

## Finlayson City Council – Regular Meeting

Finlayson City Hall

August 12, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.

The regular city council meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Monday, August 12, 2024 by Mayor Dave Auchter, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**All Council Members present:** Kim Schaefer, Russell Lucht, Joe Okun, Barb Morgan.

**Others present:** John Mikrot, Wyatt Lucht, Joe Luedtke, Randy Millner, Cary and Elaine Steeg, Marge Haefner, Mark and Judy Reiling, Ed Palmer.

**Additions or Corrections:** Add P-X on agenda: Hiring process, clerks; Resolution for Northview Bank; Aquarius HVAC; CD purchase at 5%; Annual financial reports to state auditor due date; Cannabis law info; PCAWS; City Hall Coverage for 8-13-24; Bollig Meeting 8-15-24

**Petitions/Compliments/Complaints:** None

**Public Comments:** None

### Approval of Meeting Minutes and bills to be paid

- A. A motion was made by Schaefer to approve the July 8, 2024 regular city council minutes. Second by Lucht. All in favor. Motion carried.
- B. A motion was made by Okun to approve the July 22, 2024 emergency council meeting minutes. Second by Schaefer. All in favor. Motion carried.
- C. A motion was made by Schaefer to approve the August 2, 2024 special council meeting minutes but amend to show minutes were recorded by Dawn Tasler, Deputy Clerk and transcribed by Shelly Goodman, City Clerk, and that Auchter asked Tasler if she was interested in staying on as Deputy Clerk at her current wage. Tasler declined. Second by Okun. All in favor. Motion carried.
- D. A motion was made by Schaefer to pay the July bills. Second by Lucht. All in favor. Motion carried.

### Reports:

- A. **John Mikrot, Water/Sewer Operator:** Mikrot reports the hydrants by the school are fixed, MN Rural water helped with this. Three solenoids are needed to run air vents on in water plant. Mikrot discussed his contract with the council, which is due for renewal. Mikrot is proposing a 2 ½% increase for each of the three years (first year \$137.50) for regular hours (7 a.m. – 5 p.m.); hourly rate going from \$25/hr to \$50/hr (5 p.m. – 7 a.m.); jetting 1/3 of the city's sanitary sewer lines per year at the rate of \$200/hr. Motion made by Okun to approve Mikrot's proposal with the effective date beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2027. Second by Schaefer. All in favor. Motion carried.  
Okun stated some contractors would like access to water from the city's hydrants. Mikrot feels allowing such could possibly cause unnecessary problems for the city, such as possible contamination of the city's water source. Also a back flow valve would be mandatory, along with other regulations. City will not allow.

- B. **Randy Millner, Public Works:** Streets and sidewalks have been sprayed. Randy seeded the hill area by bike trail with 13 different varieties of flowers that will bloom at various times in

spring/summer/fall. Street signs were discussed. They are on order; price does not include installation or freight. The money received for this must be used for public safety. If any remaining funds, city may look at purchasing speed bumps or strips. Lucht will follow-up on the installation of the street signs.

Millner will work towards obtaining his CDL. The City of Finlayson pays for Millner to obtain the CDL, and requires Millner to stay employed with the City for 3 years following the completion of CDL. Millner would be required to pay back if obligations not met as explained in his October 25, 2023 letter of employment confirmation. At this point Millner has declined pay increase upon completion. May discuss at future date.

- C. **Joe Luedtke, Liquor Store Manager:** Luedtke reports July Liquor Store profit of \$30,562.35. Luedtke has dismissed an employee of duties. He will be looking to hire another bartender and cook. He thanked councilor Schaefer for her help in the kitchen recently when unexpectedly short of staff. Luedtke has been looking at financial reports and will be increasing food prices. Luedtke is considering replacing TV's in the Liquor Store at a cost of approximately \$1500 for 3 TV's. Council encouraged keeping an eye on budget when making purchases. Morgan requested that Luedtke get invoices from the people who are hired to do entertainment and give to City Clerk for payment. Invoice needs to come from them with price, date, name, Social Security number and address. Proper information is needed for records so W9's/1099's can be sent at end of year.

