

UNAPPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2019

Mayor Eder called the regular meeting to order at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Frank Eder, Tootz Tschumperlin, Jason Laumer, Sue Unterberger. Marc Wirz arrived at 7:04 p.m.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Others: Steve Geislinger, Chad Unterberger, Doreen Unterberger, Ashlee Lundberg, Emily Laumer, Bonnie Holthaus, Doug Green, Viri Liebrenz, Jeanette Neidhardt, Chris Lease, Deb Kramer

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes from July 11th regular meeting, July financial report, Resolution #2019-15, Resolution Accepting Donations, Resolution #2019-16, Resolution Approving Transfers, delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – Chris Lease from the Red Goat Bar and Grill stated the bars would like to do a Halloween pub crawl again October 26th. He asked if the city would be willing to shut down the central business district block again for a street dance. Chris noted there were a lot of people in town for it last year. He asked approval to close the block off from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. to allow time to clean up the street. Chris has talked to the other bars and they are on board for the clean-up.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ALLOW THE PUB CRAWL ON OCTOBER 26TH, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Ambulance chief Bonnie Holthaus reported Chelsea Heuring has resigned from the service.

Councilor Wirz arrived at this time.

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

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF CHELSEA HEURING, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Doug Green from Baker Tilly discussed refunding the G.O. Refunding Bonds Series 2013A. The first call date on the bonds is January 1, 2020. Doug noted the city could refund the bonds and close in 90 days and set the funds in escrow and pay off January 1st and then the new debt issue would start. There is \$3,970,000 principal outstanding after the January 1st payment. Doug noted the interest rates have been falling. The savings would be about \$23,000 per year. The estimated savings is approximately 9.41% of the outstanding debt service. Doug noted the general rule is anything over 3% is considered a

“good” refunding. The interest rates may not be as low in October, but Doug didn’t think it would change much. The sale can be delayed if needed or the city would have the option to reject the bids if they don’t like them. A contract would be needed between the city and Baker Tilly but it doesn’t obligate the city to anything. The contract could be acted on at the September meeting.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO PROCEED WITH REFUNDING THE 2013A BOND ISSUE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

The annual payment date will be changed from January 1st to February 1st with the new issue.

Chad Unterberger asked permission to put a bench in honor of his dad, Tom, at the VFW Park and plant a tree. Chad checked with the VFW and they are okay with it as long as the city approves it.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE A MEMORIAL BENCH AND TREE AT VFW PARK, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Deputy Defries was not in attendance. There was no sheriff’s report.

Pool manager Ashlee Lundberg asked that the wage schedule for pool staff be reviewed before next year when letters go out to returning staff. She would like to have the wages included in the letters for incentive to return. Ashlee noted she will be in the area this school year so she can come back to a meeting. She also asked about reimbursing staff that took a water safety instructor (WSI) course earlier this year. Lifeguards have been reimbursed for their course fees-getting ½ after the end of the first season and the other ½ after the end of the second season. She recommended the same for WSI course reimbursement. Council discussed setting a cap of \$275 on reimbursement for a WSI class.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ALLOW REIMBURSEMENT OF ACTUAL COST OF WSI COURSE UP TO \$275, REIMBURSING ½ AFTER THE FIRST YEAR AND ½ AFTER THE SECOND YEAR, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Ashlee reported the last day for the pool would be August 24th. Free swim day is August 16th from 1 to 8 p.m. and a pool carnival fundraiser from 2 to 6 p.m. A total of 20 private lessons were done this season. There were five group sessions with 362 kids. Water aerobics and lap swim are also being held.

