

UNAPPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019

Mayor Eder called the regular monthly 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 present: Jeff Hilsgen, Jody Bauer, Becky Berg, Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, pool manager Ashlee Lundberg, Emily Laumer, Maicy Laumer, Fred Struzyk, Clerk Deb Kramer.

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes of the May 9th regular meeting, May financial report, Resolution #2019-11, resolution accepting donations, delinquent water bills for shut off and Meeker County Sheriff's report.

Public Forum – none

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

Jeff Hilsgen reported the ambulance service asked for a resignation from Amanda Krapf. She hasn't submitted it yet but the service voted at their last meeting to remove her from the service due to attendance issues.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO APPROVE RESIGNATION OF AMANDA KRAPF FROM THE AMBULANCE SERVICE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Becky Berg requested an extension through October for the use of the Village Hall for her nutrition club at the same fee. She noted it has been going well and is looking to extend hours to two days a week.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ALLOW BERG TO CONTINUE THROUGH OCTOBER, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE AN ON-SALE TEMPORARY LIQUOR LICENSE FOR THE WATKINS FIRE RELIEF ASSOCIATION FOR AUGUST 2, 3 & 4, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Meeker Cooperative is installing fiber optic lines along the same path as some of their existing power lines. In order to do so, they need to update some existing easements to include the installation of fiber optics, as their previous easements only stated electrical service. The fiber optic route includes the property owned by the cities of Eden Valley and Watkins where the wells are located. The easement

they are requesting follows the same route as their current power lines and covers the same area of the existing easement that was signed by both cities in 2012.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE EASEMENT FOR FIBER OPTIC, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION MADE BY TSCHUMPERLIN NOT TO WAIVE THE CITY'S MONETARY LIMITS ON MUNICIPAL TORT LIABILITY ESTABLISHED BY MN STATUTES 466.04, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Council reviewed the draft addendum for the renewal of the sewage treatment capacity agreement with Clear Lake Subordinate Service District.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO APPROVE THE ADDENDUM, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

The agreement will be sent to the District and Forest Prairie Township for their consideration.

Robert Diffley, 261 Central Avenue South, has started siding the house. Council agreed to table and monitor.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO TABLE AND KEEP AN EYE ON PROGRESS, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Meeker County Assessment contract – Kramer spoke with the Assessor and he confirmed that a new contract would be sent to the city when this one expires and would have new rates included.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO APPROVE THE ASSESSMENT CONTRACT WITH MEEKER COUNTY FOR ASSESSMENT YEARS 2020 THROUGH 2023, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Public Alert quote – Kramer reported the city would get 3,000 free alerts instead of 2,000. Voice and text alert count as one alert. Each household would be considered one alert. The voice alert would have to go through to be counted. If no voicemail or machine picks up it doesn't count. The city could do as many emails as it wants as those don't count as an alert. The cost for Public Alert is \$275. Meeker County uses Code Red alert system. The city would be considered an extension of the county. The Emergency Management Director thought the county's limit on alerts was quite high so she didn't think that would be a concern for the city. The county would still handle all EMS emergency event alerts. The city could use it for general notifications and non-EMS emergency related events. The rate would be based on population. The first agreement would be \$264.71 per year and 2019 would be prorated based upon the date the agreement goes into effect. Meeker County would help the city get set up.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO GO WITH THE CODE RED SYSTEM, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Council discussed replacement of the electronic sign. Council advised Kramer to find out how many spaces are available to advertise and then send a letter to all businesses asking if any want to advertise on the new sign. When the current sign was purchased 4 businesses paid \$5,000 each for advertising on both sides of the sign. Council advised to go with the same amount this time.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO SEND A LETTER TO ALL BUSINESSES ASKING FOR A DONATION FOR SCENIC SIGN, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Council agreed to contact businesses first before contacting the local organizations.

CP Rail lease – Kramer noted she was still waiting for a quote for the pollution liability. The rent would be \$2,195 upon lease signing and would increase 3% each year. The city’s liability insurance would also have to be increased from \$3 million to \$5 million. Council discussed making an offer to purchase the property but there are concerns of pollution issues and liability. Council discussed the liability it may be taking on if the lease is signed. Council advised Kramer to check with the attorney on the liability issues. Council agreed to table until it can get a quote on the pollution liability and check more on the liability. If needed, a special meeting could be called to act on the lease once the information is received.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO TABLE, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Planning Commission update – There were two violations for building without an approved permit. Letters were sent notifying of the violations and the penalty fee along with permit applications. One was a residential property and the penalty fee was \$250. The resident returned the application with the fee, penalty fee and a letter to the city. The resident stated it was a replacement of a “living” fence of hedges/bushes. Council agreed this was not a fence replacement and agreed the penalty fee should be enforced. The other violation was a commercial property and the penalty fee was \$500. The owner questioned why there was such a big difference between the commercial and residential penalty. Council discussed and decided the fee should be the same for both. The Fee Schedule ordinance would need to be amended.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO CHANGE THE FEE ORDINANCE TO THE SAME PENALTY FEE FOR BOTH RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL AT \$250, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

The commercial violation was tabled until the ordinance is amended.

