

APPROVED MINUTES  
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2022

Mayor Rowan called the regular meeting to order at 7 P.M. at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Chris Rowan, Tootz Tschumperlin, Marc Wirz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sue Unterberger, Brenda Carlson

Others: Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Kent Louwagie, Bella Butterfass, Ellie Field, Duane Peterson, Deputy Sandstrom, Jeff Hilsgen, Jody Bauer, Tom Landwehr, Bryan Landwehr, Steven Landwehr, Clerk Deb Kramer

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes from March 10<sup>th</sup> public hearing and regular meeting and April 7<sup>th</sup> Board of Appeals & Equalization meeting, March 2022 financial report, delinquent water bills for shutoff, Resolution No. 2022-12, Resolution Accepting Donations.

Public Forum – none

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

Teresa Carlson resigned from her position on the ambulance relief association board. Duane Peterson was elected to fill the position.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF DUANE PETERSON TO THE AMBULANCE SERVICE RELIEF ASSOCIATION BOARD, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE AMBULANCE SERVICE 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER REPORTS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Steven Landwehr, Tom Landwehr and Bryan Landwehr were present to discuss the gravel lease Steven has with the city. They would like to go 100' beyond the 200' allowed in the lease to mine gravel. They would close the area up after mining to plant in crop. Landwehr's noted this would also be a little extra revenue for the city. Geislinger and Wirz viewed the area and felt once planted in crop there wouldn't be any erosion concerns.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ALLOW THE ENCROACHMENT AS DESCRIBED, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Nancy Schulzetenberg with berganKDV presented the 2021 audit report. There was one internal control finding - lack of segregation of accounting duties.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE 2021 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

City Engineer Kent Louwagie reviewed MN Department of Employment and Economic Development's Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) with council. This is a grant program for housing and commercial rehab and public infrastructure. Bolton and Menk could assist the city in the application process. The estimated fee to prepare a Preliminary Proposal is \$7,000. If the city were authorized to proceed to the final application, their estimated fee for that phase is \$3,000. Kent suggested a project should be in the range of \$750,000 to \$1 million to make it worthwhile. The preliminary application would be due in November. UCAP has also submitted a proposal to the city for assisting with the application process. Council will follow up at the May meeting when a full council is present.

Bolton and Menk submitted an estimate of \$3,000 to perform a survey, draft an easement description and prepare a drawing representing the easement for the water and sewer mains that run on the southern portion of the city limits on property owned by Faber Building. The city attorney would then prepare the easement document. Bolton and Menk will also verify that the easements over the parcels to the west are correct. The solar array being installed at Faber Building is clear of utilities.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE BOLTON AND MENK TO PROCEED WITH PREPARING THE EASMENT INFORMATION, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

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

The personnel committee reviewed the applications for pool staffing and made the following recommendations for 2022: Manager: Bella Butterfass. Assistant Manager: Ellie Field. Lifeguards: Erin Geislinger, Alison Olson and Mitchel Hesse. Concessions: Madisen Becker, Tabitha Butterfass, Kris Butterfass.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POOL STAFF, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Council reviewed the pool policy manual draft. Councilor Carlson added a section on Mutual Respect and Harassment and also had some minor language changes. Council approved lifeguards must work an average of 10 hours per pay period throughout the season to be eligible for the swimsuit reimbursement. A final copy of the manual will be presented at the May council meeting for approval.

Bella Butterfass presented a logo design for clothing for pool staff. Staff would be responsible for ordering and purchasing the items from Hometown Screen Printing and Design.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE DESIGN FOR POOL EMPLOYEES CLOTHING ORDERS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Swimming pool fees will be discussed at the May meeting.

Mobile Home Park – The owner notified the city that they should be moving forward with clean up in the next few weeks (no longer than a month). He has asked the mobile home mover to send over a

written bid and time to complete the work of removing all of the abandoned homes. Violation notices were delivered to tenants that do not meet community standards. He noted they are looking at several other projects they think could help improve the park. Kramer noted a tenant from the park called City Hall with concerns of mold spores getting into the air during removal or demolition of these homes. These concerns were sent to the park owner along with a request to clarify if the homes will be moved out or if they plan to demo on site as well. There was no response before the meeting. Wirz noted there may be an issue with critters that might be inhabiting these abandoned homes. Kramer noted as part of the demo process, they are supposed to supply documentation that extermination has been done. Kramer will check with MN Department of Health to see where things are at on their end.

