



CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 10, 2025 AT 6:30 PM
FINLAYSON CITY HALL

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM, by Mayor Auchter, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **ROLL CALL**
 - a. Council members present: Dave Auchter, Barb Morgan, Kim Schaefer; Jeff Flaws
 - b. Council members absent: None
 - c. Others present: Wyatt Lucht, Bill Morgan, Rhonda Kriesel, Joe Luedtke, Ed Melzark, John Mikrot, Liz Bernhardt.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *A motion was made by Morgan to approve the February 10, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried. A motion was made by Flaws to approve the March 3, 2025 Special Meeting minutes, with the correction from “regular” to “special” meeting made. All in favor. Motion carried.*
4. **PUBLIC FORUM** - None
5. **CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA** – *A motion was made by Schaefer to accept the agenda with the following additions. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - a. *Addition:* New business G: Planning & Zoning Member Appointment.
 - b. *Addition:* New business H: Community Service Project List
6. **CONSENT AGENDA** – *A motion was made by Flaws to approve the consent agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - a. Discussion about the Fire report for the Council ensued. Lucht expressed disapproval of the format and need for reporting; Auchter responded that the council needs information ahead of time to process and make informed decisions at the council meetings, and to ensure time at council meets is used efficiently. Clerk reminded council that departments are able to modify and change reports as they see fit. No action taken.
 - b. Discussion about Water & Sewer needs ensued; the council inquired about capital improvement plans and maintenance schedules. No action taken.
 - c. Discussion about the Liquor Store ensued; Luedtke reported the bar fridge broke. Auchter reminded Luedtke that there is an appliance breakdown included in the City insurance policy. Morgan also requested the clerk to inquire about additional storage available for the camera system, in the event that data is needed further back than one month. Clerk will request quote from People’s Security.
 - d. Discussion about City Clerk report ensued. Auchter requested that along with monthly financials, the to include budget, year-to-date actual vs. budget, and prior year actual vs. budget. Clerk will ensure financial reports include this data going forward. Auchter inquired more about “Annual Financial Reporting Form” on Clerk report. Clerk will follow up with details.
 - e. City Maintenance worker was not present to provide a report; Auchter inquired about culvert drainage issue by Gilpin’s on School Street. The culvert, under the city street, is city property & responsibility. The property on each side of the culvert is private property. In order to maintain the culvert, the city needs an easement to the private property. No action taken.
7. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. **Rhonda Kriesel** – Asking permission from the City Council to have chickens, per Animal Ordinance #32, section 600.02. Council concerned about setting precedent. Council agreed to an interim approval for up to six chickens, hens only, provided that regular and routine maintenance is provided, and that current ordinances are followed, with special attention to sections 600.04 Animals at Large, and 600.07 Manner of Keeping, 600.08 Care of Premises, and 600.09 Manure. *Motion by Auchter to approve Kriesel to have up to six chickens in accordance with the ordinance, for an interim period of up to one year, through March 2026. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Separately, the council asked Kriesel if she'd like to join the city council, and she agreed. *Motion by Auchter to appoint Rhond to fill the vacant council position. All in favor. Motion carried.* Kriesel will be sworn in at the next regular council meeting.

- b. **Volunteer Fire Department** – Termination Letters were presented to council, noting that an updated version has since been provided to the Clerk with corrected dates. Clerk will mail out.
- c. **Fire Contract Formula Option** – Fire contracts were sent out last fall, a couple townships were not happy with the rates and requested to have the formulas reviewed. Clerk researched formulas from neighboring fire departments and League of MN Cities, and provided eight different formulas to Fire Chief. Fire Chief requested options get narrowed down to three or four. Clerk presented and mailed to each township, for them to vote on the method they prefer, a strategy directed by the Fire Chief. The City now has to vote on their preferred method. Discussion ensued about the process and formulas. Auchter requested that the clerk update the fire bond amount and ensure that is included in the budget for upcoming years, as it has not been done in the past. *Motion by Schaefer to choose option A as the City's "vote". All in favor. Motion carried.*
- d. **Ordinance Review** – Ordinance #155, fee schedules, needs to be reviewed. Auchter recommends an inflationary increase be reflected. Flaws will work with the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Zoning Administrator to review the fees related to Building, Planning & Zoning. Clerk will forward water & sewer rate recommendations to council (from MN Rural Water's formula template) for review. All council is to provide recommendations to Clerk prior to next regular council meeting.
- e. **Letters** – Morgan noted that three included letters regarding building permit applications did not have dates. Clerk confirmed the letters were sent on 2/27, and emails with the same verbiage were sent to the three building permit applicants on 2/27 as well, as stated in the Agenda. As stated in the Agenda, a letter of recognition was received for city staff Millner for helping a resident with a frozen pipe issue. At that time, Schaefer also publicly thanked Morgan for her assistance with the water meter readings in the absence of Millner. Clerk also expressed gratitude.
- f. **Ordinances & Resolutions**
 - i. **Resolution #2025-07 – Contributions to Fund Events (National Night Out).** Morgan expressed concern that by authorizing the City to collect contributions for events, that it implies that city employees will be responsible for managing events, and time will be spent on events rather than city business. Morgan mentioned that the Community Club hosted National Night Out in the past. Clerk noted that some sponsors require a 501c3 or public entity to receive donations. Clerk also noted that in most towns, the city does sponsor the event in collaboration with volunteer organizations. By approving this resolution, it does not tie the city to further commitments, it just allows the city to accept contributions for such events. *Motion by Schaefer to adopt resolution #2027-07. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Motion by Flaws to extend the starting time for the last topic from 8:30PM, as stated in bylaws, to 8:45PM for this specific meeting. All in favor. Motion passed.

- ii. **Resolution #2025-08 – Adopting a Permit Process.** Recommendation to strike "as outlined in the attached Exhibit A" from #1. *Motion by Flaws to adopt resolution #2025-08 with changes. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - iii. **Resolution #2025-09 – Frozen Service Lines Policy.** Suggestions for the council to submit their changes to Clerk for policy & resolution revision. No further action taken.
 - iv. **Resolution #2025-10 – Annual Council Appointments** – See New Business, G.
- g. **Planning & Zoning Member Appointment** – Auchter recommends appointing Bruce Pogatchnik to replace Kester on the Commission. *Motion by Flaws to accept Resolution #2025-10 including an update to Planning & Zoning Commission, fixing a typographical error, and noting that Auchter is "temporary" Wellhead Protection Plan Manager. All in favor. Motion carried.*
- h. **Community Service Project List** – Auchter has interested party who is going to reach out for community service hours. Clerk added that others have shown interest in obtaining community service hours, and that she spoke with a Probation Officer who also inquired about it. Officer confirmed the City's

obligation is to ensure work and hours are completed by community service member. Clerk has previously asked Fire, Maintenance, Bar, Water/Sewer, Lions Club, Historic Friends of Finlayson – all of them are aware and will reach out to Clerk if/when projects arise. Morgan recalled that City previously discouraged community service projects due to the time and paperwork required by city staff. No action taken.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. ESST / PTO Policy – Personnel Committee working to shore up PTO accruals. Will present to council when finished.
- b. Broadway Development – Clerk reports things are moving along on both sides. City is currently awaiting further direction from City Attorney.

9. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS – Ordinances/Legislation (none)

10. ADJOURNMENT. *Motion by Schaefer to adjourn the regular council meeting at 9:04PM. All in favor. Motion carried.*