

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2023

Acting Mayor Tschumperlin called the special meeting to order at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Acting Mayor Tootz Tschumperlin, Brenda Carlson, Sue Unterberger

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor Chris Rowan, Marc Wirz

Others: Jody Bauer, Shawny Kramer, Ron Kramer, Duane Peterson, John Kramer, Dave & Karri Hokanson, Randy Berg, Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen-Krone, Clerk Deb Kramer

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes of the May 11th regular meeting and May 18th special meeting, May financial report, Resolution No. 2023-16, Resolution Accepting Donations, delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – Randall Berg was present to follow up on the drainage issue he asked about at the last meeting. The city attorney was contacted and his opinion was this was a civil matter between the land owners. A letter was sent to Randy informing in of that. Randy cited language from the City's Drainage Ordinance and felt the buildup of the land will continue to trap more snow and his garage will flood in the spring. Dave Hokanson noted if the swale had been done properly, the water would drain. No further action was taken by council.

John Kramer was present to discuss a mixed used building in the Central Business District. He would like to have apartments in the Central Business District, but can only do so with a business in front. He attended the Planning Commission meeting Wednesday night and was advised to attend the council meeting. He is considering a laundromat, or some type of business, and questioned how big the commercial area needed to be. If he did a laundromat, could he have 2 or 3 washers and dryers. Staff is not aware of any regulations on this in the Zoning Ordinance. Council agreed the business would need to face Central Avenue. The residential units could go behind or above. A door facing Central Avenue leading to the residential units would be acceptable. Council agreed they need to discuss this further.

Jody Bauer reported that Randy Hesse and Stacy Hesse have resigned from the Ambulance Service.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATIONS OF RANDY HESSE AND STACY HESSE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE RETIREMENT PAYOUT TO RANDY HESSE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Dave Hokanson was present to discuss a permit violation letter he received. Hokanson put up a fence along his south property line without getting a permit first and the posts are on the outside of the fence. City ordinance requires an approved permit be issued before starting work and the finished side of a fence must face out. Hokanson asked for a variance to keep the posts on the outside. Randy Berg stated he felt the fence should be installed properly. Once a permit application is received, the city has 60 days to issue the permit. Berg didn't dispute the fence location, but felt the posts should have to be changed to be inside Hokanson's property line. Hokanson was advised the variance request would need to start with the Planning Commission.

Fire Chief Ron Kramer requested to purchase 6 air pack batteries. This way they can swap out the batteries and always have charged batteries in the packs. The batteries are \$485.33 each for a total of \$2,911.98.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE PURCHASE OF 6 BATTERIES, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Kramer also noted the limit for the fire department to purchase without needing council approval is at \$1,000. Kramer noted that doesn't buy much anymore and asked if the limit could be increased.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO INCREASE THE LIMIT TO \$2,500 FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND AMBULANCE SERVICE, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE THE WATKINS FIRE RELIEF ASSOCIATION REQUEST FOR A TEMPORARY ON-SALE LIQUOR LICENSE FOR KRAUT N' WURST FOR AUGUST 4 THRU 6, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

The Lions Club requested approval for an off-site gambling permit for Kraut N' Wurst, Saturday, August 5th.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2023-17, RESOLUTION APPROVING OFF-SITE GAMBLING, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Council advised to find out more information from the developer of the Glenshire townhome project on the request to pay the escrow fee in installments. Carlson felt there should be some paid upfront. Kramer will check with the developer and follow up at the July meeting.

Public Works Director Geislinger noted Mike Lease was going to get another opinion on what could be done with the drainage issue at property on Western Avenue North near the apartment building. Geislinger noted the pipe going across Western Circle is too small to handle the water that comes from Luella Street and down past the townhomes. The apartment building on Western Circle is not causing water to flow onto the Hokanson and Berg properties.

Medical insurance – Council requested the information received last year to review and follow up at the next meeting.

Planning Commission update – The city's liability regarding surveys was discussed. The city attorney's opinion is that requiring a survey would cut down on more expensive disputes down the road, but felt if

the city put a disclaimer on its permits that the property owner is responsible for knowing where property lines are that should be sufficient to protect the city from liability with respect to those disputes.

Swimming Pool – minimum temperature to open the pool was set at 70 degrees a few years ago. Council discussed and agreed to remove the minimum guideline and see how it goes. A quote for \$8,981.07 from Faber Building to add more shade was reviewed. This would be a 72' extension to the east of the existing structure. Council agreed to see what the Lions Club might be donating to the city Pool Maintenance fund. Council felt the city should purchase the necessities needed at the pool. Council tabled the shade discussion until the July meeting. Holding a Water Safety Instructor course at the pool in late summer was discussed or have interested staff take a course during the off season. If the course was held here, council discussed opening it to the public and having students pay for the course. Anyone hired by the city could then be reimbursed. Kramer will get more information on holding a course here. There will be 2 free swim days – June 29 and July 20. Council approved that no outside beverages of any type be allowed at the pool.

There were no major projects to request for the MN 2024 Capital Budget.

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

Juneteenth, June 19th, is now a state holiday. City Hall will be closed.

Council reviewed proposed ordinances. In Section 13.12, the Planning Commission recommended to remove "spas, and hot tubs" from the proposed addition to swimming pool regulations. The proposed language would be: D. Above-ground pools, spas, and hot tubs with sides or attached fences which create a barrier at least four (4) feet in height do not require an additional fence or barrier. Any entrance to the pool must be secured with a self-closing and self-latching lockable gate. Council agreed to increase the maximum sq. ft. limit in Section 2.02 from 1,500 to 1,700. The Nuisance Ordinance needs to be reviewed to be clear before adopting. Council felt a special meeting should be held to review all the proposed ordinances.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO ADOPT SECTION 13.12 D. WITH THE REMOVAL OF SPAS, AND HOT TUBS, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Council called for a special meeting for Thursday, June 29th at 7 p.m. at City Hall to review the rest of the ordinance amendments.

The city received a written complaint about the junk/garbage left at the mobile home park when trailers were removed. Geislinger felt there were some improvements being made. Duane Peterson noted he made the complaint and that nothing has been done there since December. He noted this has been going on for 3 years now and nothing has been done since the last trailer was moved out. Peterson noted he put some blocks on the plastic to keep it from blowing around. Kramer will check if the city needs to send a new letter starting the blight/nuisance ordinance process or if it can start enforcement actions from a prior letter sent.

Geislinger noted the neighborhood watch signs posted around the city have severely faded. They were initially installed by Meeker County, but they won't replace them. Geislinger noted one should be

installed on School Avenue if they city opts to replace them. That would be 10 signs at a cost of \$30 each.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE REPLACING THE SIGNS AND ADDING ONE ON SCHOOL AVENUE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Tschumperlin asked about making no parking on the west side of Meeker Avenue North from Third Street N to Fourth Street N. Discussion followed. Council tabled until the July meeting.

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

Next regular meeting is Thursday, July 13th at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan
Mayor