

UNAPPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2018

Mayor Eder called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Frank Eder, Tootz Tschumperlin, Sue Unterberger, Marc Wirz, Brenda Carlson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes from the January 11, 2018 regular meeting, January financial report, Resolution #2018-7, Resolution Accepting Donations and delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – Mitchell Mueller, 340 Central Avenue South, had a water leak that was repaired in December. He asked the council for assistance in paying the bill to Ron's Excavating. He was told it was negligence from 2007 street project. The leak was on his side of the shut off but after digging it up, it was found the pipe fitting was not installed properly during the 2007 project. Council viewed the pipe and fitting that was replaced. Ron's Excavating bill was \$2,350.48. The sidewalk will also need to be repaired this spring/summer.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE PAYMENT ON THE BILL TO RON'S EXCAVATING FOR WATER LEAK REPAIR, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Council reviewed ambulance service bills. It was noted the four back tires on the ambulance need to be replaced at a cost of \$940.00.

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

MOTION BY WIRZ TO REPLACE THE FOUR BACK TIRES ON THE AMBULANCE, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

City of Kimball Mayor Tammy Konz and members of Friends of the Library gave a presentation on a proposed new library for Kimball. The current library is at City Hall and they are somewhat limited as to what can be done there since it is a historical building. Tammy noted that Watkins residents use the library quite often. Tammy was not requesting any donation but did ask for the community's support of the project. There are grant dollars available through a matching grant. They will be doing fundraising to try and reach that goal. They are looking for people who are able to help their cause.

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

Farm land lease with Tom Landwehr - Wirz and Geislinger looked at the city land by the wastewater ponds that Tom Landwehr leases. Wirz did some research and thought there should be a value placed on the pasture land and the tillable land and balance that against the property tax paid. There is about 30 acres that is tillable and approximately 40 acres of usable pasture. Wirz felt the city should get values on the land and work from there. Wirz noted that Landwehr's pay the property tax so that would come off of whatever value they arrive at. Wirz had some information from USDA on cropland cash rent from 2016. Tom thought rent for tillable land ranged from \$150 to \$175 per acre. Council reviewed the USDA information and discussed. Tom noted they have done a lot of work on the land since they started renting it. Council acknowledged they are good tenants. Tom asked about first right of refusal. Discussion followed on values for the tillable and pasture land. Council agreed on \$1,000 rent on the pasture land and \$125 per acre for the tillable land or \$3,750. Total rent for all land would be \$4,750 annually, less whatever taxes are which are paid directly by Landwehr. Council also agreed to change the term of the lease from 10 years to 5 years and include first right of refusal in the agreement.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO SET THE LAND VALUE FOR LEASE AT \$4,750 ANNUALLY FOR A TERM OF 5 YEARS, LESS THE ANNUAL PROPERTY TAX THAT IS PAID DIRECTLY AND THE DIFFERENCE PAYABLE TO THE CITY AND TO GRANT RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Gravel lease with Landwehr - Wirz and Eder researched gravel prices. The current lease is .40/cubic yard. Eder found rates anywhere from .85 to \$1.75. Wirz found anywhere from .50 to \$2, depending on what the renters were required to do. Wirz found one that was .65/yd. with full restoration of the pit. The current lease does require banks to be sloped no more than 4:1 and for top soil to be returned. In 2017, there was 16,243 yds. removed. Landwehr pays the gravel tax. Landwehrs were agreeable to increasing the rate to .50/yd. Mayor Eder felt the city should go with a 5-year lease rather than 15 years. Tom asked about being able to go further south. Council viewed an aerial map of the area. Council and Public Works didn't have any concerns with allowing that.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE A FIVE-YEAR LEASE AT .50/YARD AND EXPANSION TO SOUTHEAST LINE, CHANGE THE PAYMENT TERMS FROM MONTHLY TO ANNUALLY, AND TO RENEW EVERY 5 YEARS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Tom noted that Steven now owns the farm and that both leases should be in his name.

Dan Gossman with Federal Warning Systems was present to answer any questions the council had on the outdoor warning siren quotes they submitted last month. Dan noted the current siren was used when the city purchased it in 1992. He estimated it to be close to 50 years old now. Dan noted the DC model would run for about 15-20 minutes after loss of power. Wirz asked what his recommendation was. Dan thought a lot of communities were going with the AC/DC model, but a lot do go with the DC model also. He noted inactivity is not good for it. Federal Signal was proposing a 130db siren. The current one is 125 db. There is a 5-year warranty on the siren head and 2-year warranty on the equipment. Dan noted a 55' pole would be sufficient. Usually the pole is dressed on the ground and then set. Right now, delivery would be about 4 weeks. Kramer Electric will be contacted about the power at McCarthy Park. No other action was taken.

