

## Finlayson City Council – Regular Meeting

Finlayson City Hall

December 9, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.

1. **The regular city council meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. Monday, December 9, 2024 by Mayor Dave Auchter, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.**
2. **Roll Call: Council Members present:** Dave Auchter, Kim Schaefer, Barb Morgan.  
**Council Members absent:** Joe Okun, Russell Lucht  
**Others present:** John Mikrot, Randy Millner, Wyatt Lucht, Liz Kelly, Dennis Liebelt, Craig Skaff, Sirena Samuelson
3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** *A motion was made by Schaefer to approve the November 2024 regular city council minutes. Second by Morgan. All in favor. Motion carried.*
4. **Approval of Payments:** *A motion was made by Morgan to approve the November bills paid. Second by Schaefer. All in favor. Motion carried.*
5. **Additions or Corrections:**
  - a. Addition: New Business I – use of office space at City Hall
  - b. Addition: New Business J – Closed session to follow regular meeting for the purpose of the 90-day probationary period for the City Clerk
  - c. Addition: Resolution #30 and #31
6. **Petitions/Compliments/Complaints:**
  - a. Norm Kester – Municipal liquor bottles/cans/cardboard are still being dumped in his business dumpsters. Joe is working with the bar staff to ensure they know which dumpsters are the Muni's and which are not.
  - b. Sirena Samuelson – Received letter regarding indefinite banning from the Municipal Bar, apologized for behavior and noted that it was an out-of-character moment and asked for reconsideration. Luedtke will work with Kelly to draft revised notice.
7. **Reports:**
  - a. **John Mikrot, Water/Sewer Operator:** Mikrot reports the VFD for the high service pump will be installed by the end of the year; the air valve is ordered from Kurita & it will be repaired; the Hydrant Pressure Relief Valves will be here by the end of the year as well.  
The Water Tower is now at winter heights. Mikrot confirmed the city jetting schedule is 1/3 of the town each year.
  - b. **Randy Millner, Public Works:** Millner is working to build shelving in the storage room at City Hall and will be procuring lumber from Bass Lake Mill. Plowing has been going well. Millner is able to work with (W) Lucht for the use of his city credit card in the event a card is needed for purchases.

c. **Joe Luedtke, Liquor Store Manager:** Profit reported in November. Luedtke reported that a cook has been hired & trained in, but would still like to see the kitchen leased out. The modification of the bar is on hold pending the outcome of the kitchen (lease). Subcommittee consisting of Morgan, Schaefer, Kelly & Luedtke will pursue kitchen leasing opportunities. Has received applications for bartenders and reports he is staffed at this time. Luedtke attended a presentation with Kelly for Toast, a POS system for the bar; see New Business, G.

d. **Wyatt Lucht, Fire Chief, Fire & Rescue Department:** Lucht reports there were 11 calls in November: 1 fire calls, 10 medical/rescue. YTD, we've had 148 calls total, up 35% from last year. Lucht reported on annual township meeting for Fire Service Contracts; Pine Lake & Wagner were only townships in attendance. A couple townships are not happy with the rates, and asked the Council to reconsider the formulas. Auchter reported that the debt payment for the Fire Hall is not currently included in our formula, but should be. Clerk will pull formula options, work with neighboring towns to make recommendations for next year, and follow up at the January council meeting.

Lucht also reported that four SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) have been ordered within the 2024 budget allocation. In 2025 additional gear will be needed. An ice rescue/cold water training occurred on Sunday 12/8. Lucht also reports that donations from the Fireman's Pancake Breakfast brought in \$679 in donations and another \$500 was received from a private party.

e. **Liz Kelly, Clerk/Treasurer Report:** Kelly reported that the 2024 Pay Equity has been finalized and believed to be in compliance now. 2025 Tobacco license for Muni has been submitted. New hire packets are completed. Work Comp insurance audit completed. Working on getting debit/credit cards for City that are not tied to employee's personal credit. Clerk is doing bank reconciliations in-house. A 2025 Payroll calendar has been made and there are various days that conflict with holidays where paychecks will need to be issued one day prior.

In September clerk was made aware that bartender tips had not been included in the reported wages for contribution calculations & PERA now wants to go back to 2021 to review records. Kelly spot-checked 2021 records and confirmed that tip wages were not included in contributions. Kelly will work with PERA and will gather more information.

f. **Planning and Zoning Committee report by Auchter:** Minutes presented.