Council reviewed an updated wage schedule for pool staff as follows: Manager: \$14.75 to \$17.75 per hour; Assistant Manager: \$13.75 to \$15.75; Water Safety Instructor: \$13.00 to \$15.00; Lifeguard: \$12.50 to \$14.25; Concession Stand: current minimum wage or youth/training wage if applicable.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO CHANGE THE WAGE SCHEDULE FOR POOL STAFF AS FOLLOWS: MANAGER: \$14.75 TO \$17.75 PER HOUR; ASSISTANT MANAGER: \$13.75 TO \$15.75; WATER SAFETY INSTRUCTOR: \$13.00 TO \$15.00; LIFEGUARD: \$12.50 TO \$14.25; CONCESSION STAND: CURRENT MINIMUM WAGE OR YOUTH/TRAINING WAGE IF APPLICABLE, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADOPT ORDINANCE #2019-2, ORDINANCE AMENDING FEE SCHEDULE, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2019-17, RESOLUTION APPROVING SUMMARY PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE #2019-2, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Southwest Initiative Foundation asked the city to consider a \$350 contribution for 2020 to support economic development in Meeker County and southwest MN.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO CONTRIBUTE \$350 TO SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

230 Central Avenue South – The owner was cited for the non-compliant siding on the accessory structure and that has been removed; however, the non-compliant roofing material is still on. There was an oversight when the owner was cited and the roofing was not included in the court order to bring into compliance. Council agreed it must move forward with bringing the roof into compliance also.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO SEND A LETTER TO THE OWNER AT 230 CENTRAL AVENUE SOUTH ALLOWING 60 DAYS TO BRING THE ROOF INTO COMPLIANCE BEFORE TURNING BACK OVER TO MEEKER COUNTY, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

261 Central Avenue South – The attorney presented options to the city to get the needed repairs done at the property. Council discussed option 1 - developing a list of hazardous conditions that need to be repaired and present him with an opportunity to stipulate to a written abatement agreement. He would be given a deadline, after which point, the city would be authorized per his consent to undertake the repairs and recover the costs through a special assessment, which would become a lien on the property. A title search would need to be done to ensure the city get the owner's consent and the consent of any other owners of record or lien-holders of record.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO PROCEED WITH OPTION 1, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE A TEMPORARY ON-SALE LIQUOR LICENSE FOR CHURCH OF ST. ANTHONY FOR SEPTEMBER 8, 2019, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

The city's insurance policy is in the process of being renewed. Kramer asked if council wanted to change any values or coverage to any city vehicles.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO DROP PHYSICAL DAMAGE FROM THE 2002 CHEVROLET IMPALA, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Kramer noted that all 8 spots for advertising on the new sign are taken. Mies Outland, Kramer Electric, Jack's and Louisiana Pacific Corp. each purchased 2 spots at \$1,000 each. Kramer noted the cost of the artwork for the ads wasn't included in the price of the sign. Scenic Sign estimated about \$1,000 for the new artwork.

CP Rail property – Making an offer to CP Rail for the leased land was discussed. Wirz noted he measured and used the amount that Ag-Venture paid when they purchased from the railroad and came up with a figure around \$45,000 to \$48,000. Discussion followed. Other options for a park area were discussed. Possibly near the elementary school if the school would approve or behind City Hall if the church was interested in selling. Wirz noted the buildings at McCarthy Park could be moved fairly reasonable with volunteers. Mayor Eder noted that Les Loff is working with the school district to do a land swap. Meeker County has 83,000 sq. ft. on the record for the property the city leases from CP Rail. Council discussed making an offer of \$50,000 to CP Rail for the land currently leased.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO MAKE AN OFFER OF \$50,000 TO CP RAIL FOR THE LEASED PARKING LOT AND PARK, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Council approved to have the city attorney handle the transaction.

Planning Commission update – Mayor Eder noted the board voted not to proceed with changing the ordinance for smaller lots in the R-1 District and to go with a Planned Unit Development (PUD) instead. He also noted that a public hearing will be held September 4th at 7 p.m. to amend regulations in the R-2 District to increase the number of housekeeping units in an apartment building from 16 to 20. Discussion was held on the proposed apartment building to be located on land the EDA owns to the south of the townhomes, off Western Avenue North. Access would probably be off Western Avenue North rather than the private drive used to access the townhomes.

