

APPROVED MINUTES
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

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

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Others: Jody Bauer, Shawny Kramer, Mike Lease, Kent Louwagie, Steve Geislinger, Deputy Sandstrom, Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen-Krone, Clerk Deb Kramer

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes of the August 8th regular meeting, August 28th special meeting, August financial report, Resolution No. 2024-25, Resolution Accepting Donations, updated water & sanitary sewer service application, updated Utility Billing Policy 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.

Mike Lease with the Red Goat Bar & Grill noted the bars would like to hold a Pub Crawl on October 26th for Halloween. The event will be from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Mike requested the main block on Central Avenue be closed again for the event. Mike has a crew lined up to open up the street and clean up.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO CLOSE THE DOWNTOWN PORTION OF CENTRAL AVENUE FROM 6 P.M. TO MIDNIGHT OCTOBER 26TH FOR THE PUB CRAWL, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Deputy Sandstrom noted enforcement was increased at the 4-way stop on Central and 4th.

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

550 Western Avenue North water intrusion issue – Wirz noted there was a site visit earlier today. The group in attendance was councilor Marc Wirz, planning commissioner Mitchell Moe, city engineer Kent Louwagie, city attorney Boe Piras, David Tysk and Scott Mann, owners of Western View apartments along with their civil engineer, Mike Lease, attorney Paul Storm, and Public Works Director Steve Geislinger. Wirz noted it appears to be a fairly easy fix to get the water to drain. Tysk believes he owns the driveway entrance. He built it and maintains it. It needs to be determined who owns the entrance, Tysk or the city. If the city owns it, the city would need to properly deed it to Tysk and get a utility easement.

Small box discount store moratorium – Mayor Rowan noted he spoke with the city attorney on the matter and there is a group that would like to have a discussion with the city attorney. Council called for a special meeting on November 13th at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall to meet with the city attorney to discuss the matter.

Chamber membership follow-up – It was discovered the city cannot be a chamber member after all.

Planning Commission update – The board reviewed a memo from staff about cannabis regulation. The memo recommended the city adopt an interim ordinance establishing a moratorium on new uses or the expansion of existing uses related to cannabis and lower potency hemp edibles businesses to allow time to study the new legislation and draft regulations for zoning and operation of businesses. The planning commission did recommend to the council to adopt the interim ordinance. The city has until January 1st to get regulations in place. The Sheriff's Office will not be doing the required compliance checks due to cannabis still being a violation of federal law. Meeker County Public Health may be the agency handling compliance checks for the county so the city may be able to contract with them. A public hearing is required before this interim ordinance can be adopted.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO CALL FOR A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE INTERIM ORDINANCE ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2024 AT 6:30 P.M. AT CITY HALL WITH A SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING TO FOLLOW TO ACT ON THE ORDINANCE, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Ordinance No. 2024-9, An Ordinance Amending the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Watkins by Repealing Article XXI, "Floodplain Overlay District" and Adopting a New Article XXI, Entitled "Floodplain Overlay District" was presented. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amended ordinance at which no public was in attendance. This amended ordinance that was drafted by the MN DNR, would allow for a non-residential structure or an accessory structure to an existing principal structure in a floodplain, subject to required standards in the ordinance. A conditional use permit would not be a requirement due to the required standards in the ordinance.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 2024-9, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WATKINS BY REPEALING ARTICLE XXI, FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT AND ADOPTING A NEW ARTICLE XXI, ENTITLED FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Enrolling in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was discussed. There is no cost to the city to participate. If there were severe flooding in the city, the city may be able to get some emergency financial aid, but without being enrolled in the program, there would be no aid to replace any permanent infrastructure that would be damaged, i.e. bridge, culvert, streets. More information on NFIP will be made available at the next meeting.