Schaefer asked about a safety plan for if/when needed. Concerns about less than desirable situations have arisen and there should be a plan in place to keep employees safe.

A Liquor Store patron has been banned for 6 months due to ongoing situations. A letter was sent to him stating this and stating the city does not tolerate such behavior. If further issues occur necessary actions will be taken.

Luedtke's pay was addressed. He has not been paid what he was hired at when he steps in to bartend or cook. This was not the intention when hired as a working manager. Going forward, Luedtke will receive the rate of pay he was hired at.

Kitchen hours have been cut back on a couple days. Sunday kitchen is open until 6 p.m., Monday, 6 p.m., Friday hours were extended to 9 p.m.

- D. **Wyatt Lucht, Fire Chief, Fire & Rescue Department:** There were 24 calls in July. Twenty-one were medical, three were fire, one being mutual aid with Sandstone. A total of 176 ½ hours, with the average being 45 hours per week. Lucht stated Wagner Township has received a rough draft of the amount of their township's Fire Protection fee. Lucht informed the council the FFR is in need of more SCBA equipment.
- E. **Administrator Report:** Due to resignation of City Clerk and Deputy Clerk effective August 2, 2024, there is no City Clerk report.
- F. **Planning and Zoning:** P & Z Committee met August 5, 2024. Mayor Auchter read recommendations from them. The \$20,000 Blandin Grant must be used for the Comprehensive Plan. A proposal from East Central Regional Development Commission of \$10,800. For this they will provide approximately 120 hours of service to us doing such things as preparing surveys, holding public meetings, statistical analysis, and what is needed to fit our comprehensive plan. They will not make ordinances. They will gather information and publish. The information from the public will help design the city's ordinances. The deadline is August 1, 2025, but it will be extended to December 2025. Motion was made by

Morgan to accept contract with ECRDC for the Comprehensive Plan, to be paid for with funds by the Blandin Foundation. Second by Lucht. All in favor. Motion carried.

Regarding blight – P & Z will wait until their September meeting for revisions and recommendations will then be made to the city. The childcare facility that will be opening in the Finlayson Elementary School will be inspected by the State Building Inspector. It is zoned R-1 and may need a conditional use permit. P & Z will refer to the zoning ordinance.

Mayor Auchter spoke of some possibilities to secure funding through Lakes & Pines for blight issues. Possible forgivable loans, somewhat income based. DEED grants are another possibility, half being a grant, the other half is forgivable. These must be used for structures.

Okun has done site reviews for construction permits. He volunteered to do this and will continue. Okun stated he would like to resign as the council liaison due to lack of time to dedicate to the position. After discussion, Mayor Auchter volunteered to be the liaison.

Building Permit for Mark Reiling, Sr. – Motion made by Schaefer to approve Building Permit # 10058. Fee has been paid. Second by Auchter. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Old Business:**

- A. Fire Contracts are tentatively complete. City is waiting on the tax capacity from Aitkin and Pine County.
- B. Speed Limit Signs – discussed in Public Works section. Lucht will follow-up
- C. City Clerk & Deputy Clerk job descriptions. Motion made by Okun to adopt the revised City Clerk & Deputy Clerk job descriptions. Second by Lucht. All in favor. Motion carried.
- D. Drainage Ditch by Water Avenue, Broadway & School Street. No action needed.
- E. Northern Contractors WAC/SAC – Postponed
- F. Schaefer Memorial Park – Postponed.

