

UNAPPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2020

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Frank Eder, Tootz Tschumperlin, Sue Unterberger, Marc Wirz, Jason Laumer

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Others: Chris Rowan, Bryan Landwehr, Brianna Larson, Chris Lease, Joe Kuechle, Kyle Ten Napel, Justice Walker

Mayor Eder added Justice Walker with Mid-MN Development Commission to the agenda to discuss ordinance updates.

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes of the July 9th regular meeting, July financial report, Resolution #2020-15 - Resolution Accepting Donations, and Resolution #2020-16 - Resolution Approving Transfers.

Public Forum – Chris Rowan, 211 Meeker Avenue South, asked the council to consider using some of the CARES Act funding to bring past due water bill accounts up-to-date and give a credit on all accounts. Council noted the funds cannot be used for that. The Federal Government has put strict guidelines on what the funds can be used for. Council noted unfortunately there isn't a lot the city can do for residents with the funding.

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

Bryan Landwehr noted he had a high water bill in June. He noted he was gone most of the month. The meter was replaced and it is back to normal.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADJUST LANDWEHR'S JUNE BILL TO AVERAGE AND CREDIT HIS ACCOUNT, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Brianna Larson asked to block off parking from Bud's Bar to Ertl's corner for their annual bike run August 22nd from about 11 to 1 p.m.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE BLOCKING OFF THE PARKING, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Chris Lease from the Red Goat Bar and Grill asked for approval to shut down Central Avenue from Second Street North to First Street for their annual Pub Crawl October 24th from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. Chris noted this has been going well and getting better each year.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO CLOSE DOWN CENTRAL AVENUE FROM SECOND STREET NORTH TO FIRST STREET OCTOBER 24TH FROM 6 P.M. TO 2 A.M., SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Joe Kuechle presented a survey for the two acres he is buying from the EDA. The property is part of Outlot A in Donnay's Glenshire Estates 1st Addition. Kuechle plans to build storage units there. The access would come from 667th Avenue.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO APPROVE THE SURVEY FOR STORAGE UNITS FOR JOE KUECHLE, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Kyle Ten Napel, Transportation/Community Development Planner with Mid-MN Development Commission presented a draft Trails and Pedestrian Plan to be used for MnDOT's Transportation Alternatives funding application. The first segment of non-motorized trail would connect Glenshire Estates to School Avenue. It would run along the east side of 667th Avenue to Highway 55 and then along the north side of Highway 55 to Veterans Drive. The trail is proposed to be an off-road, non-motorized, 10-foot wide, paved multipurpose trail that extends approximately 3,100 feet. The second segment of sidewalk/trail is focused around the EV-W Elementary School. This segment would run along the west side of School Avenue from Veterans Drive to 2nd Street. The sidewalk would then continue on the north side of 2nd Street and connect with the established sidewalk network. A sidewalk or trail would also be an option along Veterans Drive. Kyle noted there is \$700,000 in funding for this district. The third segment of sidewalk is focused around Hilltop Health Care Center on the north edge of town. This segment would start along the north side of Meeker Avenue North and then run east along Julius Drive. From there the sidewalk would travel north along the west side of Driftwood Avenue and end at the VFW Park. The second part of this sidewalk segment would travel south along the east side of Meeker Avenue North and connect to the existing sidewalk network. Kyle noted the first grant application would be for the trail from Glenshire to Veterans Drive. The city engineer will be contacted to see if any easements would be needed for sidewalks. A Letter of Intent (LOI) must be submitted first. The city will need to get a cost for the proposed trail to put in the letter. Kyle thought the LOI deadline would probably be the end of October. The full application would be due the end of January.

Justice Walker, Community Planner with Mid-MN Development Commission (MMDC), talked with council about updating the ordinances. The city has issues with vehicles with expired tabs, RV parking, parking on lawns, blight, etc. which were discussed at the Planning Commission meeting. Mayor Eder contacted MMDC to see if they could assist. Justice noted some other things to address would be home occupations and what to allow along with hours of operation of work that creates noise so neighbors can be made aware prior. There is a general need to tighten up the city's code. Council noted fireworks have been a big issue, even after July 4th. Deputy Defries noted 4-wheelers are becoming an issue as well as no one is following the rules. Defries noted he needs probable cause to stop someone and will start watching closer for violations. Dogs are another issue in the city. The amount allowed now is 5. If the city lowers that, anyone with 5 would have to be grandfathered in. Justice felt the ordinances could definitely be tightened up and the city could definitely add to them. Laumer noted he looked at some other cities and their ordinances had a lot more detail. Justice suggested doing a couple work sessions with the city and a thorough review of the city's ordinances. Community education would be part of the process. He suggested a city cleanup day. Some cities offer a microgrant to assist residents. Justice

recommended the city be very explicit in the ordinances. Community education would be done to let people know of changes. He noted it's better to work with the residents to get things accomplished. One session could be a site-visit session to drive around town and define blight. Justice noted there is no set timeline when a city should update its ordinances. It should be done more as things evolve and change. He suggested the city be visionary rather than reactionary. If the city wants to proceed, Justice would go through the codes to decide how many hours it would take. He estimated 30-40 hours total.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO MOVE FORWARD WITH UPDATING ORDINANCES, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Sheriff's report - Council discussed the ordinances with Defries and what kind of enforcement the city can do. Wirz felt getting more detail in the ordinances would make it easier to make a case. A code enforcement officer was discussed. Kramer will check with Eden Valley to see how this works for them.

