

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2023

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

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

Others: Kent Louwagie, Chad Unterberger, Shawny Kramer, Jody Bauer, David Tysk, Deputy Sandstrom, Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen-Krone, Clerk Deb Kramer

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda: minutes from October 12th regular meeting, October financial report, Resolution No. 2023-34, Resolution Accepting Donations, delinquent water bills for shut off.

David Tysk updated council on the Workforce Housing Grant for the Glenshire townhome project. David noted the tax increment financing (TIF) assistance automatically qualifies the city to apply for the grant. The grant application period should be opening soon. David asked the council to consider adopting a resolution in December to apply for workforce housing grant funds. The resolution would state the city is applying for funds and is located in an eligible area. The TIF would be the matching contribution needed. If the grant is funded, David would like to use the funds to upscale the exterior of the townhomes due to the Highway 55 exposure. If not funded, he would scale back. David would work with the city on the application.

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

Payment for the ambulance service treasurer position will be followed up on at the December meeting.

Assistant Fire Chief Chad Unterberger informed council the department has been told that their emergency lights on the vehicles can't be seen very well when they are out on a call. The department checked into getting new LED lights on the vehicles. To replace the lights on four trucks the estimated cost is \$13,538. Chad noted the company couldn't give a hard bid on the project due to not knowing exactly how much time it could take to install the lights. The price could come in under the estimate or possibly higher. The department has secured donations from L-P for \$5,000 and \$2,500 from CenterPoint Energy for this purpose. They would like to take the balance needed from donations made to the Equipment Fund. Mayor Rowan suggested Chad come the next Lions Club meeting and request funds to help cover the cost.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO TAKE ADDITIONAL FUNDS FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT FUND, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

City Engineer Kent Louwagie updated council on the lift station improvement project. Work that has been completed or underway is as follows: Asbestos material in the old control building was abated last month, demolition is underway on the old control building and some of the old buried tanks on site, construction of the lift station wet well structure is underway, installation of new force main has started, installation of the new sanitary sewer main from the new lift station toward Central Avenue has started. The rest of the wet well structure, the valve vault structure and the air relief manhole at the lift station site are planned to be installed this week. The anticipated upcoming schedule is to finish the new force main from the new lift station to the existing force main connection point and finish the new sanitary sewer main from the new lift station towards Central Avenue, stopping short of the sewer main on Central Avenue. Construction for the season will likely end mid-November. Some miscellaneous work may be completed over the winter as weather allows, and as materials and equipment are delivered to the project. All remaining work will be completed in 2024.

Kent reported 12% of the project is complete and presented the Contractor's Application for Payment No. 1 in the amount of \$136,125.97. Bolton and Menk recommends payment in this amount to Geislinger & Sons, Inc.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE PAYMENT REQUEST NO. 1 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$136,125.97 TO GEISLINGER & SONS, INC., SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Kent reported on the change order for the lift station project discussed last month. The additional work would consist of additional sanitary sewer replacement on Central Avenue and installing a box culvert under the driveway to the lift station site. The construction cost to complete the additional sewer main replacement work is \$51,280. Engineering, permitting and testing would bring the cost up to \$64,100. Kent noted these costs are higher than discussed last month. Once the plans were put together there were necessary items that increased the cost. The proposed box culvert would be 5' deep x 12' across. Kent noted any box culvert 10' or longer is now considered a bridge by MnDOT. The city would need to comply with the state's bridge program requiring the city to appoint a bridge inspector that would oversee inspection and inventory, and maintain a bridge file and load rating records. The inspector would report the bridge inventory and condition to MnDOT. An initial inspection within the first 6 months of opening to traffic would be required, then routine inspections would be every 24 months. If the culvert is in good condition after the first two or three inspections, it is eligible to request an increase in inspection interval to 48 months. Meeker County would not do this for the city. Bolton and Menk does have staff for this. The estimated cost would be \$1,500 to \$2,000 every inspection cycle, with some additional startup costs getting the bridge established. This box culvert came from a state aid highway. Kent noted one of their structural engineers could take a look at the culvert to be sure it is in good shape. The construction cost to remove existing culverts and install the box culvert is \$75,977.50. Engineering, permitting, etc. would increase the cost to \$95,000. The total construction cost for the additional work is \$127,257.50. Total costs with engineering, etc. would be \$159,100. The additional work is eligible for the PFA loan. PFA would update the loan figure if the city proceeds. If the city were to install a new box culvert the cost would be about double.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2023-35, RESOLUTION APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 FOR MAIN LIFT STATION IMPROVEMENTS FOR \$127,257.50, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Sheriff's report was reviewed. Deputy Sandstrom noted he has been checking speeds on Central Avenue and not finding much.

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

Health insurance eligibility – Council agreed an employee must work 32 hours per week to be considered eligible for coverage. New employees would be eligible to enroll on the first day of next month following hire date.

MOTION BY WIRZ THAT EMPLOYEES MUST WORK 32 HOURS PER WEEK TO BE CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE FOR COVERAGE AND ARE ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL ON THE FIRST DAY OF NEXT MONTH FOLLOWING HIRE DATE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Council approved to move forward with sending a Nuisance Ordinance violation notice to 130 Cedar Avenue North. The Sheriff's Office will waive the civil process fees. The League of MN Cities stance is that the notices need to be sent by certified mail, not first class.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2023-36, RESOLUTION DECLARING DESIGNATED POLL LOCATION, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2023-37, RESOLUTION APPOINTING ELECTION JUDGES, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Winter parking – Jack's fees would be \$295 per tow and \$35 per day for storage. The city would be responsible for collecting the fees. Wirz noted he would check with another towing company and follow up at the December meeting.

Council agreed not to pursue the Secure Sockets Layer for the website.

Council reviewed the proposed 2024 fee schedule. Plowing/sanding private lots will be increased along with private pool parties and after-hours water reconnection fee. Final draft will be presented at the December meeting.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE SCDP GRANT CONTRACT AGREEMENT, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Rowan noted a public meeting for the SCDP grant program will probably be held after the first of the year.

Mayor Rowan called for a special council meeting Wednesday, November 15 at 6:45 p.m. to tour Brodin Studios business.

Updating the City Code of Ordinances will be delayed until the winter parking ordinance is updated.

Public Works Director Geislinger reported that the drain tile north of the Village Hall was damaged when Arvig's fiber optic cable was installed. This was repaired this week and Arvig will be responsible for the costs to repair it.

Geislinger noted there is a sink hole at 611 Veterans Drive. It appears to be coming from a sump that was installed.

Geislinger noted he has been looking for A plow attachment for the loader. He thought there was about \$16,000 in the budget for this, but costs are coming in around \$24,000.

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

Next regular meeting is Thursday, December 14th at 7 p.m.

MOTION TO ADJOURN, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan, Mayor