

**February 18, 2020
Special Meeting**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a special meeting of the City Council of the City of Halstad was duly called and held at the Halstad Telephone Company Meeting Room in said City on February 18, 2020 at 5:15pm.

Mayor Lori DeLong called the regular meeting to order at 5:16 pm

The following council members were present: Brandon Mickelson, Dain Johnson, and Bruce Purrington

The following council members were absent: None

Others in attendance: Members of the Halstad Business League (HBL) which included Michael Holte, Jeremy Melting, Emily Finney, Cheryl Johnson, John Hinkley, and Jessica Spaeth. Those other than HBL members present included Wayne Tenneson, Adam Camp, Mike Trygg, and Bruce Lee.

This Special Meeting was called to discuss the vacant NCW School building with the HBL.

Michael Holte spoke of the dialogue between the HBL and the NCW School Board (School). The School has told the HBL that it would sell the school property, in Halstad, to the HBL for \$1. The School said they could not legally give the HBL any money to help them with its plan to refurbish and operate the building for other purposes. Because of this the HBL thought that perhaps the School could flow the money, that the HBL was requesting from the School, through the City of Halstad. Michael asked if the City would partner with the HBL with the possibility of the flow through of the funds. Mike said that if this isn't possible, the HBL has come up with a counter proposal to the School for the acquisition of the School property.

Jeremy Melting spoke of the School and what the School could be considering. The School has legal right to "walk away" from the property or levy to tear the building down. HBL wants to work with City to prevent the demolition of the building and to promote a new use for the building.

Emily Finney spoke about the HBL's counter offer to the School which would be for the School to sell the property to HBL for \$1 and School pays for all utilities, and building maintenance for one year. Emily said that there must be creativity with ownership and leasing. She spoke about how this is being done in MN with other vacant school buildings.

Jessica Spaeth presented some materials regarding grant availability from the State of MN and spoke of grants available through the Dekko Foundation that could help with the yearly operation of the building.

Further discussion ensued between HBL members and the City Council members. City is concerned about a partnership with HBL as the risk factors may be too high, concerned that the flow through of funds from the School to City to HBL may not be legal, concerned about what the School will do with the building, concerned that the HBL hasn't raised any money to help with the cost of the building acquisition and operation. There were many other concerns mentioned by City Council members.

The only action taken was that the City Council agreed to call its City Attorney to ask if it is legal for the City to flow funds from the School to the HBL for the purpose of HBL acquiring and operating the building. A Special Meeting with the City Attorney will be scheduled in the near future to discuss her findings. The City will also contact the School's superintendent, Dr. James Hess, to speak to him about having a Special Meeting with the School Board to ask the School Board what it is considering doing with the vacant school building.

Motion by Brandon Mickelson to adjourn and second by Bruce Purrington. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm.

Lori DeLong, Mayor/Deputy Clerk