Council reviewed the Short-Term Vacation Rental Ordinance. The city does not currently regulate this but there was an inquiry asking if the city did so. Council agreed they would like more time to review and tabled until the May meeting.

Public Works Assistant Viri Liebrenz submitted his retirement notice. His last day will be May 27<sup>th</sup>.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ACCEPT VIRI LIEBRENZ'S RETIREMENT NOTICE WITH LAST DAY OF EMPLOYMENT BEING MAY 27, 2022, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Council discussed the upcoming vacant position. It was agreed that the license certifications could be attained after hired. The city does not offer medical insurance. Council agreed to remove the Class B license deadline from the ad. Wage will be advertised at \$25 to \$30 per hour DOQ. Deadline for applications with cover letter and résumé will be May 6<sup>th</sup>.

EDA update – Discussion on the vacant lot on Central Avenue was tabled until the July meeting when more of the board should be present. Brodin Studios asked if there was a survey of the property. This was sent to him and will be followed up on at the July meeting.

Planning Commission update – Scott Hesse has applied for a variance to add on to the storage building he built last year. Jack's gas station is exploring constructing a new building, relocating the pumps and tearing down the old building. They have purchased the adjoining residential property and submitted a rezoning application to rezone it from R-1 District to B-2 Highway Commercial District.

Small Cities Development Program follow-up – This was tabled until the May meeting when full council can be present.

Fire Department retirements - Flavian Kramer submitted a retirement notice effective March 7<sup>th</sup> and Fran Vossen submitted a retirement notice effective May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE KRAMER AND VOSSEN RETIREMENTS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds have been allocated to the city in the amount \$104,146. Past discussions indicated putting the funds towards the proposed wastewater improvements.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO EARMARK THE STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS TO GO TOWARDS WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENTS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2022-13, RESOLUTION TO ELECT THE STANDARD ALLOWANCE AVAILABLE UNDER THE REVENUE LOSS PROVISION OF THE CORONAVIRUS LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUND ESTABLISHED UNDER THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

National Night Out will be Tuesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Carlson has volunteered to handle again. Rowan will check with the Lions Club to see if they are interested in taking on a bigger role in this.

There is an option for the local Board of Appeals and Equalization to transfer its duties to Meeker County for an open-book meeting. Benefits of doing an open-book meeting were reviewed. There is generally very little, if any, public participation at this meeting. The transfer may either be permanent or for a specified number of years, provided the transfer cannot be for less than three years. The city must give public notice of the meeting at which the proposal for transfer is to be considered. If approved, a resolution would need to be adopted and submitted to the county assessor. Council felt this would be a good option for the city. Notice will be given that it will be discussed at the May council meeting.

Spring newsletter was reviewed. Fees for daily swim fee and punch cards will be removed being they are not set at this time.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE THE NEWSLETTER WITH THE ABOVE CHANGE, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Council approved to get an ADA mini-biff unit at McCarthy Park and a standard unit at VFW Park for the spring/summer/fall. Council advised to check prices from a couple vendors and go with least expensive one.

Council approved for a food truck at a resident's garage sale as long as it up-to-date on all licenses required by the state.

A resident asked about putting a gravel pad alongside their driveway where they can't get grass to grow. Council agreed that if they want to park there it would have to be paved, as per city ordinance. If not parking there, they didn't feel they could prohibit the gravel.

The ambulance service will be going to the Eden Valley-Watkins and Kimball Kindergarten classes for EMS week in May. In the past the service has given each student a free one-day swim pass. The service then pays the city for all passes turned in at the end of the season at a reduced price, which has been \$2 prior years. The service is requesting 142 passes. Council approved to do the same.

Kramer noted that Les & Tina Loff moved a storage shed from the back of their property at 141 Central Avenue North to property they own at 221 1<sup>st</sup> St. They were not aware that a permit would be needed. Kramer noted they have done a lot of improvements to both properties and asked if the penalty would apply. After discussion, council agreed they had to stand by policy. A permit to relocate would be required and penalty fee would apply as well.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger reported that Bolton and Menk did a review of the water treatment plant. Some of the items to be discussed at the upcoming water board meeting will be the roof, blocks, VFD's and PLC.

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

Next regular meeting is Thursday, May 12 at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer  
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan  
Mayor