The city received a complaint about property at 130 Cedar Avenue North and the overgrown weeds, grass, and brush. The complaint stated neighbors are dealing with snakes and rodents and there is no visible weekly garbage service at the property. It was also noted when the dog is outside it barks all the time. Council advised to send a letter about the grass and weeds. If garbage is piled up and visible that would need to be addressed as well.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO APPROVE THE FALL NEWSLETTER AS WRITTEN, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

The city currently has a \$1,000 deductible on its property and liability insurance. The premium for the 9/23 renewal annual is \$55,921. The city could increase the deductible to \$2,500 and reduce the premium by about \$3,000. Council discussed increasing the deductible to \$5,000 if there would be a significant savings. Council advised staff to check on increasing the deductible to \$5,000 and gave approval to increase if there is a significant savings.

Personnel Policy – The policy was updated to include some recent law changes. It was recommended to include some language from the League’s model policy on improper deduction and overpayment regarding employees’ pay.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ADD IMPROPER DEDUCTION AND OVERPAYMENT SECTION TO THE PERSONNEL POLICY, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO UPDATE ARTICLE VI OF THE PERSONNEL POLICY TO PAY PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES TIME AND ONE-HALF FOR CHECKING PUMPS ON HOLIDAYS, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADOPT THE PERSONNEL POLICY IN ENTIRETY WITH ABOVE CHANGES, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Watkins Lions Club requested approval for temporary on-sale liquor licenses for a puzzle palooza event at Village Hall on October 12th and purse bingo at St. Anthony Parish Hall on November 9th.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE TEMPORARY ON-SALE LIQUOR LICENSES FOR THE OCTOBER 12TH AND NOVEMBER 9TH EVENTS, SECONDED BY WIRZ. MOTION CARRIED.

The 2025 proposed budget was reviewed. Proposed disbursements for the General Fund are \$808,958. The proposed General Fund levy for 2025 is \$318,204, the same as the 2024 levy. The overall proposed levy has a decrease of \$37,548 from 2024’s levy.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2024-26, RESOLUTION ADOPTING 2025 PROPOSED LEVY, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-26
CITY OF WATKINS
MEEKER COUNTY, MINNESOTA
RESOLUTION ADOPTING PROPOSED TAX LEVY

Be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Watkins, Meeker County, Minnesota, that the following sums of money be levied for the current year, collectible in 2025, upon the taxable property in the City of Watkins, for the following purposes:

General Fund	\$318,204.00
Economic Development Tax Abatement-Hilltop Health Care Center	\$9,437.00
Economic Development Tax Abatement-Watkins Leased Housing LLC	\$11,611.00
Economic Development Authority Fund	\$10,000.00
\$4,050,000 G.O. Refunding Bonds, Series 2019A	\$175,200.00

The city clerk is hereby instructed to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the county auditor of Meeker County, Minnesota.

This foregoing resolution was adopted this 12th day of September 2024 by the City Council of the City of Watkins.

Christopher Rowan, Mayor

ATTEST: (SEAL)

Debra S. Kramer, Clerk

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2024-27, RESOLUTION ADOPTING 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO HOLD THE TRUTH IN TAXATION MEETING DECEMBER 12, 2024 AT 7:05 P.M. AT CITY HALL, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Kramer noted MN DNR has an Outdoor Recreation Grant program that usually has a March 31 deadline. If the city would be interested in applying for pickleball courts it should start developing a plan now.

Deputy Clerk Jacobsen-Krone requested to attend a land use workshop in Hancock October 24th. The fee is \$30. Council approved.

Public Works Director Geislinger reported a pusher for the loader was purchased. Net cost was \$9,200. Geislinger reported more wood mulch is needed at the VFW Park playground area. Thirteen yards delivered would be \$676. Council approved. Geislinger also noted there is a leak at the pool they will be fixing this fall.

City Engineer Kent Louwagie reported there could be a potential delay with the lift station project. Xcel Energy is having some delays on materials and they don't have an estimate on when they might arrive. It could be a month or two. The generator has been delivered to Design Electric. Xcel's delay could push things out to November now.

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

The next regular meeting will be Thursday, October 10th at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan
Mayor