

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2023

Mayor Rowan called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. at City Hall.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tootz Tschumperlin

OTHERS: Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Kent Louwagie, Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen-Krone, Shawny Kramer, Bonnie Holthaus, Matt Geislinger, Mike Lease, Scott & Kayla Hesse, Erin Geislinger, Alison Olson, Randy Berg, Duane Peterson, Deputy Sandstrom, Clerk Deb Kramer

Mayor Rowan added Kent Louwagie and the mobile home park to the agenda.

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes from March 23rd special meeting, April 13th public hearing and April 13th regular meeting, April financial report, Resolution No. 2023-15, Resolution Accepting Donations and delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – Randy Berg contacted City Hall about his neighbor building up his property. He is concerned his garage will be flooded. Randy noted the swale still works, but if the neighbor continues to build up his land there will be more water with no place to go. The city will follow up with Randy on the matter.

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

A service estimate for \$2,516.25 from Lundeen Bros. Ford for a catalytic converter replacement on the ambulance was reviewed.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE LUNDEEN BROS. SERVICE ESTIMATE WORK, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Ambulance officers will meet with the city council quarterly, 15 minutes prior to the regular council meeting. The first meeting will be June 8th.

The ambulance service will be going to the schools for EMS week in May. In the past the service has given each student a free one-day swim pass. The service then pays the city for all passes turned in at the end of the season at a reduced price, which has been \$2 each in the past. The service is requesting 113 passes at the same price.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE 113 SWIM PASSES @ \$2 EACH, SECONDED BY CARLSON.
MOTION CARRIED.

Kayla & Scott Hesse will be purchasing the Watkins Liquor Warehouse effective June 1st. They requested approval for an Off-Sale license for the month of June and then for the renewal effective July 1st to June 30, 2024.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE THE OFF-SALE LICENSE FOR KAYLA & SCOTT HESSE FOR JUNE AND A RENEWAL FOR JULY 1ST TO JUNE 30, 2024, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Matt Geislinger requested to make a change to the meeting attendance requirement in the Watkins Ball Park Complex Joint Powers Agreement. The current agreement states a member of the board will attend city council meetings monthly during preparation of any future state amateur baseball tournaments in Watkins. If no upcoming tournaments, then quarterly attendance. Matt requested to change it to attendance twice a year, in April and October, regardless of any upcoming tournament. Council approved. Matt also requested if the city could mow later in the week so the park looks nice for Sunday games. The baseball association will not be requesting the on-sale liquor license this year.

Mike Lease expressed concern about a drainage issue at 550 Western Avenue North. Mike noted he built the house in 2000 and never had any problems with drainage. Since the apartment building was built behind the property, the current owner has been having water backup in the backyard. Wirz and Rowan will meet with Public Works to view the site and then contact the developer.

City Engineer Kent Louwagie reviewed the lift station rehab project plans with Public Works. There is an old building and a buried tank there and concerns of continuing to leave them rather than remove and demo. The plans already included the removal of the old building. They are planning to add the removal of an old buried tank to the plans. Kent suggested to get a price to see what it would cost to find out what's under the hill at the site. If the price is too high, it doesn't have to be done. Paving south 200' on Central Avenue to the city limits would also be added along with some storm sewer. They also talked about replacing air relief valves on the force main going to the ponds and improving some manholes as there appears to be some groundwater infiltration. The old system will be operational during construction. Once the new system is up and running, the old one would be torn down. Kent also noted the MPCA has a grant opportunity which the city could apply for to rehab the control structure at the wastewater pond site. The maximum grant is \$25,000 with a 25% match. Kent estimated the construction costs would be \$75,000 to \$100,000 plus \$10,000 for engineering. Bolton & Menk could put the application together if the city would be prepared to move forward. The deadline is Monday. Kent noted this could be added to the lift station project as well. He didn't know if the funding could be partnered with PFA funding. The engineering doesn't need to be done to submit the application. Kent thought it would take a couple of hours to put the application together.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE AND PROCEED WITH THE GRANT APPLICATION, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Mobile home park – Mayor Rowan noted the lots where the homes were removed last fall have junk and garbage in them yet. The park owner said the contractor that moved the homes out is supposed to come back to clean up. He has ensured the owner that he will resolve the issue, but hasn't given him a timeline.