City engineer Kent Louwagie discussed the 2018 street improvement project. While doing research for easements, etc. it was discovered that Joe Nistler, Sr. appears to own a portion of Western Avenue North, from First Street up to the mobile home park. Kent noted there are options to correct this.

- Mr. Nistler could convey the property to John Fritzke, [mobile home park owner] and then this area can be included with the mobile home park easement area the City is planning to obtain from Fritzke.
- Mr. Nistler could convey the land in fee to the city.
- Mr. Nistler could maintain ownership and grant the city a permanent easement.

Kent thought the city attorney may have an opinion on what would be the best option. Kent will wait to hear from the city on the matter. Kent reported soil borings were done in the mobile home park and there is a pretty decent base there. There is 3-5 inches of bituminous, 12-14 inches of gravel and then sand. Kent assumed that 16 inches would need to be removed but thought now the city should be able to reclaim the top 10 inches, blend it, pack it down and reshape. That is how the plans have been prepared now. This should cut some costs as it is less work. Edge drains would still be installed. The plans and specifications for the Highway 55/School Avenue intersection are done. MNDOT will be resurfacing Highway 55 through Watkins but it shouldn't matter which project gets done first as it would be matched in to the other. Public Works Director Geislinger suggested the city work wait until after school is out. Kent noted the construction window is June 5 to August 31.

Council reviewed Resolution #2018-8, Resolution Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids. Per the resolution, the bid opening would be March 6th at 2 p.m.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2018, RESOLUTION APPROVING PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS AND ORDERING ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Kramer noted the city will have to provide evidence of the actual cost of treatment for a rate increase to the Clear Lake Sewer District and will be working on this.

The annual fire protection meeting will be Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at 8 p.m. at the Fire Hall.

The annual Board of Appeals and Equalization is scheduled for Wednesday, April 11th at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

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

Tschumperlin left the meeting at this time.

Kramer noted the Watkins House lost heat at the building and a pipe froze and broke, resulting in a large water bill. Kramer asked for council approval to waive late fees while they pay this off. The owners are hoping to have it paid in full within 6 months or sooner.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO WAIVE THE PENALTY FEE AS LONG AS PAYMENTS ARE CONSISTENT, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Pam Loch's daycare business must provide for 2 locations to use for emergency evacuation. She asked if she could list the Village Hall as one. Being on the ambulance service she would have access to a key that is used to open the building for shelter from severe weather. Council approved.

Geronimo Garden – The city would save about \$300/year if it subscribed to the proposed Geronimo Garden just outside the city limits. The city attorney has looked over the contract and would like to see changes so the contract is similar to the one for the garden the city is already subscribed to. There is also a provision that the city can't subscribe to over 120% of its average energy consumption over the previous 24 months. Council approved to move forward with subscribing.

The Right-of-Way Ordinance that was reviewed a couple months ago has been reviewed by the city attorney's office. The attorney's office is recommending to adopt the League of MN Cities model ordinance. Kramer will have copies for the next meeting.

Geislinger reported the heaters have been installed at the Village Hall bathrooms. Geislinger also noted that he has been monitoring the water temperature at different locations and it's getting close to 40 degrees. When it reaches this temperature, freezing services lines become a concern. Paynesville is running their water and Eden Valley is considering it. Council reviewed the policy that was adopted in 2014 and the notice that was delivered to residents in February 2014. Council felt Public Works should make the call if and when residents should be notified to let their water run to prevent frozen service lines.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO FOLLOW THE POLICY AS ESTABLISHED, WITH WATER BILLS BEING ADJUSTED BASED ON PRIOR YEAR'S USAGE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Geislinger noted he met with representatives from Clearwater River Watershed District (CRWD) and MNDOT regarding the culvert on Highway 55 near Central Avenue. The culvert is frozen and there could be concern for backup during the spring thaw. The culvert will need to be cleaned out. Geislinger noted this would involve the city, state, CRWD and Meeker County.

Unterberger asked about the electrical updates for the theater group area in the Village Hall. Kramer Electric has been asked to get a quote to the city.

Carlson asked if there was going to be any more discussion on the warning siren. Council reviewed the quotes again and the options for a pole and installation. Kramer noted an application was submitted to Meeker Cooperative's Operation Round-up grant program for a pole. If a pole were purchased through Meeker Cooperative, the cost would be \$930 for delivery and setup of the pole and \$1,275 for a 55' pole. Wirz noted he would talk to Kramer Electric about the power.

Next meeting is March 8th at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer, Clerk

ATTEST:

Frank Eder, Mayor