

UNAPPROVED MINUTES  
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Frank Eder, Tootz Tschumperlin, Sue Unterberger, Marc Wirz, Jason Laumer

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Others: Brianna Larson, Fred Struzyk, Jody Bauer, Bonnie Holthaus, Steve Kosbab, Jackie Johnson, David Tysk, Duane Peterson, Public Works Director Steve Geislinger, Doug Green, Jim Espelund and Clerk Deb Kramer.

Mayor Eder added Meeker Cooperative to the agenda.

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

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

Items on the Consent Agenda were minutes of August 8<sup>th</sup> regular meeting and August 16<sup>th</sup> and August 28<sup>th</sup> special meetings, August financial report, Resolution #2019-18, Resolution Accepting Donations, delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – none

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

Tires on the ambulance need to be replaced before the new ambulance arrives. Estimated cost is about \$1,200.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO APPROVE PURCHASE OF NEW TIRES FOR AMBULANCE, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Ambulance Chief Bonnie Holthaus noted the duties of the ambulance secretary have increased quite a bit. The service voted unanimously at a meeting to increase the monthly pay from \$100 to \$200 and asked for council approval.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE SECRETARY PAY INCREASE TO \$200 PER MONTH, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

The ambulance service presented the council with proposed by-laws and a proposed amendment to the ordinance regulating the Volunteer Ambulance Service. They asked council to review within the next month for action at the next council meeting.

Brianna Larson asked to have Central Avenue blocked off from Bud's Bar to Ertl Hardware and from Riebe's building south to the corner on the east side from noon to 1 p.m. Saturday for a bike run.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ALLOW THE STREET TO BE BLOCKED OFF FROM NOON TO 1 P.M., SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Doug Green with Baker Tilly MA reviewed a contract for services on the upcoming bond refunding issue with the council. The bonds will be paid for with levy and assessments. The assessments end in 2028; however, this debt goes out until 2044 so the city will need to decide if it wants to use utility revenues to service the debt along with the levy once the assessments stop. The savings, including fees, is \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year over the life of the bond. Doug noted if interest rates really go up over the next month, the sale can be cancelled and try again the next month. The current bond issue has about a 3% average rate so the city would be going down about 1%. Bids will be taken October 10<sup>th</sup> and the award would be at the October 10<sup>th</sup> council meeting.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2019-19, RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE COMPETITIVE NEGOTIATED SALE OF \$4,070,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION REFUNDING BONDS, SERIES 2019A, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

David Tysk from Meeker Leased Housing stated that he and his business partner, Scott Mann, attended an EDA meeting a couple months ago. The Watkins EDA owns the property behind the townhomes on the north end. David and his business partner are looking at developing the property with an apartment building. David noted discussion needs to be held on the land sale and the workforce housing grant. A water mitigation plan also needs to be developed. A meeting was held at the site with the developers, engineers and city public works director to discuss this. David noted there will be a need for a holding pond. David noted the general consensus was that it wouldn't be a significant expense for the water mitigation. This development project does hinge on being awarded a workforce housing grant. The city would be the applicant for the grant and must secure matching funds, one dollar for every two dollars in funding offered through the program. For a \$600,000 grant, there would need to be a local contribution of \$200,000. The land value and tax abatement could be used to meet this requirement. David noted there could be two access points. One from Western Avenue North and another from the private entrance to the townhomes-which he and his business partner own. Meeker County will need to give a value on the development for tax abatement. The abatement can't exceed 15 years. David noted they have staff that can assist with the grant application if needed. They would be looking at a 20 or 24-unit building. A 24-unit building would increase the cost by \$500,000. A 20-unit building won't be a problem to fit on the property. David thought the application period might open up October 1<sup>st</sup> with a possible deadline of November 1<sup>st</sup>. A hearing will be required for both the tax abatement and sale of the EDA property. The next EDA meeting will be October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Steve Kosbab from Meeker Cooperative and Vibrant Broadband stated they are bringing highspeed broadband internet to the community. Steve asked the city to consider getting broadband at city locations. They are extending member prices to governments, schools, etc. The installation cost for fiber is \$299 with a three-year contract and includes a router. Standard fixed wireless is also available with no install cost and no contract.