8. **Ordinances & Resolutions:** *Motion by Morgan to adopt resolutions #28 & 29. Second by Schaefer. All in favor. Motion carried.*

a. Resolution #28 – Authorizing assessment of delinquent fire service call billings to the tax roll.

b. Resolution #29 – Certifying the 2025 Tax Levy to Pine County.

c. Resolution #30 – Acknowledging the donation from Nancy & James Azarski. *Motion by Morgan to adopt resolution #30. Second by Schaefer. All in favor. Motion carried.*

d. Resolution #31 – Acknowledging the donation received at Santa Days Pancake Breakfast from various community members. *Motion by Schaefer to adopt resolution #31. Second by Morgan. All in favor. Motion carried.*

9. **Old Business:**

a. Schaefer Memorial Park – postponed until 2/25

- b. PTO Policy & Handbook – postponed until 1/25.
- c. Blight concerns - Abandoned house at 2326 Hwy 18. Was postponed until 2/25 but discussion ensued. Tax forfeit in 2026. Assessments need to be in by 10/25. Property is still in Dan Becker’s name. Person who bought from Becker failed to properly file the deed. If City moves forward with possible demo, would seek advice from City Attorney.
- d. Blight concerns - Creamery building – Was postponed until 2/25 but discussion ensued. Planning & Zoning commission working on item. Auchter will check with the county on asbestos updates. State owns the property; the county manages it and has authority to sell. We will continue to work on this and revisit 2/25.
- e. Northern Contractors & Finlayson Properties – Craig Skaff, representing Northern Contractors & Finlayson Properties, raised concerns regarding potential libel involving the city and emphasized that his team has fulfilled all requests made by the city concerning the development on Broadway. In response, Mayor Auchter clarified that the city's intention was not to cause any harm and expressed appreciation for the contributions that Skaff and his businesses have made to the community. A discussion ensued regarding the lack of documentation on file with the city related to the development. Skaff presented a Quit Claim deed dated 11/15/21 regarding the road through his development north of Broadway St. The City of Finlayson did not have a copy of this on file. It was agreed that a separate meeting would be scheduled to clarify issues related to the ownership of the road and infrastructure, the parking lot at the liquor store, and the WAC/SAC fees. Mayor Auchter, Council Member Schaefer, and the City Clerk will represent the city at this meeting.

#### **10. New Business:**

- a. Certificate of Election: Mayor Auchter and Council Member Schaefer for 2025. Both Auchter & Schaefer are serving current terms. The new terms begin on 1/6/25, or when the Oaths of office are given at the January regular council meeting.
- b. Statement of City Officers Elected – will be completed & submitted to the county.
- c. 2025 Final Budget was presented with a net income of \$148,631. *Motion to approve the 2025 Final Budget made by Schaefer. Second by Morgan. All in favor. Motion carried.*
- d. Building permit #10059 – 6548 Broadway; renewal of initial permit issued in 09/2023. *Motion by Auchter to issue permit and waive the \$100 fee. Second by Schaefer. Discussion commenced regarding a variance to the fee structure & waiving the fee. It was acknowledged that this is a one-time variance and should not set precedent. All in favor. Motion carried.*
- e. Temporary liquor license applications submitted by Finlayson-Giese Lions Club for 1/31, 2/22 & 3/22 events. Clerk was unsure of what events were being held at the Community Center but will inquire. *Motion by Morgan to approve application for temporary liquor licenses. Second by Schaefer. All in favor. Motion carried.*
- f. Revision of Fire Contracts – Clerk will seek input from similar, local cities & compile options to present to Wyatt.
- g. POS System update for the Muni – Clerk presented a proposal through Toast, as the current POS system is outdated and does not allow for individual transactions or proper inventory functionality. The proposal includes POS software, hardware, inventory management, payroll & scheduling features, as well as enhanced reporting features (to monitor labor & operational costs in

comparison to sales.) Proposal is approximately \$600/month recurring, and clerk noted that we are currently paying \$200/month. Clerk will work with the Bar Committee (Morgan, Schaefer, Luedtke) in conjunction with kitchen lease option to move forward.

- h. Letters presented. Clerk will work with Luedtke to revise Samuelson letter. No other action taken.
- i. (Addition) Office Space at City Hall – Morgan noted a need for the city to have an additional working office, which could be utilized by the clerk, the council, the mayor and other meeting groups. *Motion by Morgan to use the existing empty office in City Hall as a working office for city business. Second by Schaefer. All in favor. Motion carried.*

**11. Miscellaneous announcements:** Morgan inquired about inventory process for January 1. Clerk will contact Auditor to obtain clear requirements & auditor preference.

**12. Adjournment.** *A motion by Schaefer to recess the regular council meeting for a closed meeting at 8:56 p.m. Second by Morgan. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Open meeting reconvened at 10:00 p.m. *Motion by Schaefer to adjourn the meeting at 10:01 p.m. Second by Morgan. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Liz Kelly  
City Clerk