

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2022

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

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tootz Tschumperlin

Others present: Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Kent Louwagie, Jody Bauer, Jeff Hilsgen, Deputy Sandstrom, Brian Harff, Bryan Landwehr, Duane Peterson, Clerk Deb Kramer

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes of the January 13th special and regular meetings, January 2022 financial report, and delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – none

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

Jody Bauer reported the MNStar Reporting Clerk position held by Teresa Carlson is no longer needed since going to electronic reporting. The position ended December 31st.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO TERMINATE THE MNSTAR REPORTING CLERK POSITION EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 31, 2021, SECONDED BY CARSLON. MOTION CARRIED.

Signature cards for the ambulance accounts need to be updated. The bank needs documentation of names in minutes. The ambulance will be holding its elections in March. The treasurer of the ambulance and two council members signatures will be required.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE AMBULANCE SIGNATURE CARDS REQUIRE THE AMBULANCE TREASURER SIGNATURE AND TWO COUNCIL MEMBER SIGNATURES, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Bauer also noted the agreement with Expert Billing for billing services is up for renewal. They have increased from \$28 per call to \$29 per call.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE EXPERT BILLING AGREEMENT, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Watkins Clippers building project follow-up – State statute does not require competitive bidding when under \$175,000, but, when possible, it does require two quotes. Some commitments have already been

made on the project so the city is not really in a position to get quotes. If quotes are not possible in this case, council can weigh the benefits of the project against the downside of not being able to get the quotes and determine if possible and advisable to proceed without quotes. If council finds it's not possible to get quotes and that it's advisable to proceed without quotes, the city must still contract directly for the project. The baseball association did get quotes but did not have them available. Both the lease between the city and the school district and the joint powers agreement between the association and city require the improvements be city-owned. The association is still requesting the \$65,000 that was discussed in January with repayment coming from gambling funds and hosting the state tournament in 2027. Wirz recommended capping the amount at \$65,000 with repayment over a 5-year period at 3% interest.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE \$65,000 AT 3% INTEREST OVER A 5 YEAR SCHEDULE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Council reviewed the monthly Sheriff's report. Rowan noted there was a concern about the speed of vehicles exiting Western Circle onto Western Avenue. Sandstrom noted he wasn't aware of any issues but they could observe it. Discussion followed on placing a STOP sign there. It was agreed to monitor it to see if a STOP sign is needed.

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

City Engineer Kent Louwagie updated council on the proposed wastewater improvements. A facility plan was prepared and submitted to council in August. This plan needs to be submitted to MPCA for its review and approval. A public hearing on the proposed improvements is required. The resolution before council adopting the Facility Plan and its submittal to MPCA has a hearing date of March 10th at 7 p.m. but can be changed if needed. Council approved the hearing for March 10th at 7 p.m.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2022-8, RESOLUTION ADOPTING PROPOSED FACILITY PLAN AND CALLING FOR PUBLIC HEARING, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

2022 pool season – Lack of swim instructors is a concern again this year. The city is not aware of any staff that have been certified to teach lessons. Council advised letters be sent as soon as possible to last year's staff to see who is returning and in what capacity. Council discussed incentives like paid training with a commitment. Dassel-Cokato does have a WSI course scheduled to start the end of February. Council advised to advertise for lifeguards and water safety instructors offering paid training.

Mobile Home Park follow-up – Kramer noted the procedures of MN Department of Health (MDH). Their enforcement team meets monthly, but it wasn't known if it has reached this point. Kramer will follow up with MDH. The owner did email the city today and said they are in contact with some vendors to try and get work started. They are also trying to get financing to move the project along more quickly. The owner hadn't gotten back to the city before the meeting on exactly what type of work would be done.

Council will do some research on what other cities charge for permits for ROW excavation, obstruction, demolition, etc. This will be looked at next month.

Mayor Rowan noted the Lions Club would like to put a bronze statue of Alayna Ertl in McCarthy Park near the flower bed. The Ertl family has been contacted and is in favor of the project.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE LIONS PROJECT, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE THE RELIEF ASSOCIATION PER MAN YEAR INCREASE FROM \$1,750.00 TO \$1,900.00, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

The MN Twins Fields for Kids grant program is open. The first deadline is March 4th. Another round will open with a June deadline if there are remaining funds. Wirz noted they did get quotes for dugouts, grading and fencing. Kramer noted the school district would have to be the applicant as they operate the youth leagues. Wirz noted due to timing, they may need to try and get in on the second round.

The League of MN Cities and MN Association of Small Cities have asked cities to adopt a resolution supporting the authority of local elected officials and city staff to make land use decisions in their community.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2022-9, RESOLUTION SUPPORTING HOUSING AND LOCAL DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Sewer rates for the three properties just outside city limits were discussed. When they hooked up to city sewer back in 2008, rates were based off what Clear Lake residents were being charged by the township. The rate being charged now to the 3 properties is \$38.50 per month. The current charge to Clear Lake residents is \$155.60 per quarter (\$51.87/month) for a homestead property. The last increase to the three properties was in 2018. Council agreed to increase to \$45 per month, effective June 1st.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO INCREASE THE SEWER RATE FROM \$38.50 PER MONTH TO \$45.00 PER MONTH, EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2022, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

The personnel committee will score the applications for the deputy clerk position and interviews will be set up. Council called for a special meeting Thursday, February 24th at 7 p.m. to get the personnel committee's recommendation for the position and make appointment.

Mayor Rowan met with Jeff Gladis from United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) regarding applying for the Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) grant through MN DEED for housing and commercial rehab and possibly a street scape component. UCAP does grant writing for these applications and administration of the grant if awarded. Mayor Rowan will contact Jeff to see if he can attend the March 2nd planning commission meeting to discuss the program. The EDA and council will be invited as well.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE STAFF PTO REQUEST, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

The annual Board of Appeals and Equalization will be Thursday, April 7th at 6:30 p.m.

Council agreed a permit would not be needed for a pickle ball court in Faber's 2nd Addition playground area.

The Watkins House has a purchase offer pending and the perspective buyers would like to operate an assisted living facility. There was a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approved in 2016 to allow for a state

licensed residential facility serving from 7 to 16 mentally or physically challenged persons, and licensed and registered as specified under MN Statutes Chapter 144D, or as amended. Typically, a CUP runs with the land; however, the Legislature repealed Chapter 144D in its entirety in 2020. Facilities licensed under Chapter 144D had to either discontinue services or convert to an assisted living facility licensed under Chapter 144G. The city attorney's opinion was that a new CUP should be applied for. The perspective buyers of the property are under a March 31 deadline to be operating in the building. Council agreed that a new CUP needs to be applied for and the city will work with the applicant to expedite the process. A special meeting of the planning commission will be held Wednesday, February 16th at 7 p.m. to review the application. A public hearing will then be scheduled with proper notice given and a recommendation to the council on March 10th. All fees for special meetings and application will apply.

Kramer noted a law firm is attempting to serve a lawsuit on the city to bring the city into a dispute with Meeker County on the alley vacation. This has been sent to legal counsel and will be covered by the city's insurance.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger requested approval of PTO.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE GEISLINGER'S PTO REQUEST, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Next regular meeting will be Thursday, March 10th at 7 p.m.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADJOURN, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk