the entire program and there would not be a need for additional staff to be hired for the program. Councilmember Seeley stated there would be a monthly fee for each participating resident and the cost could be reduced if additional groups committed to participating. Councilmember Allesee inquired about the cost of program. Manager Sokolovich stated there would be a \$5.00/month fee per person as well as an annual fee of \$2,500.00 for Peanut Butter to administer the program.

Administrator Brooke stated the Council could motion to move the item forward and review the level of involvement the City would have in the program. Councilmember Connell inquired about what would need to be approved for participation in the program. Administrator Brooke stated a 28E Agreement would need to be prepared and reviewed by the Council. Mayor Vulich stated the Council could direct the City Administrator to prepare a draft 28E Agreement and that the matter return to the Council for further review.

M/S, Connell-Allesee moved that Administrator Brooke work with the County and the CRDC to prepare a 28E Agreement regarding a Student Loan Repayment Program and that the 28E Agreement be forwarded to a future Council meeting for review. On roll call, carried unanimously.

In discussion before roll call, Councilmember Gassman stated Attorney O'Connell would need to review the matter. Attorney O'Connell concurred and stated an opinion could also be obtained from the Auditors to ensure no issues were present.

2. Fourge, LLC Services Agreement for Social Media Services – Councilmember Seeley

Councilmember Seeley stated the Clinton Progress Coalition had reviewed information from Fourge regarding a Social Media Services Agreement. Councilmember Seeley stated the services would include management of the City's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages as well as other entities' social media platforms. Councilmember Seeley stated the services were aimed to help improve the City's image and digital footprint as well as spread a positive message. Councilmember Seeley stated the City of Dubuque had an agreement with Fourge for Dubuque's social media platforms. Councilmember Seeley stated the County, Chamber of Commerce, CRDC and schools had attended the meetings regarding social media services offered by Fourge.

Administrator Brooke stated the focus of Fourge's services would be for the City of Clinton and Fourge would help the City design a year-long strategy whereby notices would be ready in advance for distribution to the public. Administrator Brooke stated Fourge would provide a measure of effectiveness and would enhance information dissemination to the public. Administrator Brooke stated it would be proposed that the City would budget the agreement amount for the first year in its budget and bill the other users of Fourge services based upon the time spent for those users.

Councilmember Seeley stated Celebrate Clinton could be used as a general platform for Fourge. Councilmember Seeley stated *The Clinton Herald* could also help push information out to the public. Administrator Brooke stated in addition to providing information on crime, housing and demographics, Fourge would also help disseminate information on events and activities. Councilmember Seeley stated Fourge would address negative content.

M/S, Allesee-Schemers moved to forward the Fourge, LLC Services Agreement for Social Media Services to the next City Council agenda. On roll call, carried unanimously.

In discussion before roll call, Councilmember Gassman stated businesses could also contribute funds. Councilmember Seeley stated the more participants available, the more the overall cost to the City would be reduced. Councilmember Schemers stated the school would be a large benefactor from Fourge services and had not yet committed to participating. Councilmember Seeley stated Superintendent DeLacy was on board.

3. Lobbyist Agreement – City Administrator Matt Brooke

Administrator Brooke stated the City's share for the Lobbyist Agreement would again be \$5,500.00 for the calendar year. Administrator Brooke stated in the two years that the agreement with Advocacy Strategies had been in place, it was hard to see any priority items coming to fruition. Administrator Brooke stated the large item completed by the lobbyist was the coordination of Des Moines Days. Administrator Brooke inquired if the Council believed the cost was worth the services received.

Councilmember Schemers stated he had attended the last two meetings. Councilmember Schemers stated law changes typically took three years and he believed it would be a mistake for the City to not continue the agreement with the lobbyist for the third year. Councilmember Allesee stated she would like to see a report from the lobbyist more often. Councilmember Allesee stated the hotel/motel tax item was critical and needed to be completed by the legislature this year. Mayor Vulich stated notices from the lobbyist were being sent to the Chamber and not distributed to the other members of the agreement.

Councilmember Connell inquired if the control board for the lobbyist had met. Mayor Vulich stated the board had met last year but had not met since the Chamber had been overseeing the lobbyist. Mayor Vulich stated he would like the Des Moines Day visit to include one-on-one visits with representatives and senators in order to discuss the hotel/motel tax and determine what impediment may exist in passing the hotel/motel tax bill. Mayor Vulich stated the lobbyist could set up such meetings.

Councilmember Gassman inquired if there was anyone that was regularly communicating with the lobbyist. Mayor Vulich stated Maureen Miller at the Chamber was currently communicating with the lobbyist for the calendar year. Councilmember Connell inquired if the control board consisted of appointees from each community and if meetings were being regularly scheduled. Mayor Vulich stated he was the appointee to the board for the City. Mayor Vulich stated initially the City had taken the lead on organizing meetings with the lobbyist; however, criticism was received that the City was too involved and the City chose to step back at that time. Councilmember Connell stated the City was spending the largest portion of any entity in the agreement.

Mayor Vulich stated in order to accomplish the hotel/motel tax changes, additional trips to Des Moines may be needed and during the last legislative session there was not enough votes to bring the bill to the floor for discussion. Administrator Brooke stated the rollback was also very important for the upcoming session. Mayor Vulich concurred. Councilmember Gassman stated it was very important that someone from the City of Clinton be present at the meetings with the lobbyist.

M/S, Gassman-Seeley moved to forward a resolution approving a 28E Agreement for the lobbyist and a resolution approving the lobbyist agreement to the next City Council agenda. On roll call, carried unanimously.

In discussion before roll call, Councilmember Connell inquired if the City's portion of the lobbyist agreement was paid out of two separate fiscal year budgets. Administrator Brooke stated the City's portion was only paid out of one fiscal year budget.

4. Mayor and Council Updates

Mayor Vulich thanked the City staff for their work after the snow event and thanked the citizens for their patience. Councilmember Gassman concurred.

Mayor Vulich stated the 2nd Annual Christmas Tree Lighting would take place on Friday, November 30, 2018 at 6:00 P.M. at the end of 5th Avenue South (100 block). Mayor Vulich stated he would be present for the tree lighting.

Councilmember Odor stated the Skyline celebrated its 55th anniversary a few weeks ago and appreciation dinners were held. Councilmember Odor stated the grand opening of the Skyline's retail store would take place on Friday, December 7, 2018.

M/S, Gassman-Seeley moved to adjourn. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Frederick
City Clerk