Council acknowledged a \$2,500 grant from CenterPoint Energy to the Fire Department for the purchase of a new thermal imaging camera.

Council reviewed a letter from Isaak Sackett and Melissa Sackett asking for support of Raptors Roost, a youth hangout/arcade/multi-purpose space in Eden Valley. Legally, the city is probably not able to donate. No action was taken.

Council called for a special meeting to work on the 2020 budget on August 28th at 7 p.m.

Kramer noted Meeker Cooperative will be installing fiber optic in parts of the city and offering its Vibrant Broadband to businesses in the city along Highway 55 and Central Avenue.

Kramer asked if the council would consider changing City Hall hours to be open one hour longer Monday thru Thursday and close early on Fridays. After discussion, council advised office staff to track activity on Friday afternoons and they will review at the September meeting.

Kramer noted the office computers and public works computer all operate with Windows 7. Microsoft will stop supporting Windows 7 after January 14, 2020. The computers will still work, however there won't be any support or security updates, which will leave the computers at a higher risk of being targeted by hackers. The cost for the upgrade to Windows 10 on the two office computers will run about \$480 total. The cost to upgrade the public works computer would run about \$320. A new computer can be purchased for \$400. Wirz noted the city should ask about ransomware also. He knew of some companies that ended up paying a lot of money to get access to their files.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO APPROVE THE UPGRADE TO WINDOWS 10 AND A NEW COMPUTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Eder noted that Mike Klein attended the planning commission meeting and wants to move a house in on a lot he owns to the west of St. Anthony Manor. The home would have a permanent foundation. This lot is zoned R-2 multi-family and a single-family home is an allowed use.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger noted the south pool wall hasn't moved much this summer but moved a lot over the winter. The wall should be 16" thick but is only 8". Geislinger could contact a few people again to see what would be the best option to fix it and maybe they can fix it themselves. Steve

noted they should get going on this as soon as possible after the season is done. Geislinger asked for more lighting at the maintenance garage on School Avenue. Council advised to get a quote from Kramer Electric. No quote has been received yet for the repair of the retaining wall by the skating rink. Steve thought they should be able to re-use the blocks that are there since they are a commercial grade.

Mayor Eder asked about the blacktop that needs to be repaired on Cedar Avenue North off of 3rd Street. Steve noted there is also a patch needed on 4th Street North and on Service Road South near Kramer Electric. Steve noted the school will be blacktopping and might be able to piggy-back with that project.

Rain gutters at City Hall were discussed. Public Works will try using silicone or Flex Seal on the joints to see if that seals up the joints.

Laumer noted the Community Foundation meeting went well, although there is representation needed from the Watkins area. They would like to have a board with 11-15 people on it. The next meeting will be August 20th at 6:30 p.m. at Village Hall.

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

Next regular meeting will be Thursday, September 12th at 7 p.m.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO CLOSE THE MEETING FOR STAFF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS PER MN STATUTE §13D.05, SUBDS. 1(D), 3(A) FOR DEB KRAMER, JEANETTE NEIDHARDT, STEVE GEISLINGER, VIRL LIEBRENZ AND ASHLEE LUNDBERG, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting closed at 8:53 p.m.

Meeting reopened at 9:02 p.m.

Wage negotiations – Kramer, Neidhardt, Geislinger and Liebrezn requested a 4% increase in 2020 and 2021. Council discussed an increase of .75/hour for the pool manager.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE A 4% WAGE INCREASE FOR THE NEXT 2 YEARS FOR KRAMER, NEIDHARDT, GEISLINGER AND LIEBRENZ AND INCREASE ASHLEE LUNDBERG'S WAGE TO \$16.25/HOUR FOR 2020 SEASON, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO ADJOURN THE MEETING, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer, Clerk

ATTEST:

Frank Eder, Mayor