

APPROVED MINUTES  
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, MAY 13, 2021

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

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tootz Tschumperlin

Others: Dave Hokanson, Karri Hokanson, Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Chuck Unterberger, Duane Finger, Ron Kramer, Mitchell Mueller, Jeff Hilsgen, Jody Bauer, Bill Lorentz, Duane Peterson, Jenny Rowan, Kent Louwagie, Chris Lease via phone, Clerk Deb Kramer

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE AGENDA, 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 the April 8<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, April 8<sup>th</sup> Board of Appeals and Equalization meeting and April 22<sup>nd</sup> special meeting, April financial report and Resolution No. 2021-14, Resolution Accepting Donations.

Public Forum – Dave Hokanson asked if there was a city ordinance on semi-trucks and work trailers parking on city streets. Per the ordinance, they are not allowed to be parked on streets from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. or for longer than 2 hours from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Hokanson asked the city to enforce the ordinance as there is a semi parking on Meeker Avenue North. Wirz advised Hokanson to call the Sheriff's office. Carlson advised to check with Deputy Defries. Chuck Unterberger noted they should be enforcing while patrolling if it's an ordinance violation.

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

Jeff Hilsgen asked if Rescue and Ambulance signs could be put on the overhead garage doors.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ALLOW THE SIGNS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Chris Lease noted the Red Goat Bar would like to have an event on Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup> from 8 p.m. to midnight. The temporary expansion ordinance still in effect states outdoor music must be off at 11 p.m. Chris asked if the city would allow it until midnight for the event. The tent will not be up. If there is rain, the music would be moved inside.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE MUSIC UNTIL MIDNIGHT, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Chuck Unterberger noted there has been some talk of pickle ball courts in the city – possibly at the VFW Park. He noted the VFW would be willing to contribute to this. Duane Finger asked about putting some in the skating rink. He estimated cost would be about \$1,000 per court. They could expand if it goes well. They would seal up the holes and be able to flood the rink for winter. Unterberger noted the VFW

will be moving forward to develop something at the VFW Park. It was suggested that maybe both clubs could partner together.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ALLOW PICKLE BALL COURTS AT THE RINK, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER.  
MOTION CARRIED.

Bill Lorentz noted vehicles at excessive speeds entering into the mobile home park by his house. There is a 10 MPH sign posted on First Street as you enter the park. Lorentz noted he has flagged down some cars and they said they didn't realize it was 10 mph zone. Lorentz asked if the city would consider putting up a stop sign on the northeast corner of First Street and Western Avenue South. There are stop signs on both streets coming out of the mobile home park at that intersection. Lorentz noted the speed sign is a little obscured by the power pole. Duane Peterson noted that ATV's, etc. don't obey any signs. Peterson and Lorentz had to chain off their back yards to stop them from coming on their lawns. Public Works Director Steve Geislinger noted the city might want to make it a 4-way stop. Geislinger noted the speed limit sign could be moved in front of the pole. Peterson noted it has really gotten bad this spring. Lorentz also asked about a junk trailer across the street from him. Wirz noted the city is working with the owner to clean up. Mitchell Mueller suggested asking for extra patrol around that time when there are issues going on.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO CHANGE THE INTERSECTION TO A 4-WAY STOP, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER.  
MOTION CARRIED.

Mitchell Mueller, 340 Central Avenue South, stated there was a water leak by his property. His driveway was dug up and the leak fixed at city cost. He noticed water in the basement from the northwest side and the sump pumps were running often. He had 8" of water one night because the pumps failed. Once the leak was fixed, all their issues stopped inside. They lost several things and asked the city for \$1,000 for damages and \$500 for loss of use of their driveway. Wirz noted he has never seen that done since he has been on. Wirz felt it would be a homeowner insurance claim. Wirz questioned if the city is liable for those damages. Unterberger noted she had an issue in her home after there was work done by the power company and it was a property insurance claim. Mueller noted they would like something to cover what they lost. They can't store anything down there. Mueller asked if the city knew there was a leak. Geislinger noted when it surfaced, it was visible. Yes, he knew there was something. Wirz felt the city should check with the attorney on this.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO TABLE TO CHECK WITH THE ATTORNEY, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER.  
MOTION CARRIED.

This will be discussed at the June meeting.

Fire Chief Ron Kramer stated that Kurt Nistler retired from the Fire Department effective May 1<sup>st</sup>.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE RETIREMENT OF KURT NISTLER, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER.  
MOTION CARRIED.

