

## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

SEPTEMBER 9, 2013

The Willmar City Council Work Session was called to order in the Willmar Municipal Utilities Auditorium at 4:45 p.m. by Finance Committee Chair Denis Anderson. Those present included Mayor Frank Yanish, Council Members Rick Fagerlie, Tim Johnson, Audrey Nelsen, Ron Christianson, Steve Ahmann, and Bruce Deblieck. Also present were City Administrator Charlene Stevens, Finance Director Steve Okins, Police Chief Dave Wyffels, Fire Chief Gary Hendrickson, Willmar Design Center Treasurer John Christianson, West Central Integration Collaborative Executive Director Charley Leuze, Multi-Cultural Business Center Director Robert Valdez, Willmar Marketing Coalition Director Sam Bowen, West Central Tribune Journalist David Little, and Accounting Supervisor Carol Cunningham.

The purpose of this council work session was to discuss requests from various community groups for funding under the Mayor's 2014 Proposed Budget.

**Item 1 – Public Comments.** Chair Anderson acknowledged that no one present wished to address the Council at this time.

**Item 2 - Community Group Funding Requests.** Representatives from four community organizations presented their funding requests to the City Council, beginning with the Willmar Design Center's Treasurer John Christianson. He explained that they received \$32,000 from the City in 2013. Their request for 2014 totals \$58,500 which is comprised of the 2013 amount plus \$25,000 for three projects being undertaken and \$1,500 to attend the Main Street National Conference. The three projects, which are the next steps needed to move the City's Downtown Plan forward, include the Glacial Lakes State Trail cooperative agreements to complete the extension to Selvig Park, Becker Avenue Implementation Funding Search, and Selvig Park Schematic Design for the anticipated influx of bikers from the Glacial Lakes Trail. Council Member Christianson asked if the contribution for the Willmar Design Center could be budgeted and paid from another fund, such as the Local Option Sales Tax Fund. Finance Chair Anderson requested staff to research this possibility.

Charly Leuze, of the West Central Integration Collaborative, explained to the Council that they are requesting \$21,000 for 2014. For the City and Community, the Collaborative provides interpretation services, assistance in de-escalating conflicts, cultural training for City staff (a few years ago), and assistance to the Community Education and Recreation department. Ms. Leuze noted that the Collaborative was originally established in 2002 serving three school districts. They are currently serving eight school districts utilizing funding received through these districts, besides their community efforts. Council Member Christianson was concerned City funds contributed to the Collaborative would be used for their work with other cities and school districts. Ms Leuze assured him that the amount the City has been funding has been entirely used for City work, such as interpretation services. It was noted that the Collaborative generally does not perform interpreting services for the Police Department. Council Member Johnson pointed out that it is required for the courts to utilize qualified interpreters. After considerable discussion, Finance Chair Anderson requested Ms. Leuze to prepare a detail of the various services the Collaborative has provided to the City, including hours spent.

Robert Valdez, of the Willmar Area Multi-Cultural Business Center, presented his request for \$20,000 from the City of Willmar. The Business Center provides business consulting, workforce

development, and borrowing opportunities for high risk applicants for business purposes. In response to Council Members' questions, Mr. Valdez stated that he assisted the Center Point Mall businesses with the termination notices they received recently by helping to find new locations to lease. He also stated that without the City's support, he would be unable to apply for several grants because part of their application criteria is evidence of a City contribution.

Sam Bowen, of the Willmar Marketing Coalition, was present earlier but needed to leave before his opportunity to speak was granted. Chair Anderson stated that he will be given another opportunity to address the Council at a later date and noted that the Coalition was requesting \$2,000 from the City in 2014.

Chair Anderson noted that the Mayor's 2014 Proposed Budget does not include a contribution to any of the above organizations.

Council Member Ahmann voiced support for a City contribution of \$5,000 to the local Archery Club to be used for constructing a berm on the eastside of the Kandi Mall in an area the Club would like to use. He stated they would be shooting from East to West and that this berm would act as a buffer between the Mall and the shooting range. Council Members Nelsen and Deblieck voiced concerns about a contribution to start up a new Archery Club when other existing Community Ed & Rec structures are in need of improvement, such as city parks and the gun range.

Chair Anderson declared the Council Work Session adjourned at 6:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Cunningham  
Accounting Supervisor