

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021

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

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Others: Dean & Jeanne Pearson, Matt Faber, Jody Bauer, Randy Hesse, Duane Peterson, Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Clerk Deb Kramer

Mayor Rowan added Lawsuit Defense Counsel to the agenda.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH THE ADDITION, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were September 9th special and regular meeting minutes, September 15th special meeting minutes, September financial report, Resolution No. 2021-30, Resolution Accepting Donations, April 29th Joint Water Board meeting minutes and financial report, delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – none

Matt Faber and Dean and Jeanne Pearson submitted a petition to vacate 2 utility and drainage easements on property they own in Faber's Second Addition. Faber and Pearson split a vacant lot that adjoined each of their properties. They are petitioning to vacate the 5' easements on either side of the original lot lines. Public Works Director Geislinger noted he had no concerns as far as the city was concerned. Pearson noted there are no utilities in the areas.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO CALL FOR A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE VACATION, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO HOLD THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE VACATION ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH AT 6:45 P.M., SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

The hearing will be held at City Hall.

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

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

The ambulance service will be transitioning to electronic run sheets. Paper forms will no longer be accepted. Assistant Chief Randy Hesse noted with this new format they will need training and support. CentraCare Emergency Medical Services, Inc. (CEMS) can provide electronic medical record access and services to the ambulance service. Wirz asked if this would eliminate some work for staff. Jody Bauer noted it would and they need to evaluate the position. Hesse noted the training, support and any issues would be handled through CEMS for the fee of \$2,800 annually. Council reviewed the Agreement to Provide Services from CEMS and the Business Associate Agreement with CentraCare Health.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE BOTH AGREEMENTS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Deputy Defries informed the council as of October 24th he would no longer be the deputy in Watkins. He has taken a different position within Meeker County. Defries introduced Reggie Sandstrom who will be taking over the post in Watkins. Council wished Defries well and thanked him for his service to the city.

Mobile Home Park follow-up – A letter was sent to the owner advising them of the complaints and asked them to come up with a written plan documenting how the park will be cleaned up along with completion dates. The letter also advised that the trees and brush around the vacant homes needed to be removed. The owner responded that they were bringing in a landscape company to assist with the cleanup. They requested the city's permission to crush the homes onsite as that would make the cleanup faster and more efficient. Council discussed allowing crushing onsite. Council agreed that the owners need to do their due diligence to get titles to the abandoned homes. It was also noted that there is brush growing up around trailers that are occupied or owned by someone other than the park but may be vacant. The Park hasn't been cleaning around any of those. Council agreed the city would not offer any assistance in cleaning up the property. Council agreed to allow the homes to be crushed onsite to expedite the cleanup. A permit form will be drafted to be used for each home to be crushed documenting the owner has complied with all state and county regulations and city ordinances.

Council noted the railing at the apartment building on Central Avenue North is now secure and the property has been cleaned up.

IT quotes – Council reviewed quotes from Quantum Data Systems and IT Solution of MN for IT equipment and on-call support services for City Hall. After review, council agreed on the quote from IT Solutions.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO GO WITH THE QUOTE FROM IT SOLUTIONS OF MN, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

Trail follow-up – Contact has been made with the owner of the agricultural land the city would like to put a trail through but he needs to talk with another party involved. The city is not prepared to submit a letter of intent for this application round. There was also discussion if going through the ag land would be the safest route.

Small Cities Development Program – Mayor Rowan noted Eden Valley received funding through this program (for owner occupied housing rehabilitation and commercial rehabilitation). Rowan mentioned he would like to see something done to improve the street lights on Central Avenue and rehabilitation. There is a Streetscape component under the Program. Eligible items include decorative streetlights, garbage cans, signage, trees, benches, ADA sidewalks/bump outs, and monuments. Council approved for Rowan to check into this further.

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

Renewal of Gordies Bar 2 a.m. license – Wirz asked the deputy about an after-hours violation and if the city gets notification on that. The deputies noted they got a call for a noise complaint and upon entering the bar, they found customers inside after legal serving hours. The deputies didn't know if the city would receive notification. Council noted that if there are any further issues, they will be looked at when the on and off-sale and Sunday licenses are up for renewal July 1.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE 2 A.M. LIQUOR LICENSE, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

EDA Update – Riverwood Realty will be advertising the Glenshire property. The use of the empty lot on Central Avenue North was tabled. That property will be removed from the city's website.

Kramer reported the city was served with a lawsuit on October 5th regarding the alley vacation. The League of MN Cities will be the defense counsel and has recommended Attorney Paul Merwin.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE MR. MERWIN AS DEFENSE COUNSEL, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE A \$350 CONTRIBUTION TO SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Kramer noted the city should have a final draft on the ordinance updates next week along with some information on setting fees.

Public Works Director Geislinger noted he will be having surgery in November and he would be off a few days. Bill Hennen would be available for snow plowing if needed.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO PUT BILL HENNEN ON THE PAYROLL FOR BACKUP AND PLOWING AS NEEDED, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Wirz noted he would be available to help out as well if the need arises.

Mayor Rowan thanked Margee Theis and Chickie Lease for putting the fall decorations on the Central Avenue light poles.

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

The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 10th at 7 p.m. (The change is due to Veterans Day holiday falling on regular meeting night.) The public hearing for the drainage and utility easements will be held at 6:45 p.m.

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

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan
Mayor