Chief Kramer noted they had two openings on the department and advertised for the positions. Four good applications were received. There are two more members retiring next May. The department would like to put all four guys on now. Eden Valley and Kimball are both adding members so they could hold a class locally for required training.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPOINT FOUR MEMBERS INSTEAD OF TWO, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Jenny Rowan noted the Lions Club would like to put up signs for the club. She checked with MNDOT and was told the city was at its limit for signs attached to the population signs. She asked about putting them on the pillars of the new Welcome to Watkins signs. Unterberger was concerned that the city would get more requests to put signs on the Welcome signs. Carlson asked if they could be hung on the bottom. Rowan noted they were open to other ideas. Discussion followed and council thought it was best not to put signs on the pillars.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ALLOW THE SIGNS WITHIN THE FOOTPRINT OF THE WATKINS SIGNS, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

City Engineer Kent Louwagie noted there has been some discussion on replacing the city's lift station and forcemain. The first step would be preparing a Preliminary Engineering Report. This would evaluate the existing system and look at rehabilitation of the system or replacement. The fee for preparing the report is estimated at \$10,000. Cost would not exceed that amount without prior approval. Geislinger noted the forcemain has been dug up six times, but the lift station is the main concern. Kent estimated complete replacement to be around \$1.5 to \$2 million.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2021-15, RESOLUTION ORDERING PREPARATION OF REPORT ON IMPROVEMENT, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Kent noted the railroad crossing might qualify for a Quiet Zone with supplementary safety measures. He would have to look at how it would line up with Third Street North. Carlson asked if the city wanted to invest in the expense of this if it's going to cost \$80,000 to install. Unterberger noted the train doesn't bother her. Kent noted he could do a ballpark estimate and then an estimate of their time going forward to investigate the matter further. Wirz suggested bringing it up at the public hearing that's going to be needed for the ordinance amendments and see what the public thinks. Council agreed to see what the feedback is from that.

Alley vacation – Council reviewed two resolutions for vacating the alley. One resolution would be to vacate the entire alley and the other would be to vacate the east/west portion only.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2021-16, A RESOLUTION VACATING ALL OF AN ALLEY OFF OF 4<sup>TH</sup> STREET NORTH PURSUANT TO MINNESOTA STATUTE §412.851, SECONDED BY WIRZ. VOTING IN FAVOR: UNTERBERGER, WIRZ, CARLSON, ROWAN. OPPOSED: NONE. MOTION CARRIED.

AED – Mayor Rowan noted the Lions Club wants to get an AED and put in front of City Hall. Rowan also got an email from a local business that would like to donate towards another. Wirz noted the Fire Dept. would maybe pursue this also. Council thought there may be a possibility of locating four throughout the city. The company supplying the AED's could assist in finding the best locations for them. Rowan asked if the Lions could put one in front of City Hall.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO LET THE LIONS PUT THE AED OUTSIDE CITY HALL, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

There was no information on the server and VOIP quote. This will be available for the June meeting.

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

Carlson reported she interviewed three lifeguard applicants and all were excellent. The city would have a total of 6 lifeguards with the three new applicants. There is no manager or assistant manager yet. Carlson suggested the city forgo the WSI certification for this season since lessons are not being held. The one application the city did get was looking for part-time only. Council discussed forgoing both the lifeguard certification and WSI certification requirements for the manager and assistant manager this season. Council agreed to advertise for a full-time manager and part-time assistant manager with no certification requirements. Geislinger noted public works would need a week to get the pool up and running. Ads will be put in area papers with a May 28<sup>th</sup> deadline. Council called for a special meeting Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at 7 p.m. to review applications, approve preparedness plan, discuss water aerobics, set a startup date and cover any other pool matters.

Carlson reported there is someone interested in doing one hour water aerobics classes 2 to 3 times a week. Carlson will talk to her and see what her rate would be.

Carlson recommended the city hire Alison Olson, Kali Torborg and Mallory Evens as new lifeguards and reappoint Erin Geislinger, Bella Butterfass and Ellie Field as lifeguards.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ACCEPT THOSE SIX APPLICANTS FOR LIFEGUARDS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Geislinger asked about a closing date for the pool as the annual MN Rural Water Association conference was changed this year from March to August. It will run August 24-26. Council agreed the last day for the pool season would be August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Council reviewed an Emergency Paid Sick Leave form to be used under the American Rescue Plan Act.

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

Clerk Kramer reported the new flooring is scheduled to be installed the week of June 14<sup>th</sup> and asked approval to close up City Hall as needed for the work to be done. Council approved. Council agreed to patch and paint the walls and leave the old fire truck fill apparatus as is.

Ordinance update – Council reviewed two options for exterior building materials in the B-1 District to be submitted to Justice Walker at Mid-MN Development Commission to include in the proposed ordinance amendments.

*EXAMPLE 1*

1. *Permitted exterior materials. The following materials shall be allowed as exterior finishes for all principal structures within the B-1 District:*
  - a. *Face brick, natural or artificial stone, cut limestone or granite.*
  - b. *Glass with a maximum light reflectance of fifteen (15) percent and a minimum light transmittance of twenty (20) percent.*
  - c. *Stucco, synthetic stucco or EIFS, provided that such material shall not be allowed within twenty-four (24) inches from grade.*
  - d. *Architectural concrete and adorned precast panels.*
  - e. *Color impregnated decorative block.*

f. *Steel and aluminum siding, wood, cement fiber board, pre-finished architectural metal panels with concealed fasteners only, with a minimum twenty (20) year manufacturer color-fast warranty as an accent material, provided that no more than twenty-five (25) percent of any individual exterior wall shall consist of such material.*

