

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2024

Mayor Rowan called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Thursday, April 11, 2024 at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Chris Rowan, Tootz Tschumperlin, Sue Unterberger, Marc Wirz
MEMBERS ABSENT: Brenda Carlson

OTHERS: Heidi Donnay, Jody Bauer, Shawny Kramer, Margee Theis, Paul Storm, Steve Geislinger, Sarah Jacobsen-Krone, Mike & Chickie Lease, Deputy Sandstrom, Al & Diana Henfling, Dustin Kramer, Randy Berg

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Items on the Consent Agenda were: minutes of March 14th special and regular meetings, March financial report, Resolution No. 2024-13, Resolution Accepting Donations, delinquent water bill for shut off.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF THE AMBULANCE BILLS AS PRESENTED, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE THE AMBULANCE SERVICE FIRST QUARTER REPORTS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT WITH MAYO CLINIC AMBULANCE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Public safety aid funds will be split amongst Ambulance, Fire Department and law enforcement contract expense. The amount would be \$15,082 each. Jody Bauer noted the ambulance would put it towards the new ambulance on order. Wirz noted the Fire Department would replace expired turn-out gear with its share.

Dustin Kramer gave an update on the Watkins Clippers baseball park. The hitting shed is near completion. A final building inspection is needed yet. There won't be any field improvements until it gets closer to hosting the state tournament in 2027. Watkins is hosting the region tournament this year starting the first weekend in August. Profits from the tournament will be used to pay down the loan for the hitting shed.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO ACCEPT THE SHERIFF'S REPORT, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Water and sewer connection fees – Fees for surrounding communities were checked. Kimball is at \$2,250 for water and \$2,500 for sewer, Eden Valley is at \$1,000 each, Cold Spring is at \$2,200 for water

and \$5,300 for sewer, and Litchfield is at \$225 for water and \$150 for sewer. Watkins is at \$1,750 each. Council felt the city was in line with the average. No change was made to the fees.

Mayor Rowan recessed the meeting at 7:15 for a public hearing.

Mayor Rowan called the public hearing to order. Purpose of the hearing was to discuss regulations of small box discount stores. There was no public present for the hearing. Mayor Rowan closed the hearing and reconvened the regular meeting.

Margee Theis and her attorney Paul Storm were present to discuss a water intrusion issue on her property. With the development of the apartment building to the east of her, it has changed the water flow to be directed onto her property. Mr. Storm noted they have tried to talk to Mr. Tysk to resolve the issue amicably, but communication seems to have broken down somewhat. Mr. Storm noted sections of the city's nuisance ordinance appear to be violated by this issue. Water is trespassing onto her property and garbage is ending up in her yard as well. To relandscape Margee's yard would cost \$6,000 if the contractor can access her property from Western Circle. If the contractor has to stay within the confines of Margee's property only, the cost would be much higher. Historically, Margee never had water in her yard until the apartment was developed. Margee is looking for an amicable resolution to the matter. Mr. Storm noted there are resolutions to the matter but it may take the city's involvement to get it done. Council agreed to contact the city attorney and review the Nuisance Ordinance.

2024 pool season – council agreed if lifeguards or WSI's work a shift in the concession stand, they would be paid at the concession stand wage. Opening date will be Saturday, June 1st, weather permitting. Council approved to use All Paid for credit cards at the pool.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING STAFF FOR THE 2024 SEASON: MANAGER: ERIN GEISLINGER; ASSISTANT MANAGER: BROOKLYN GLENZ; WATER SAFETY INSTRUCTORS AND LIFEGUARDS: DIANA WIRTZFELD, MADISEN BECKER, EMILY KRAMER, ALEXIS VOSSSEN, OLIVIA KRAMER, CAMBEL HESSE, RUBY HESSE; CONCESSIONS: AUBREE MCDONAGH, TABITHA BUTTERFASS, BLAKE GLENZ, CAMBEL HESSE, MOTION SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

June and July open swim hours will be 1 to 8 p.m. Starting August 5th, the pool will close at 7 p.m. Private lessons will be offered if staff is available. Lesson signup will be Saturday, May 4th from 10 to 11 a.m. at Village Hall. Payment will be required at time of registration.

Unterberger noted Erin Geislinger asked if the manager wage was negotiable. Erin noted the previous manager was at \$20 per hour in her second season and there is more responsibility this year with lessons coming back. Unterberger felt it was a reasonable request. She felt Erin did a good job last year. Discussion followed.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO INCREASE THE MANAGER WAGE TO \$20 PER HOUR, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Snow emergency declaration procedure – declaring the emergency beforehand if snow is in the forecast was discussed. The way the ordinance is written might prohibit doing so. Council advised to check with other cities that declare emergencies and see what policy is.

The resident at 521 2nd St South discovered a leaking hose outside and requested an adjustment to the sewer charge. Public Works verified the water didn't go down the sewer.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO CHARGE FOR THE WATER AND ADJUST THE SEWER CHARGE TO AVERAGE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

EDA update – Unterberger noted water/sewer connection fees were discussed and the board recommended no change. A letter is to be sent to Brodin Studios about buying the land back from him or for him to pay an additional \$2,500 per the purchase agreement terms.

Mini Biffs at parks – Nelson Sanitation and Mini Biff were contacted for quotes. Nelson Sanitation had the lower quote at \$85/month for a standard unit and \$125 per month for the ADA compliant unit. Damage waiver was \$4/month for each unit.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE QUOTE FROM NELSON SANITATION WITH DAMAGE WAIVER, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Spring newsletter was reviewed. One addition was made to the brush site regulations that this service is for city residents only.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE SPRING NEWSLETTER, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

The software used for meter readings has to be updated. The company is going to a cloud-based software. This requires a one-time update to Banyon Data Systems billing software also. The required Interface is \$2,195.00 and \$595 for support. The support will be an ongoing expense.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE BANYON DATA SYSTEMS UPDATE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Planting flowers in boulevard - council advised to have the resident interested in this to attend the next meeting to discuss further.

Off-street parking in business district – a potential buyer of Ertl Hardware would like to add another apartment upstairs and asked if parking in front of the storage shed on First Street would be acceptable. The ordinance requires 2 off-street parking spaces per unit. Council felt parking there could be problematic for snow plowing and advised if they want to pursue it, they should attend the next meeting.

Kramer will check to see if it's necessary to continue holding hearings on the small box discount store regulations or if discussion can simply be part of the regular meeting at this point. Council called for a work session Thursday, May 9th at 6:15 p.m. at City Hall to review more information on regulating this type of use. Another hearing may be held June 13th if necessary.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger noted the resident at 140 Western Avenue South is having his driveway repaired. There is a catch basin there that should have the curb raised to the height of the catch basin. The cost to the city would be \$1,600.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE REPAIR OF CATCH BASIN FOR \$1,600.00, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER.
MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Rowan noted Public Works staff received a certificate of commendation from MPCA for wastewater treatment plant operations.

A Nuisance Ordinance violation was delivered to 340 4th Street North April 5th. The notice allows 30 days from delivery to clean up the property.

Mayor Rowan noted the mobile home park is looking better.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS AS PRESENTED, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Next regular meeting is Thursday, May 9th at 7 p.m.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADJOURN THE MEETING, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan
Mayor