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

Pool staff appointments: Manager: Erin Geislinger. Asst. Manager: Alison Olson. Lifeguards: Mitchel Hesse, Alexis Vossen, Madisen Becker, Brooklyn Glenz, Emily Kramer, Diana Wirtzfeld, Ruby Hesse, Olivia Kramer. Concessions: Tabby Butterfass, Chelsey Vossen, Brody Kramer, Aubree McDonagh, Blake Glenz.

Wages: manager - \$18/hour, assistant manager - \$17/hour. New lifeguards - \$14/hour, returning lifeguards - .25 per hour increase. New concession staff - \$10.59, returning concession staff - \$10.84.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE POOL STAFF APPOINTMENTS, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

The onsite lifeguard course will be June 2, 3 and 4. Recertifications and instructor training will also be done. The instructor could bring his camper to stay in over the weekend. Wirz will check with the school district about parking in their lot.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE ALL WAGES AS DISCUSSED, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

The city will pay for the lifeguard course. The two that took the course in Litchfield will be reimbursed in full this year. Opening day will be June 5th, weather permitting. Open swim hours will be noon to 7 p.m. The pool will be closed July 4th and August 5th. The manager or assistant manager will be required to be at the pool at all times and scheduling the hours will be between the two of them.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE LIONS REQUEST FOR A TEMPORARY ON-SALE LIQUOR LICENSE FOR JUNE 3 AND 4, 2023, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Planning Commission update – Randy Kramer submitted a variance application to add a lean-to to his detached garage, which would exceed the 1,000 sq. ft. limit. He also wants to build a greenhouse, which would exceed the 1,500 sq. ft. limit for two accessory buildings. He has started on the lean-to. The Planning Commission agreed the penalty needs to be applied. The public hearing and meeting for the variance application is May 22nd at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

David Tysk's request to pay the tax increment application fee in installments was tabled until the June meeting.

Northland Securities financial planning agreement for the TIF housing project was reviewed. Northland's fee for establishing a tax increment finance district is not to exceed \$10,000. Council is aware this would be a phased TIF housing district. Discussion followed. Council agreed it should be added to future purchase agreements that construction must start within twelve months of closing.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL PLANNING AGREEMENT WITH NORTHLAND SECURITIES, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

The liquor ordinance amendment will be included with the rest of the ordinance amendments.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE ON-SALE, OFF-SALE AND SPECIAL SUNDAY ON-SALE LIQUOR LICENSES TO BUD'S BAR, GORDIES BAR AND RED GOAT BAR & GRILL; CLUB ON-SALE AND SPECIAL SUNDAY ON-SALE LIQUOR LICENSES TO WATKINS LEGION CLUB ROOM; 3.2 ON-SALE, WINE ON-SALE, SPECIAL SUNDAY ON-SALE AND STRONG BEER LIQUOR LICENSES TO KEEKS, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Kramer noted there was a request for speed checks at the mobile home park. Council advised to have the deputy patrol the area more.

The resident at 540 Cedar Avenue North would like to add a paved parking space off the current driveway. No curb cut is needed. Council approved.

Public Works Director Geislinger noted when West Star Curb & Concrete poured the sidewalk at 120 Central Avenue North they didn't want to go straight because then the water would go toward the building. Geislinger thought there was a lack of communication when the work was done. West Star gave a quote of \$3,485 to remove and replace it properly. Discussion followed. Council agreed to get another quote.

Mayor Rowan will check into web cams and microphones for City Hall as neither of the computers are equipped with them.

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

Next regular meeting is Thursday, June 8th at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan
Mayor