2. *Prohibited exterior materials. Unadorned pre-stressed concrete panels, non-decorative concrete block, metal siding with exposed fasteners, vinyl siding, corrugated metal as defined or unfinished metal or glass exceeding the values in ~~Subdivision 5-1-b.~~ above shall not be used as exterior materials. Painting previously unpainted brick on the facades of buildings is prohibited.*

#### EXAMPLE 2

*Exterior Finish. All new construction and alterations to an existing building or structure must meet the following requirements. Steel is acceptable provided the lower four (4) feet of the building's face (excluding windows and doors) consists of a material other than steel unless it's a different color.*

*Buildings shall be designed to prevent the appearance of straight, unbroken lines in their horizontal surface. Structures more than forty (40) feet in width shall feature breaks/divisions in materials, separate entrances/entrance treatments, variations in roof lines and/or variations in building setbacks.*

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO SUBMIT OPTION #2 TO JUSTICE WALKER, SECONDED BY CARLSON.  
MOTION CARRIED.

Trail follow-up –Wirz noted he didn't have any luck connecting with the owner of the farm land to use as a possible route for the trail rather than along Highway 55. Council agreed to move forward with preparing a grant application using the Highway 55 route.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO WORK ON REVISION TO TRAIL APPLICATION ALONG HIGHWAY 55, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

City Facebook page – Mayor Rowan checked with some other cities and found their administrator, clerk or assistant clerk ran it. Carlson noted there should be a plan for more than one person to have access. Council agreed that the admin rights to the pool Facebook page be changed from Ashlee Lundberg to Brenda Carlson. Discussion followed on what to allow on the city's page. It was agreed it would be for city business only, no outside advertising and comments would be turned off.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE A CITY FACEBOOK PAGE USED ONLY FOR POSTING, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Land use permit application – An application was received for an accessory structure over 120 sq. ft. to be used mainly for a dog kennel. The roof material did not meet regulations. Wirz felt the city needs to stand by its ordinance and the roof has to match the house if it exceeds 120 sq. ft.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO NOT ALLOW THIS BUILDING UNDER THE TOOL SHED RULE DUE TO SQUARE FOOTAGE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

EDA update – The board recommended the appointment of Cole Jirik to the board. He is employed at Hilltop Health Care Center.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPOINT COLE JIRIK TO THE EDA BOARD, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE A LIMIT OF \$300 FOR FLOWERS FOR THE PLANTERS ON CENTRAL AVENUE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

American Rescue Plan Act – The city is being allocated funds from the act. The city will need to certify to get the funds like it did for the CARES Act funding. The eligible uses aren't as restrictive as the CARES Act and the deadline to spend the funds is 12-31-2024.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPLY FOR THE FUNDING, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ 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; OFF-SALE LIQUOR LICENSE TO WATKINS LIQUOR WAREHOUSE; 3.2 ON-SALE, WINE ON-SALE, SPECIAL SUNDAY ON-SALE AND STRONG BEER LIQUOR LICENSES TO KEEKS, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

There are some old office desks and chairs not needed any more. Council agreed to put out for bids for one week. Starting bid at \$1.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADVERTISE OLD OFFICE FURNITURE FOR SALE WITH STARTING BID OF \$1, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Fire Hall A/C replacement – Geislinger reported Barry's Furnace and A/C submitted a quote to replace the unit at the fire hall but it's 16 weeks out. Wirz noted he would check with SCR. Barry will also check with another vendor. Council agreed to approve this estimate, but if the city can get a different unit sooner, this one will be cancelled upon approval of a different one.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE THE ESTIMATE FROM BARRY, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Safety concerns on Central Avenue – Kramer noted she had a phone call from someone about the intersection at Central Avenue North and Second Street North and a near miss. The caller was concerned about the safety at the intersection. Council agreed that violations for parking in the yellow need to be enforced and citations issued.

Clerk Kramer noted the automatic door opener at City Hall doesn't sticks on occasion and won't open. There is a one-year warranty and the company has been out a couple of times and made adjustments. They noted they may have to cut into the steel and then there would be additional costs to repair that. Council agreed it needs to work and to do what is needed. Council advised that Geislinger be available when the door company is out so he is aware of what is going on.

Kramer noted that Congressionally Directed Spending requests are open. Projects to be considered range from small to major infrastructure. The city could apply for funding for the wastewater improvements/replacement. Council approved to submit an application.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPOINT AARON DOCKENDORF, NICK MEIERHOFER, JACOB KRAMER AND JOE KUECHLE, JR. TO THE WATKINS FIRE DEPARTMENT CONTINGENT ON BACKGROUND CHECKS, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Public Works Director Geislinger thanked the VFW for donating the flags. They do this every other year. Geislinger noted the seal coating project should start around June 7<sup>th</sup>. They will be stockpiling rock at Glenshire Blvd. dead end. It was noted the sidewalk by Lynn's Diner is becoming a tripping hazard.

Geislinger noted they could grind them down. Geislinger noted sidewalks that are sinking may need to be pumped up again like they were a few years ago. Geislinger also mentioned that the stop sign that was just approved may need to be removed if it doesn't work due to First Street being more narrow and that intersection being so tight.

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

Next regular meeting is Thursday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer  
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan  
Mayor