

UNAPPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2019

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

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Others: Ashlee Lundberg, Emily Laumer, Jody Bauer, Bonnie Holthaus, Shawn and Julie Erickson, Steve Geislinger, Ron Welter, Vic Geislinger, Jeff Hilsgen

Kramer asked for Resolution #2019-14, resolution for off-site gambling permit, to be added to the agenda.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH THE ADDITION OF RESOLUTION #2019-14, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes of the June 11, 2019 meeting, June financial report, Resolution #2019-12, Resolution Accepting Donations, Resolution #2019-13, Resolution Approving Transfers, delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – Ron Welter and Vic Geislinger were present to discuss the renewal addendum between the city and the Clear Lake Subordinate Service District. They objected to the last sentence of Section II, b of the Agreement that states “Watkins is free to adjust the rates it charges its users at its sole discretion, without input or approval of the District”. Wirz explained this allows the city to increase the rates to its residents without any input from the District. The District’s rate would remain at 65% of whatever the city’s rate is and the city still has to give a 90-day notice of any increase to the District. After discussion, Ron and Vic were satisfied with how it was written.

Shawn and Julie Erickson were present to discuss the property at 261 Central Avenue South. Erickson’s live on Meeker Avenue South and their backyards abut. They stated there are dog feces on the yard, it smells and the backyard is a mess. A picture of the backyard was shown to the council. Shawn stated the dog smell is horrendous and they have four dogs. Shawn also noted it’s humiliating when they have company at their house. They asked what can be done with the property. They noted there was black mold on the back of the house and the owner just covered it with Tyvek wrap. Wirz explained the situation with another property in town and that it was a long process. Julie also noted there is garbage in the back. (This property was on the agenda and would be discussed further at that time.)

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

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE SECOND QUARTER AMBULANCE REPORTS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Jeff Hilsgen, present on behalf of the Watkins Lions Club, requested an on-sale temporary liquor license for a model race car derby event at the skating rink facility on September 14th.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE THE ON-SALE TEMPORARY LIQUOR LICENSE REQUEST FOR SEPTEMBER 14TH, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Jeff requested on behalf of the club to use funds from the Park and Rec Fund to purchase a batting cage to set up on the rink. Cost would be \$1,000. The Lions Club also approved to pay the difference between the group swimming lesson rate and private rate for children with disabilities. This was limited to ten children. The club would like to use Park and Rec Funds for this as well.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE USING PARK AND REC FUNDS TO PAY FOR THE BATTING CAGE AND LESSONS, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Jeff also reported the Lions Club would donate to the city to replace the electronic sign if the city could pay for it up front. Letters were sent to businesses for advertising on the sign at \$2,500 per space or \$5,000 for two spaces. There was only one response for one space. Council discussed and approved sending another letter offering at \$1,000 per space. Jeff noted the Lions Club is committed to donating for the cost of the sign so the city could move forward with ordering it.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO ORDER THE 10MM SIGN FROM SCENIC SIGN AT A COST OF \$47,320, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Tschumperlin asked if National Night Out was being handled by the Lions Club. Jeff noted he wasn't aware of it but would check.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #2019-14, RESOLUTION APPROVING OFF-SITE GAMBLING PERMIT FOR WATKINS LIONS CLUB FOR AUGUST 3RD, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ACCEPT THE MEEKER COUNTY SHERIFF'S MONTHLY REPORT, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Wirz noted the Fire Department advertised for a firefighter and two applications were received. The department recommended that Mark Kremer be appointed to the department. He has training from serving on another area department. A background check would need to be done.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF MARK KREMER TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT PENDING A BACKGROUND CHECK, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO APPROVE A THREE-YEAR AGREEMENT WITH MEEKER COUNTY FOR CODERED NOTIFICATION SYSTEM, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Fee Schedule amendment – Last month council discussed lowering the penalty fee for starting work without a permit for a commercial/industrial property to be the same as the residential/agricultural penalty fee of \$250. Pool manager Ashlee Lundberg also requested the council to consider adding a fee for the 2 on 1 private lessons last meeting. She noted there would have to be a stipulation that they be

siblings and her approval of the levels. Last year this fee was \$135. She suggested increasing it to \$150. She noted there isn't anywhere around here that offers 2 on 1 private lessons.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO OFFER THE TWO-ON-ONE PRIVATE LESSONS AT A FEE OF \$150.00, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO MAKE THE FEE FOR STARTING WORK WITHOUT A PERMIT FOR COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL TO \$250, SAME AS THE RESIDENTIAL, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Diffley property progress at 261 Central Avenue South – A letter was sent to Mr. Diffley in May asking him to attend the June meeting. He contacted City Hall that he couldn't make the meeting and said work would be done. After discussion, council advised Clerk Kramer to contact the city attorney and ask what the most aggressive option is to move forward with. Erickson's noted the dogs don't seem to get out a lot. They wondered about the urine and feces in the house and if the health department should be contacted. Erickson's also mentioned the mold issue and asked if that was a reason for condemnation. Wirz felt from the city's standpoint it would be best to take on the construction issues.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO TURN DIFFLEY PROPERTY BACK OVER TO CITY ATTORNEY FOR ACTION TO TAKE ON CONSTRUCTION ISSUE, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

The school district asked approval to install state robotic champion signs on the population signs. They have contacted MnDOT and were advised to check with the city. The Yellow Ribbon community signs are on the population signs now. The city did purchase these a few years ago and will remain on the signs.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO ALLOW THE STATE ROBOTIC CHAMPION SIGNS ON THE POPULATION SIGNS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