EDA update – EDA board president Fred Struzyk noted that Stein’s Thriftway will close at the end of the year if not sold by then. Fred asked how bad the city wants to keep a grocery store. Laumer noted he talked to the owner of the store and thought there may be a couple of people interested or possibly a co-op of 4 to 5 families that would run it as a business. Fred, who owns Hilltop Health Care Center, noted the nursing home would do anything it can to purchase groceries there. Fred reported that Brodin Studios will be purchasing the lot the EDA owns on east Highway 55. There is an issue with an easement that needs to be cleared up before the sale can be completed. Fred also reported the EDA cannot find a developer for the empty townhome lots at Glenshire Estates that the EDA owns. Southwest MN Housing Partnership met with the city and proposed to build a single- family home there but had some criteria and the EDA board declined. The board can’t find a developer to build any townhomes either because it’s too costly. The city’s Zoning Ordinance requires a front yard width of 80’. Fred asked what the city’s aversion was to a 50’ lot vs. an 80’ lot. He asked if the EDA could try 50’ lots. Wirz asked if the city allowed 50’ lots would a road be built right away. Fred noted they would need to see if the lots would go. The EDA has discussed selling the lots for \$1 with stipulations. Fred thought all 3 lots would have to sell before putting a road in. Kramer will check if there is a way for a city to allow smaller front yard widths in the development than the rest of the city or if the ordinance has to be amended to change city-wide. The planning commission should start the discussion to amend the ordinance and hold a public hearing and make recommendation to the city council. The council

would have final approval. It was questioned if the lots would be open to a developer to purchase. Fred thought so, but they would have to meet the same stipulations as anyone else. The next planning commission meeting will be July 10th.

The meeting for the Community Foundation that was scheduled for May 30th had to be canceled due to some scheduling conflicts. The meeting will now be held Monday, July 29th at 7 p.m.

Council advised the Public Works Department to check options for the new hands-free cell phone law effective August 1st.

Doreen Unterberger requested reimbursement of \$132.38 for flowers she planted in the pots on Central Avenue.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO REIMBURSE DOREEN UNTERBERGER FOR FLOWERS, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Pool manager Ashlee Lundberg recommended a .25 per hour wage increase for all returning staff. Laumer noted he would be abstaining from the discussion as his daughters are employed. Ashlee also recommended that Emily Laumer be appointed as assistant manager. The starting wage for the assistant manager is \$11 per hour.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE A .25 PER HOUR INCREASE FOR ALL RETURNING STAFF, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. LAUMER ABSTAINED. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPOINT EMILY LAUMER AS ASSISTANT MANAGER AT \$11 PER HOUR, SECONDED BY WIRZ. LAUMER ABSTAINED. MOTION CARRIED.

Ashlee requested to reimburse lifeguards for the certification course they took as was done in the past. They would get ½ at the end of this season after working the full season and upon the manager's approval and the other ½ at the end of next season with the same rules.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO REIMBURSE FOR LIFEGUARD COURSE ½ THIS YEAR AND ½ NEXT YEAR PER MANAGER'S APPROVAL, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Ashlee would like to try aerobics and lap swim again in the evenings starting June 17th. Aerobics would be Mondays and Wednesdays and lap swim would be Tuesdays and Thursdays.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ALLOW THE AEROBICS AND LAP SWIM, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Ashlee asked the council to consider bringing back the 2 on 1 private lessons. She has families interested. It would have to be made clear that this is for siblings only and the same level. The charge for one on one is \$90. Council will amend the fee ordinance for this at the next meeting.

Ashlee noted there are children with disabilities that cannot participate in group lessons and asked if she could talk to the local organizations about donating to cover the difference (\$50) between the group lesson fee and private lessons. Ashlee noted the disability would have to be documented. She noted about \$300 would be needed to cover the difference.

Ashlee noted 2 new rescue tubes were ordered and she may need a new backboard in the future. Ashlee asked council its thoughts on getting an AED at the pool. She noted there is one at the elementary school but that is locked most of the time. The ambulance service also has one and the pool is not that far away. Lifeguards are all trained in CPR. The Minnesota Department of Health has never mentioned that it is a requirement to have one on-site. The least expensive one staff found was \$1,200.00. No action was taken.

Wage increases for the assistant manager and returning staff will be effective June 2nd.

Ashlee noted she reached the cap on wages last year that was set for the pool manager position and requested an increase. Council discussed removing the cap.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO INCREASE POOL MANAGER WAGE .50 PER HOUR STARTING JUNE 2ND, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO CHANGE THE LANGUAGE IN THE WAGE SCHEDULE TO REMOVE THE CAP FROM THE POOL MANAGER WAGE, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger noted there were no deficiencies at the pool during the Department of Health's inspection. Geislinger reported the retaining wall at the skating rink is in bad shape and asked council to take a look at it. Wirz noted he would have Jeff Wendroth take a look at it and get some ideas. Steve presented a quote from Preferred Controls Corp. to install a 7" C-more Display at the reservoir so public works can see the level at the reservoir and tower via computer. The cost would be \$1,700.00.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO PURCHASE THE C-MORE DISPLAY, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Geislinger reported there is an occupied lot in the mobile home that needs to be mowed. A letter was sent to the tenant as well as the owner of the park and the time allowed has expired. Geislinger noted he wanted a deputy there when the mowing is done. Council advised to bill this to the park owner and if public works doesn't feel safe not to mow it.

A zoning permit violation has gone to the court system. A court date was set for August to follow up that the resident did indeed bring the building into compliance.

Mayor Eder noted there would be some relatives of Eugene McCarthy in town over Valley Daze weekend walking in groups looking at family homes.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS AS PRESENTED, EXCLUDING THE BILL FROM CP RAIL FOR PARK RENT, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Next regular meeting will be Thursday, July 11th at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk

ATTEST:

Frank Eder
Mayor