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

Kramer noted a new program called Meeker in Motion is starting in the county. This program is designed to bring community leaders together to understand dynamics of the county communities, create a shared vision to develop vibrant communities, make connections with area leaders and build on leadership skills. The program format will consist of 24 people who live or work in Meeker County and nine sessions held monthly from September thru May. There is a tuition fee of \$450 for each participant. There were two individuals from the Watkins area that were selected. Council agreed to pay the tuition for both participants.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE APPOINTMENT OF BRUCE WALZ AS FIRE CHIEF AND RON KRAMER AS ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO ALLOW THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO PUT FFA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP SIGNS ON THE POPULATION SIGNS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2019-20, RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING NATIONAL PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS AWARENESS DAY, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Jim Espelund reported he had a broken pipe under his mobile home in July. He stated the water went on the ground under the mobile home and that Public Works verified this. He requested the sewer charge be adjusted to his average usage. Geislinger confirmed that he did see it.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADJUST SEWER CHARGES TO AVERAGE, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Espelund noted in August he had another issue with his toilet and water went all over his floor and not down the sewer and requested an adjustment on the sewer for that as well. He did not have this verified at the time but stated that Steve could come over to see the damage done to the door and flooring.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ADJUST THE AUGUST SEWER CHARGES TO AVERAGE, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

340 4<sup>th</sup> St N and 530 1<sup>st</sup> Street properties. It was noted that the 4<sup>th</sup> Street property was good, but seems to have gone a little backwards again. The First Street property owner called City Hall about trimming the hedges. They were advised to do what they could as time allowed. Unterberger will check on the property at 4<sup>th</sup> Street North. Laumer will check on the hedges and see what they get done this fall.

Councilor Wirz left the meeting at this time.

Mayor Eder summarized the August 8, 2019 closed meeting. He reported staff performance reviews were done and council felt all were doing good jobs.

No action was taken on joining the Coalition of Greater MN Cities organization.

The city attorney made an offer on behalf of the city of \$50,000 to CP Rail for the park and parking lot. CP Rail responded saying it would forward on for review and pre-approval to continue negotiations on the sale. CP Rail asked the City to execute the new lease to avoid any discrepancy in billing while waiting

on approval and send payment for the lease. There has not been any further communication since CP Rail's initial response. No action was taken.

Planning Commission update – Mayor Eder noted Mike Klein has applied for a variance. He wants to move in a home on a lot across from the Manor and have a 2' side yard setback on the north side. Mike also owns the lot to the north. He has been advised there can be no further progress until the variance application is final.

A hearing was held in August to amend the Zoning Ordinance to change the minimum lot size requirements in the R-1 Residential District. The planning commission recommended that the change be denied and that a residential planned unit development be used instead for developing the property owned by the city EDA in Glenshire Estates.

**MOTION BY LAUMER NOT TO CHANGE THE MINIMUM LOT REQUIREMENTS IN THE R-1 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.**

A public hearing was held by the Planning Commission to amend Article XVII of the Watkins Zoning Ordinance, R-2 – Multiple Family Residential District, Section 17.01. Uses Permitted. The planning commission recommended to the council to increase the number of housekeeping units allowed in a row house or apartment building from 16 to 20.

**MOTION BY LAUMER TO ADOPT ORDINANCE #2019-3, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF WATKINS ZONING ORDINANCE, ARTICLE XVII, SECTION 17.01, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.**

EDA update – Jeff and Reneen Babbitt are purchasing Stein's Thriftway. They have met with the EDA and will be applying for loans through the revolving loan and rehab loan programs. There may be a possible developer for the townhome pads at Glenshire Estates and a possible buyer for the highway property near Glenshire Estates.