Meeker County will be receiving CARES Act Elections Funding and working with cities and townships that have incurred extra costs for poll worker safety. Allowable costs include plexiglass barriers, sanitation and disinfection supplies and other election related and pandemic related supplies. The city has been allocated \$588.45 and as of now has about \$288 in expenses with the barriers and sanitation supplies. The city can certify the expenses and be paid for that amount with the balance staying with the county for more election equipment (option #1) or choose to be paid the full amount and return what doesn't get spent to the county which they will in turn refund to the State (option #2).

MOTION BY LAUMER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2020-18, RESOLUTION APPROVING AGREEMENT OPTION #1, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Council discussed the CARES Act funding tabled last month. The city has been allocated \$72,025. Eder and Kramer attended a meeting in Litchfield with Meeker County officials. If the city certifies and cannot spend all the funds, Meeker County Hospital and EDA would have use for the unspent funds. The hospital is looking to add a video M.D. service. They would also like to build a garage with a drive-thru for testing and vaccinations. The EDA will be offering grants to assist businesses and non-profits who were shut down or severely impacted by COVID-19. This would be a grant program, not a loan program. It would be need-based. A committee would be set up to review the applications. Kramer noted some things the city could purchase with the funds would be hand sanitizer dispensers for all buildings and possibly touchless paper towel dispensers and soap dispensers. Kramer suggested a laptop for the clerk that would be set up to work remotely should the need arise. More barriers could also be purchased for City Hall and the pool building concession area.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO CERTIFY FOR CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUNDS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Last month council approved to resume shutting off delinquent water accounts. The League of MN Cities has recommended avoiding residential water and sewer shut-offs. The Governor's emergency executive order prohibiting evictions could be applied to shut-offs of essential services.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO FOLLOW LEAGUE OF MN CITIES RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SHUT-OFFS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2020-17, RESOLUTION CLOSING OUT G.O. REFUNDING BONDS OF 2013A, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO CONTINUE CONTRIBUTING \$350 TO SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Planning Commission update – There was an issue between two parties with a building over the property line. They have come to an agreement now and some footage will be sold to the party that owns the building. Council didn't feel a survey was needed. There was also a question about what is considered an alley vs. road. The definitions from the Zoning Ordinance are: *Section 2.03. ALLEY. Any dedicated public way providing a secondary means of ingress and/or egress to land or structure thereon. Section 22.59. STREET. Any thoroughfare or way other than a public alley dedicated to the use of the public and open to public travel, whether designed as a road, avenue, highway, boulevard, drive, lane, circle, place, court or other similar designation, or a private street open to restricted travel and at least forty (40) feet in width.* Council agreed the two in question would be alleys as they are only 16' wide and are not a secondary means of ingress and/or egress.

EDA update – A closing is scheduled for August 17th for the parcel on east Highway 55.

Council discussed a complaint on a lot of cars parked at 340 4th Street North making it difficult for traffic to get through and another complaint about vehicles being parked on lawns. Defries will check on the vehicles parked on the street and see what can be done. The issues will be addressed during the code update. Unterberger also mentioned that the dog at 340 4th Street North is aggressive and knocked her down while walking.

Council called for a special meeting on September 15th at 7 p.m. to review and certify the proposed budget and levy. The preliminary levy must be certified by September 30th.

The law enforcement contract is due to renew for 2021 and 2022. The per hour rate for 2020 is \$47.50. Proposed per hour rate for 2021 is \$48.50 and \$49.50 for 2022. Discussion was held on increasing patrol in the city on weekends to help curb some of the issues going on. Laumer will contact Sheriff Cruze about this.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE THE 2021-2022 LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT WITH MEEKER COUNTY, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Meeker in Motion will be starting another program in September. Anyone interested in applying or knows of someone who may be interested should contact City Hall.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE UPDATED COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS PLAN, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Kramer Electric submitted estimates to change to LED bulbs at the Fire Hall and City Hall building. Xcel Energy has a bonus rebate on LED bulbs going on now. The total quote for both buildings is \$6,604.64. This includes materials and labor to replace ballasts and install bulbs. Total rebate would be \$1,572.00. The city would see approximately \$628 in savings annually as well. Geislinger noted lights in the back garage would be updated to OSHA approved lights as well with this update.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO APPROVE THE UPDATE TO LED BULBS AT CITY HALL AND FIRE HALL, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Bolton and Menk notified the city that the Small Cities Development Program application period is open. This is federal funding to help cities with funding for housing and commercial rehabilitation and public infrastructure projects. The preliminary application is due November 17th.

Council approved sponsoring an ad for \$40 in the EV-W School calendar.

Kramer noted staff reviews usually take place at the August meeting. Since wages are set for 2021 Kramer asked if the reviews could take place at another meeting when the agenda is not so full. Council approved to schedule for another meeting.

The city currently has an agreement with Meeker County for building code enforcement for accessibility and bleachers only. The building official would be willing to review the plans, do inspections and issue the certificate of occupancy for the 20-unit apartment building for a fee of approximately \$2,500. The agreement would need to be amended to add "and other services as needed". The developer would be responsible for the fee.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO AMEND THE AGREEMENT WITH MEEKER COUNTY TO ADD "AND OTHER SERVICES AS NEEDED", SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger reported that the second phase of updates is being done on the joint water treatment plant and the city's reservoir and tower. Geislinger also noted that both Meeker Cooperative and Arvig are installing fiber optic in the city. The crack filling work is about a month out yet.

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

Next regular meeting is September 10th at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer, Clerk

ATTEST:

Frank Eder, Mayor