### **New Business:**

- A. Front Office (Table Talk Outreach (TTO) rental extension: Request made by Haefner/Boyd to extend the rental agreement through December 2024. They will be given first right of refusal beyond that date. Motion by Okun to extend at rental rate on contract. Second by Schaefer. All in Favor. Motion carried.
- B. John Mikrot Contract – see under Mikrot Water/Sewer Operator report above.
- C. Rick Palmer Building Permit – approved by the Planning and Zoning Committee. Motion made by Morgan to accept building permit #10057 contingent upon payment. Second by Schaefer. All in favor. Motion carried.
- D. Using fire hydrants for a fee by businesses. Denied. See Water/Sewer Operator report above.
- E. Resurfacing on Broadway near DSE – Rocon cost \$1500. Postpone pending further research.
- F. Sewer coverage fee for irrigation systems and pools – city resident has installed irrigation system. Is requesting decrease on water bill as that water doesn't go down sewer. It is currently not metered. Postpone until more information can be gathered.
- G. Millner CDL – see under Public Works
- H – L. Donations for Finlayson Fire Department – Total amount of \$1207.13. Motion made by Schaefer to accept Resolutions 2024-15 through 2024-19 totalling \$1207.13 with thanks and appreciation. Second by Morgan. All in favor. Motion carried.
- M. Watering flower beds around town: Millner, Public Works will water flower beds.

- N.** Sportsmen Club Gun Raffle: Motion made by Schaefer to approve the gambling permit for the November 23, 2024 gun raffle. Second by Lucht. All in favor. Motion carried.
- O.** Mark Reiling, Sr. Building Permit – see Planning and Zoning above.
- P.** Hiring Process for Clerk/Deputy Clerk – Personnel Committee will form a panel that will screen, interview, and make job offers for hiring Clerk and Deputy Clerk. Job ads will run until August 23, 2024. Motion made by Okun for the Personnel Committee to do the hiring process. Second by Lucht. All in favor. Motion carried.  
  
A temporary clerk has been hired to work being paid an emergency pay rate of \$30/hr in the absence of City Clerk or Deputy Clerk. Motion made by Schaefer to accept the temporary clerk position with the emergency wage. Second by Lucht. Schaefer, Lucht, Morgan, Auchter in favor. Okun abstained. Motion Carried.
- Q.** Northview Bank Signature Card – temporary clerk will not be added to Northview Bank signature card. Previous Clerk Shelly Goodman and previous Deputy Clerk Dawn Tasler will be removed from all Northview Bank accounts. Motion made by Lucht to have Auchter, Morgan and Lucht be authorized signers. Second by Okun. All in favor. Motion carried.
- R.** Aquarius HVAC report – City’s geo-thermal HVAC System from Aquarius is nearing its end of life. Postponed until more information can be gathered.
- S.** Northview Bank – 5% CD. Motion made by Okun to purchase CD at Northview Bank in the amount of \$250,000 at 5% for 9 months. Second by Morgan. All in favor. Motion carried. Mayor Auchter will take care of this.
- T.** Financial Report Deadline – September 30 is the last day to submit the annual financial reports to the state auditor without penalty. Mayor Auchter will check with City Auditing firm to see if this has been done.
- U.** Cannabis Law – City has the option to opt in to the county’s ordinance to restrict sales. Moratoriums may be gotten until January 1, 2025. City needs to stay on top of this to see what, if anything, we must do as the Liquor Store does sell infused beverages.
- V.** Pine County Animal Welfare Society (PCAWS) – In the past they have used an office in the city hall building for their clinics. That office is now rented. Morgan to notify PCAWS that there is no longer space available.
- W.** Filing for City Office – Last day is Tuesday, August 13, 2024. City Hall must be open until 5:00 p.m. Morgan will cover after Okun leaves for the day.
- X.** Bollig Engineering – Meeting scheduled with Bolling for Thursday, August 15, 2024 will be rescheduled.

With no City Clerk or Deputy Clerk on staff, the minutes were taken and transcribed by Barb Morgan.

A motion by Okun to adjourn an 8:34 p.m. Second by Lucht. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barb Morgan, Finlayson City Council Member