Council reviewed the 2020 proposed levy and budget. The proposed taxes to be collected in 2020 would remain at \$315,231 for the General Fund. The city would also levy for two tax abatements in the amount of \$39,918, \$20,000 for the EDA and \$165,200 for debt service.

**MOTION BY LAUMER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2019-21, RESOLUTION ADOPTING PROPOSED TAX LEVY, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.**

RESOLUTION #2019-21  
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 2020, upon the taxable property in the City of Watkins, for the following purposes:

General Fund	\$315,231.00
Economic Development Tax Abatement-Mies Outland	\$25,000.00
Economic Development Tax Abatement-Hilltop Health Care Center	\$14,918.00
Economic Development Authority Fund	\$20,000.00
\$4,725,000 G.O. Refunding Bonds, Series 2013A	\$165,200.00

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 12<sup>th</sup> day of September 2019 by the City Council of the City of Watkins.

ATTEST: (SEAL)  
Frank Eder, Mayor

Debra S. Kramer, Clerk

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ADOPT RESOLUTION #2019-22, RESOLUTION ADOPTING PROPOSED BUDGET, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Council will hold the truth in taxation discussion at its December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting at 7:05 p.m. at City Hall.

City Hall hours were discussed. Council tabled until the October meeting so Councilor Wirz can be part of the discussion.

There are some concessions left over at the pool. Council discussed selling to the Lions Club at cost for an upcoming event and donate the rest to the Ertl family for Alayna's Halloween birthday party.

MOTION BY UNTERBERGER TO SELL LEFTOVER CONCESSIONS TO THE LIONS CLUB AND DONATE THE REST TO THE HALLOWEEN BIRTHDAY PARTY, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Kramer noted the CodeRED notification is moving forward. Residents will be able to "opt-in" to the program to receive non-emergency notifications by land line, cell phone, text and email. A mailing will be going out soon asking for the necessary information.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger noted they are waiting for the contractor to start digging at the pool. A quote from Kramer Electric for \$1,090 to install additional lighting at the maintenance garage on School Avenue was approved. Landscaping Plus submitted a quote for \$1,792 to repair the retaining wall at the skating rink.

MOTION BY LAUMER TO APPROVE THE QUOTE FROM LANDSCAPING PLUS, SECONDED BY UNTERBERGER. MOTION CARRIED.

Geislinger reported the instrument panel at the reservoir is from 1953 and needs to be replaced. Kramer Electric would work with Xcel Energy on this and also raise the wire outside the building. The total cost would be \$5,621, which includes Xcel Energy's fee.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO PROCEED WITH THE ELECTRICAL WORK AT THE RESERVOIR, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

Geislinger also noted a couple poles at the water tower building are pulling the conduit away. He has contacted Kramer Electric about repairing this and going underground with the electrical.

Council approved to purchase 2 caster wheels with brackets for the plow truck at a cost of \$2,300.

Geislinger discussed full online control of the irrigators. Hydro Engineering quoted \$9,600 for 4 pivot control kits, 4 transducer kits, installation and one-year subscription. This would allow full online control of end guns, direction, start, stop and sectional variable rate with a smart phone. Hydro also quoted another option that would allow monitoring of the pivots and text alert only for \$1,965. First year subscription is included in that price. Geislinger noted this could wait until next year.

The Chamber had a successful pool carnival fundraiser. Approximately 150-200 people attended. The net profit was \$700 and local businesses donated \$1,300 for a total of \$2,000. The Chamber is retaining \$500 for next year's fundraiser. The pool manager gave the Chamber some ideas of items needed at the pool. The Chamber will purchase this equipment in the spring before the pool opens.

Tschumperlin discussed wage increases for staff and felt Jeanette Neidhardt should receive more than the 4% increase in 2020. Jeanette is currently at \$14.34 per hour.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO INCREASE JEANETTE NEIDHARDT'S WAGE TO \$15.50 IN 2020 AND A 4% INCREASE FOR 2021, SECONDED BY LAUMER. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Next regular meeting will be Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

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

Adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer  
Clerk

ATTEST:

Frank Eder  
Mayor