

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2024

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Chris Rowan, Sue Unterberger, Marc Wirz, Brenda Carlson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tootz Tschumperlin

Other: Jody Bauer, Heidi Donnay, Shawny Kramer, Chad Unterberger, Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Deputy Reggie Sandstrom, Nancy Schulzetenberg, Ryan Tri, Tony Faber, Spencer Faber, Maynard Walz, Chuck Unterberger, Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen-Krone, Clerk Deb Kramer

Mayor Rowan added Resolution No. 2024-12 to the agenda.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH ADDITION, 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 of the February 8th regular meeting, February financial report, Resolution No. 2024-9, Resolution Accepting Donations, Resolution No. 2024-10, Resolution Approving Transfer of Funds, delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – None

Nancy Schulzetenberg presented the 2023 audit report. The city was issued a clean opinion.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE 2023 AUDIT REPORT, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Council reviewed an agreement between the City of Watkins ambulance service and CentraCare Emergency Medical Services, Inc. (CEMS) for CEMS to provide electronic medical record services. Fees for this service have increased from \$2,800 TO \$3,600 due to changes required by the state.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE 2024 AMBULANCE SERVICE ROSTER, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE 2024 AMBULANCE SERVICE OFFICERS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Pickle Ball Court project – Chuck Unterberger noted the VFW has been discussing installing 2 pickle ball courts at the VFW Park on the north end of town. The VFW has been donating to a fund with the city for this purpose. A notice was sent to property owners near the proposed area to attend the council meeting to get their feedback on the project. Concerns of the location of the courts, noise, parking, traffic speed, current upkeep of the present park and future maintenance and upkeep were brought forth. Unterberger noted if the council didn't feel pickle ball courts were a good fit for the park, they would look at something else. Unterberger noted the VFW is looking at doing some improvements and upkeep at the park. There is no off-street parking there, but the VFW has always planned to add parking. Council advised that more research be done on pickle ball courts and discussed at a future meeting.

Tony Faber and Spencer Faber requested the council re-evaluate the water and sewer connection fees. They feel these fees are discouraging home construction. Wirz noted the council did lower the fees a few years ago. Discussion followed. Carlson noted she would bring this up at the next EDA meeting to see if the EDA could possibly do something to assist. A study of connection fees of area cities will be done also.

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

Public safety aid funds – this payment was received in December. There is no deadline to spend the money. Council discussed splitting it three ways - fire department needs, ambulance needs and law enforcement contract. The ambulance service and fire department will be asked to come with proposals for use of the funds.

2024 pool season – There are 5 employees from last season returning this season that are also water safety instructors (WSI) now and one new WSI applicant. Two of the WSI's will be on a school trip in June for 3 weeks. Council felt there could be 2 sessions held in June even with the reduced staff. A community sign up will be held at later date. All registrations will require payment at time of registration and will be on a first come, first served basis. The manager from last season has applied for the same position. There are 2 assistant manager applications. Council directed the manager to interview both of them. Wages were set at follows: Returning manger - \$19/hour, returning assistant manager - \$18/hour, new assistant manager - \$17/hour, lifeguards and WSI's - \$15 to \$17/hour with returning staff getting credit for each prior year employed, concessions - \$10.85 to \$12 per hour with returning staff getting credit for each prior year employed. WSI's will be reimbursed for the course fee, getting ½ after this season and the remainder if they return for a full season next year.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO MAKE CHANGES FOR WAGE INCREASE FOR MANAGER, ASSISTANT MANAGER, LIFEGUARD AND WSI'S, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Council approved to hold a WSI refresher course the last week of May. Staff will not be charged a fee.

SCDP grant kick off meeting – this meeting has been changed to March 26th starting at 5 p.m. at Village Hall.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE RELIEF ASSOCIATION PER MAN YEAR INCREASE FROM \$1,900.00 TO \$2,100.00, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE KEEK'S CONSUMPTION AND DISPLAY PERMIT RENEWAL, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE A 3.2 MALT LIQUOR LICENSE FOR THE WATKINS BASEBALL ASSOCIATION, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Planning Commission update – there was further discussion on a setback variance and a lot split or possible home addition. The board called for a public hearing to be held April 3rd at 7 p.m. for rezoning the skating rink property from R-1 to B-1.

MOTION BY CARSLON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2024-12, RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ON-SALE MALT LIQUOR LICENSE AND ON-SALE WINE LICENSE AT WATKINS BASEBALL PARK, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

A letter of support was also drafted stating the city supports the Watkins Clippers be allowed an on-sale malt liquor license and on-sale wine license to sell during amateur baseball games/events. No sale would be allowed at any high school events.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE LETTER OF SUPPORT, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2024-11, CERTIFIED COPY OF RESOLUTION FOR MN HOUSING APPLICATION, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE OFFICIAL CITY LETTERHEAD WITH LOGO TO THE LEFT OF THE ADDRESS, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

The city received notice that property at 121 Central Avenue South is in foreclosure. The City of Watkins 2016 RLF Rehabilitation Program has a repayment agreement that appears of record against the property. The city subordinated this agreement to Citizens Bank MN in 2018. The Sheriff's sale is set for April 25th.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO INCREASE ELECTION JUDGE WAGE TO \$15 PER HOUR, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger reported the 1981 sewer jetter jointly owned with the City of Eden Valley is on its last leg. The cities would like to upgrade to a 2006 trailer mounted jetter unit for \$16,000. There would be a \$3,000 trade-in allowance, so the final cost would be \$13,000, with each city paying ½. Geislinger also noted he would like to check into televising sewer lines.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE SPLITTING THE COST OF THE JETTER WITH EDEN VALLEY, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Wirz noted that something needs to be done with the property at 340 4th St N. The yard is a mess, vehicles, etc. Council advised a letter be sent to the property owners allowing 30 days to clean up. Photos will be needed to address the specific violations on the property.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO SEND A LETTER TO 340 4TH ST N, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Unterberger asked about cleanup of the mobile home park. Council will look at the park before the next meeting. It was noted the park manager is not aware of any homes scheduled to be moved out.

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

Next regular meeting is Thursday, April 11th at 7 p.m.

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

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan
Mayor