Holyoke City Council members hope to form a committee to conduct some research to see what can be done with safety issues at the Lions Club Mini Park located near the stoplight in Holyoke. The decision comes after discussion at their Tuesday, Dec. 6 meeting.

Council member Scott Murray said it would be nice to get a committee together to gather facts and figures to see what can be done.

There is concern with the condition of a brick wall and the possible safety hazard it poses. Council members also want to find out exactly who owns what. City attorney Al Wall said the park is deeded to the city and the wall is the responsibility of the city and not Scheunemann's Department Store, which it is attached to.

There is also some concern with the condition of the sidewalk and liability issues should someone get hurt. "There are some drops, but the drops in that sidewalk don't scare me near as bad as that wall does," Mayor Orville Tonsing said.

It is believed the ground has settled under the park due to improper filling of the hole after a fire burned part of the building. The settling has caused the brick wall and sidewalk to crack and sag.

Reports of city officials

Council members heard reports last Tuesday night from city clerk/treasurer Kathy Olofson, city supt. Mark Brown and police chief Doug Bergstrom.

Olofson informed council members the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant application was

not accepted for the ball park concessions stand. She said the council will need to decide whether or not to try again when the next cycle begins in March or look into using some of the Conservation Trust Fund money that was set aside as the city's match for the project.

Olofson said it wasn't the application that wasn't approved, it was the project itself. She said more components might have to be added if the city wants to be a bit more competitive.

Olofson also reported the city received the amended and final certification of values for 2011 from the assessor, which came in a little lower than what the city started with in the budget, but still higher than last year. The value is $13,806,800 which equates into dollars for the City of Holyoke at $300,988.24.

Council members unanimously voted to allow Olofson to certify the mill levy at 21.8 mills (21.2 general, .6 for volunteer fire) and to adjust the revenue in the 2012 budget to reflect the assessor's final valuation.

To finish, Olofson said the office staff has seen the benefits they were looking for after the first round of utility bills went out through the mail to customers.

Brown reported the city's new trash truck was scheduled to be delivered Wednesday, Dec. 7.

Council member David Churchwell questioned Brown on the condition of a section of Wynona Avenue. Due to some drainage issues, a couple sections of the road are a little rough. Brown said ideally, the city would pave the road, but curb and gutter is needed on one side which limits them. He said they haven't found anything that works really well yet to fix the problem due to the slope of the ground.

Bergstrom introduced newly-hired officer Dwight Thompson, who began Dec. 1.

The chief said two out of the three candidates he sent to polygraph and psychological testing

didn't pass. He sent a notice to the academy stating Holyoke was searching for one more officer to hire. If a response wasn't received by last Wednesday, Bergstrom said he would begin the search process over again to locate one more officer.

Bergstrom said he would like to continue utilizing one deputy from the sheriff's office until Thompson gets on his feet and patrolling on his own.

Other business

In other business Dec. 6, council members:

—approved an ordinance appropriating additional sums of money to defray expenses in excess of amount budgeted for the City of Holyoke.

—approved the annual appropriations ordinance, with total appropriations for 2012 at $6,250,421.

—hired officer Dwight Thompson to work for the Holyoke Police Department at a starting salary of $27,000.

—approved a resolution that establishes the refuse fee schedule for the City of Holyoke.

—appointed Jay Dean Krueger to another five-year term on the Holyoke Housing Authority board.

—approved donation to Historical Society (Phillips County Museum) for 2012 utilities and an additional $150 for 2011.

—approved request from Holyoke Volunteer Fire Department to use an upstairs office in the fire hall for an exercise room. The room will only be available to Holyoke firefighters.

—voted to offer two individual vacation days as a door prize for employees at the Christmas party.

—held a 25-minute executive session for negotiations.

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