

APPROVED MINUTES  
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Chris Rowan, Tootz Tschumperlin, Marc Wirz, Brenda Carlson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sue Unterberger

Others: David Tysk, Kent Louwagie, Jody Bauer, Shawny Kramer, Public Works Asst. Keith Peters, Asst. Pool Manager Alison Olson, Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen-Krone, and Clerk Deb Kramer

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes of June 8<sup>th</sup> and June 29<sup>th</sup> special meetings and June 8<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, June financial report, Resolution No. 2023-18, Resolution Accepting Donations, Resolution No. 2023-19, Resolution Approving Transfer of Funds, delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – none

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

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

David Tysk was present to discuss his proposed housing project. They will try to start with 18 townhome units, rather than 6. Per the MHFA grant guidelines, projects must be done within two years. They would look at starting construction next May/June. He estimated 8 to 9 months to build. David noted some new stormwater regulations need to be considered. They will be surveying the property next week. David's civil engineer will then send the information to the city's engineers, Bolton & Menk, to review. The purchase agreement with the EDA was over a 5-year period. They would now be looking at 18 lots over a 2-year period. David noted their new apartment building in Dassel was at full occupancy in six weeks. This would be a tax increment financing housing project. A public hearing needs to be held after proper notice is published.

Council reviewed proposed Resolution No. 2023-20, Resolution Calling Public Hearing on the Proposed Establishment of Municipal Development District No. 9, the Proposed Establishment of Tax Increment Financing District No. 9-1 Within the Development District, the Proposed Adoption of the Development Plan for Municipal Development District No. 9, and Proposed Adoption of the Tax Increment Financing Plan Relating to Tax Increment Financing District No. 9-1. The public hearing would be held Thursday, August 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2023-20, RESOLUTION CALLING PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT NO. 9, THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT NO. 9-1 WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, THE PROPOSED ADOPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT NO. 9, AND PROPOSED ADOPTION OF THE TAX INCREMENT FINANCING PLAN RELATING TO TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT NO. 9-1, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

City Engineer Kent Louwagie reported there were two bids received July 12<sup>th</sup> for the Lift Station Improvements. Each bidder was required to submit two bids. One bid required compliance with all the requirements of using PFA funding, such as prevailing wages and American Iron and Steel provisions. The other bid was for the same work, except without the PFA funding requirements. Geislinger and Sons was the apparent low bidder. Their bid utilizing PFA funding was \$1,142,500.00, and \$1,138,500 not utilizing PFA funding, a difference of \$4,000 between the two. Kuechle Underground submitted the other bid. Kuechle's bid utilizing PFA funding was \$1,499,000.00, and \$1,474,855.00 not utilizing PFA funding. Geislinger and Sons was \$356,500 lower utilizing PFA funding and \$336,355 lower not utilizing PFA funding. There were 3 parts to each bid. The base bid is to construct all facilities as described in the plans and specs. Bid A is to demolish existing 2<sup>nd</sup> filter, intermediate tank and 1<sup>st</sup> filter structures and remove material from site. Final grading shall be completed to match area. Bid B is to rehab a control structure at the wastewater pond site. The control structure work at the ponds is the same work the city applied for a grant for thru MPCA in May. The council has 61 days to award the contract. Kent noted the city was successful in getting the MPCA grant for \$25,000 for rehab of the control structure at the wastewater pond site. He has been in contact with MPCA to see if the work can be combined with the Lift Station Rehab project. The bids for the wastewater site work were \$20,850 from Geislinger's and \$32,000 from Kuechle. Kent advised the city to talk with Northland Securities about financing and whether to use PFA funding or local funding. The city also needs to decide if it's going to add bid A for \$14,250 to demolish and remove the old filter, tank and structure and grade the site. This will need to be decided when the contract is awarded. Knocking down the hill at the lift station site is part of bid A. The city needs to find out what MPCA may or may not allow on its grant funding before awarding the contract. Council should be able to award the contract at its August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Kent hasn't talked with Geislinger's yet, but thought the project could potentially start this year.

Deputy Sandstrom was absent and no report was available.

Medical insurance – Carlson thought the city should consider offering starting in 2024. Some options will be reviewed at the August meeting.

Planning Commission meeting update – Dave Hokanson applied for a variance to keep the posts on the outside of the chain link fence he installed in May. City ordinance requires the finished side of a fence to face out. The board denied the application. Hokanson told the board he would not remove the fence. The board set recommended guidelines regarding John Kramer's proposal for mixed business/residential use in the Central Business District as follows: 1) no entrance to residential units from Central Avenue; 2) 25% of building has to be commercial/business and the business must face Central Avenue; 3) ground floor apartment in back allowed and upstairs units allowed. The residential units would have to enter from the rear and parking would have to be in the rear. The Zoning Ordinance requires 2 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit in the B-1 District. Council agreed with the guidelines. Kramer would need to combine the vacant parcels for planning purposes for the proposed building to build across the

line. The board agreed not to allow painted sheet steel to be used as deck skirting in a residential district, per the Ordinance regulations.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE COMBINATION OF PARCELS 28-0088000 AND 28-0089000 FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Council approved to send a letter to Dave Hokanson that the non-compliant fence must be removed.