American Legion Baseball state tournament will be holding some Division I games at the Clipper Park on August 1st. They have asked if the city would like to sponsor an ad in the program.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE A ¼ PAGE AD IN THE LEGION BASEBALL STATE TOURNAMENT PROGRAM FOR \$185, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

CP Rail lease was discussed. A quote for the pollution liability was received. The premium and fees for one year was over \$4,000.00. Wirz spoke to someone in the insurance industry and was advised that the city would always be on the hook to buy it even if terminated the lease. Council discussed tabling to allow time to get an offer put together to purchase the property. Other locations for a park were discussed if the city is unsuccessful in purchasing it.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO TABLE THE LEASE AND PUT TOGETHER AN OFFER TO BUY THE LAND FOR THE AUGUST MEETING, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Parking lot improvements will be on hold until the matter is settled.

Planning Commission update – A public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, August 7th at 7 p.m. at City Hall to gather input on changing the minimum lot width, building setback line and rear yard

requirements in the R-1 District. Wirz asked about the Glenshire Estates property owned by the EDA and who would bear the cost to put in a road if these lots sell. Would it be the EDA or the city? Kramer thought the EDA was planning to cover the road expense. Wirz noted the city needs to know who is going to pay for the infrastructure and make sure the money is there. It was noted the lots in Glenshire are zoned R-2 and they may need to be rezoned to R-1.

EDA update – Tschumperlin reported the board has met with a developer about building an apartment building on the land owned by the EDA to the south of the former Meeker County EDA townhomes. There had been some issues with drainage in that area but Public Works Director Steve Geislinger noted that should be taken care of now. This is zoned R-2, Multiple Family. This would hinge on getting a workforce housing grant and the city would have to be the applicant. The developer is also asking for tax increment financing or tax abatement. Council agreed to do what it can to get housing going.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO SUPPORT TAX ABATEMENT FOR THE WORKFORCE HOUSING PROJECT AND COUNCIL SUPPORT OF THE MN HOUSING FINANCE GRANT PROGRAM, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Laumer noted something needs to be done with the property at 340 4th Street North. There is a camper in the front yard and the yard is a general blight problem. Laumer also noted the property at 530 First Street has hedges that are over grown between properties. Council discussed if this was a civil issue. After reviewing the Blight Ordinance, council agreed it could site Section 94.01 I of the Blight Ordinance.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO SEND A LETTER TO 530 FIRST STREET PROPERTY FOR GENERAL BLIGHT ISSUE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

It was also noted the property on 4th Street North has junk by the creek as well.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO SEND A GENERAL BLIGHT NOTICE TO 340 4TH STREET NORTH PROPERTY, SECONDED BY EDER. MOTION CARRIED.

Property at 230 Central Avenue South has some accumulation of junk again. Council agreed to see what happens by August meeting.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE A 3.2 MALT LIQUOR ON-SALE LICENSE FOR ST. ANTHONY PARISH FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2019, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Kramer noted Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors contacted the city about refunding the G.O. Refunding Bonds of 2013A. The estimated average annual savings is approximately \$16,000.00. Kramer noted Northland Securities is normally who the city works with on bond issues. Kramer asked if council wanted to pursue this. Council advised to have someone from Baker Tilly attend the August meeting.

Pool manager Ashlee Lundberg noted pool staff wages haven't been updated since 2011 and asked council to consider updating. She noted a concession stand employee could be making as much per hour as a first-year lifeguard. Minimum wage has also increased over the past few years but returning staff's wages never increased proportionately. Ashlee presented some recommendations and asked council to review. She didn't know if anything could be done any more this season but felt it needed to be updated for next season. She noted she was contacted by Annandale looking for lifeguards and they are paying \$15 per hour. Council will review at August meeting and look at updating for next season.

Ashlee asked if the council would consider reimbursing staff for the WSI course similar to the reimbursement that was done for the lifeguard training course. She noted she was in dire need of WSI's this season. Three staff members took the course. Two went to Hutchinson where the fee was \$257 and one to Lake Elmo where the fee was \$287. Council felt it would be fair to do the same as the lifeguard course. Council agreed to review at the August meeting along with the wages. Wirz noted he spoke with the school district about access to an AED at the Elementary School. It might be possible to get a key FOB to be able to access theirs if needed. Wirz would work with the principal on that if Ashlee is interested.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger reported the blacktop on Cedar Avenue North (the dead-end portion) is breaking up and asked council to take a look at it. A sewer line was repaired on 4th Street North. The city will be taking care of the black top there as it did for the one on Cedar Avenue North. Council tabled the dead-end street for now until the CP Rail lease and parking lot improvements are settled. Geislinger noted they could remove the blacktop in the bad areas and fill in with Class 5. Geislinger asked approval to order a paint sprayer for spraying curbs, etc. Cost would be between \$300 and \$400.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE PURCHASE OF PAINT SPRAYER, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Wirz will follow up on the retaining wall at the skating rink.

Jeff Hilsgen reported the Lions Club will not be taking over National Night Out, but will help as it did last year.

Tschumperlin noted National Night Out will be Tuesday, August 6th from 5 to 8 p.m. at McCarthy Park.

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

Next regular meeting will be Thursday, August 8th at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer, Clerk

ATTEST:

Frank Eder, Mayor