

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2024

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

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tootz Tschumperlin, Sue Unterberger

Others: Mitch Moe, Margee Theis, Paul Storm, Mike Lease, Chickie Lease, Jeff Babbitt, Reneen Babbitt, Steve Geislinger, Deputy Sandstrom, Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen-Krone, Clerk Deb Kramer

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda: minutes of September 12th special and regular meetings, September 30th public hearing and special meeting, September financial report, Resolution No. 2024-28, Resolution Accepting Donations, April 25th joint water board meeting minutes and financials and delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – none

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

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE AMBULANCE SERVICE 3RD QUARTER REPORTS, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Western Avenue North water intrusion follow up – Council reviewed a memo from the city attorney on the matter. The city attorney recommended that Mr. Tysk, owner of Western View apartment building, be required to complete the regrading work at the site to correct the elevated points to ensure adequate drainage flow to Western Avenue North before winter so the spring thaw doesn't cause problems. The ownership/driveway situation also needs to be resolved formally. Sale of the land, while retaining a utility easement, by the city to Mr. Tysk was discussed; however, the issue has been raised that the road may need to be vacated rather than sold. The city attorney requested authority from the city council to perform a more exhaustive title search to determine ownership history and status of Western Circle. Mr. Tysk requested the council reconsider the timing of the regrading and that it be done in the spring rather than before winter. Mr. Tysk felt the delaying the work would result in a more successful and durable outcome. Paul Storm noted that Western Circle appears to have been dedicated as a public road, so the city would have dedicated use, but doesn't own it and therefore wouldn't be able to sell it. Mr. Storm agreed the ownership rights of the road need to be determined. Mr. Storm agreed that it is getting kind of late in the year to perform the regrading work. All parties were in agreement to allow the regrading work to be done in spring.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE FOR THE CITY ATTORNEY TO PROCEED WITH ADDITIONAL RESEARCH ON OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY AND ADVISE THE COUNCIL, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

National Flood Insurance Program follow up – Council reviewed information on enrolling in the program. There is no cost to enroll/participate in the program. There are 637 communities in MN that are enrolled. Watkins does have 2 areas that are in the Special Flood Hazard Area. Enrolling in the program would allow anyone in the city to purchase flood insurance. There are also benefits in participating relative to federal aid following a natural disaster. Discussion followed.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE PARTICIPATING IN THE NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

130 Cedar Avenue North complaint – A violation notice was delivered September 26th allowing 10 days to abate the violation. The property owner has not complied with the notice as of today. Discussion followed.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO PROCEED WITH SENDING A NOTICE OF HEARING TO BE HELD AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO CORRECT THE UTILITY BILLING POLICY TO STATE RECONNECT HOURS ARE 8 A.M. TO 3 P.M., SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Lift station project update – The contractor is finishing up installing pumps and equipment in the lift station. Lift station and generator start up is scheduled for October 16th. If startup goes well, they will proceed with sanitary sewer replacement from the lift station to Central Avenue. They will divert flows to the new lift station and finish replacing the sewer main in Central Avenue. Road, driveway and site grading would be done the week of October 21st with paving on Central Avenue to be done the last week of October. Miscellaneous grading and seeding are also planned to occur as the project finishes up this fall.

Pay application #6 from Geislinger and Sons for lift station project work in the amount of \$116,830.05 was presented.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE PAY APPLICATION #6 FOR GEISLINGER AND SONS FOR \$116,830.05, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

EDA update – David Tysk was present and informed the board the housing proposal for townhome development at Glenshire Estates was awarded a \$499,000 grant. Tysk noted he plans to start construction in the spring. There needs to be clarification of who owns the common areas around the remaining townhome parcels. The board agreed to have the city attorney check into this. The tax records still show Glenshire Townhouse Association owns all the property. Brodin Studios wants to retain the parcel he purchased in Eastend Addition and will be forwarding a check for the payment due.

Cannabis – Jacobsen-Krone noted she spoke with the League and there's really no reason for the city to delegate its registration authority to Meeker County if the county will not be doing the underage compliance checks for the city. It's unknown at this time how the city would handle the underage compliance checks. Being 2 councilors were absent, it was decided to table discussion on cannabis zoning and regulations until November.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO TABLE THE DISCUSSION UNTIL THE NOVEMBER MEETING, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE 2 A.M. LIQUOR LICENSE RENEWAL FOR GORDIES BAR, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE APPOINTMENT OF FIRE CHIEF RON KRAMER AND ASSISTANT CHIEF CHAD UNTERBERGER, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2024-29, LIONS CLUB OFF-SITE GAMBILNG PERMIT FOR NOVEMBER 9, 2024 EVENT, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Watkins Baseball Club update – The field house is complete and the state has signed off on it. They are looking at removing the wood wall down the 3rd baseline and putting up a smaller block wall so people can see over it when sitting. The baseball board discussed improving the little league field next to the Clipper Field and asked if the city would consider contributing to it. They'd like to install a new backstop and add another one right next to it and a couple of loads of dirt for the infield. This may be an eligible project to apply for a grant through the MN Twins Community Fund. The school district or city would need to be the applicant. Council noted they'd like to see some costs for the proposed project. Kramer will advise the baseball club.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE UPDATED LAND USE PERMIT APPLICATION AND LAND USE PERMIT FORM, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Health insurance renewal will increase from \$1,456.53/month to \$1,666.16/month effective 1/1/25.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL QUOTE, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Council reviewed two quotes for replacing the ballasted roof at the joint water treatment plant. West Central Roofing quoted \$65,229.46. Horizon Roofing quoted \$59,950.00. The city of Eden Valley approved the Horizon Roofing quote at its meeting October 9th.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE QUOTE FROM HORIZON ROOFING FOR \$59,950.00, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

There will be a special meeting on November 13th at 6:30 p.m. at Village Hall to discuss regulation of small box discount stores.

Kramer noted City Hall will be closed periodically on October 23rd while staff is doing health care voting outreach at Watkins House and Hilltop/Garden View.

Council approved for the clerk and deputy clerk to register for the League's fall webinars. Cost is \$30/person.

Council agreed to send a letter to 240 Meeker Avenue South regarding a complaint.

Council approved to advertise a job opening for the school district on the electronic sign.

Public Works Director Geislinger presented a quote from Hiperline to repair and line a manhole at Eastend Addition that's been leaking. The manhole is over 17' deep. The quote was for \$10,641.60. Hiperline will be doing some work on the lift station project the week of October 14th and could do this repair at the same time. Geislinger noted the work could probably wait until next year. No action was taken.

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

Next regular meeting is November 14th at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan
Mayor