Property & Casualty insurance renewal – The city currently carries \$50,000 in bond coverage. After discussion, council agreed to increase to \$300,000.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO INCREASE THE BOND COVERAGE TO \$300,000.00, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE A TEMPORARY ON-SALE LIQUOR LICENSE FOR ST. ANTHONY PARISH FESTIVAL SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

EDA update – Cole Jirik submitted his resignation effective May 31, 2023. The EDA board has accepted his resignation.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ACCEPT COLE JIRIK'S RESIGNATION FROM THE EDA BOARD, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

The EDA board vacancy will be advertised in the Voice, city website and FB page.

Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen-Krone requested to join MCFOA (MN Clerks and Finance Officers Association). The annual membership fee is \$50.00.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE DEPUTY CLERK'S MEMBERSHIP TO MN CLERKS AND FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

The Deputy Clerk requested to attend the League of MN Cities Clerks Academy in September. This a 2-day academy with some on-line preparation before the in-person academy. The academy is being offered in St. Paul and Staples. Cost of the academy is \$250 plus lodging. The cost of staying one night at Staples and mileage there and back is within a few dollars of paying mileage to drive back and forth both days.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE DEPUTY CLERK'S ATTENDANCE AND LODGING FOR THE CLERK'S ACADEMY IN STAPLES, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE MEEKER COUNTY ASSESSMENT SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR YEARS 2024 THROUGH 2027, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

The Fire Department was awarded a \$2,500 grant from CenterPoint Energy's Community Safety Grant Program. The grant will be used for LED lights for the fire trucks. Louisiana Pacific Corp will also be donating funds for the lights.

Deputy Clerk Jacobsen-Krone presented information to the council on the new Adult Use Cannabis law, Paid Family and Medical Leave law and Earned Sick and Safe Time law. Discussion followed. The League has upcoming webinars for the Cannabis and Paid Family and Medical Leave that staff will be attending.

Pool Employee Manual – Kramer noted the weather section states to keep out of the water until no thunder has been heard or lightning seen for 20 minutes. Most other outdoor weather guidelines state 30 minutes.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO AMEND THE WEATHER SECTION IN THE POOL POLICY TO KEEP OUT OF AND AWAY FROM THE WATER UNTIL NO THUNDER HAS BEEN HEARD OR LIGHTNING SEEN FOR 30 MINUTES, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Accepting credit cards at the pool was discussed. Council agreed to wait and set up for next season. Council advised to put on FB that it's cash only this season. Mayor Rowan noted he was still looking into options to extend the shade area at the pool. Council advised to try to set up a WSI course at the pool August 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>. This will be advertised and participants would have to pay upfront. The city would offer reimbursement if hired. Assistant Manager Alison Olson noted that most of the lifeguards are interested in taking the WSI course along with a couple of the concession stand staff. Olson noted the new lifeguards are doing well. The pool has had several private parties booked this year. On days when the temperature has been 70 degrees or below, the attendance is generally at ten people or less. There were 211 that attended the free swim day in June. The next and final free swim day is July 20<sup>th</sup>.

Establishing no parking on city streets – This must be done by ordinance. Discussion followed. Council asked Public Works to measure the streets that seem to be a problem.

Council reviewed the final Zoning Ordinance and City Code of Ordinances drafts.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 2023-2, ORDINANCE ADOPTING ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 2023-3, NUISANCE ORDINANCE, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 2023-4, ORDINANCE ADOPTING CITY CODE AMENDMENTS, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

A summary publication ordinance will be acted on at the August council meeting.

Mobile Home Park – The contractor that is staking the home at Lot 23 is supposed to clean up the lots where homes were removed last fall. It was noted that 3 more homes need to be removed. Council agreed to allow up to August 1<sup>st</sup> for the cleanup of the lots and if not done by then, a letter will be sent to the owner of the park notifying him of the violation.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger noted there are three sidewalk panels on Meeker Avenue South that were damaged a few years ago when a contractor drove heavy equipment over them to remove a house that burned. The contractor was contacted at the time, but never replaced the panels. Geislinger spoke with the contractor a few weeks ago but nothing has been fixed.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO SEND A LETTER TO THE CONTRACTOR TO EITHER REPLACE THE PANELS OR PAY FOR THE DAMAGES, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Geislinger noted staff will be changing regional safety groups for safety training.

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

Next regular meeting will be Thursday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. A public hearing will be held at 7 p.m. with council meeting to follow.

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

Adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer  
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan  
Mayor