

Finlayson City Council
Regular Meeting
June 12, 2023

The regular city council meeting was called to order Monday, June 12, 2023 by Tom Price, Mayor at 6:30 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Members present: Nadine Hedtke, Russell Lucht, Barb Morgan and Mike Drahosh

Council Members absent: none

Others present: John Mikrot, Wyatt Lucht, Bill Morgan, John & Bonnie Linden, Mary Nelson, Cary Steeg, George Slama, Rick Palmer (Mlaskoch Excavating), Jeff Nelson (Pine County Sheriff), Hayley Erickson, and Bobbi Eaton

Additions: K. Special Council for Fire Department
L. Depot

Corrections: Add Steeg's potential building permit along with other building permits to Planning & Zoning; Move street bids to "Old Business"

Compliments and Complaints:

Councilmember Morgan addressed the continued animal complaints on Sherman Road and questioned the status of the progress. The clerks have been in contact with the Minnesota Federated Humane Society and Pine County Sheriff's Office. A Pine County deputy spoke to the property owner warning him of citations being issued if the complaints persist. It was relayed to Morgan by a resident present at the meeting that it would be resolved the following day. The color of the water in town was also discussed. Some residents have noticed either an orange tint or gray hue along with a chlorine odor and/or taste. John Mikrot indicated the amount of chlorine in the water is currently at the threshold of what is directed by the Minnesota Department of Health. Mikrot to test homes further out of town within the next week. Mikrot explained the chloride cleans the pipes which can release magnesium into the water. Complaint from resident to the west of Sedillo property regarding the condition of the house. Mayor Price indicated he is uncertain of the actual property owner; it was sold contract for deed but has become a tax mess with the county. Resident George Slama voiced his concern of a fire truck speeding recently on Ryan Road. Slama said he was pulled over to the side of the road and a fire truck flew past at a high rate of speed. Mayor Price directed Fire Chief Lucht to relay to the rest of the fire department to take caution and monitor how fast they are driving. Councilmember Drahosh reminded Slama that drivers don't always pull off to the side of the road and stop to allow fire trucks to safely maneuver. Resident Slama also mentioned he had heard the city council didn't want the Sportman's Club gun raffle to be held at the Muni in November. The council denied that rumor, confirmed that it was never discussed, and would like the gun raffle to continue.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Hedtke to approve minutes from the May 8th, 2023 regular council meeting, seconded by Morgan with all in favor and carried. A motion was made Morgan to

approve the emergency meeting that took place May 15, 2023, seconded by Drahosh, with all in favor and carried.

Reports:

John Mikrot, Water/Sewer Operator:

While flushing hydrants the last week of April it was noticed that two of the hydrants were in need of attention. Mikrot to have the necessary parts ordered, no cost for labor to repair.

Wyatt Lucht (Fire Chief) Fire Department:

Fire Chief Lucht reported there have been 49 calls year-to-date, 9 calls for the month of May; 4 medical and 5 fires (two of which were rekindles) for a total of 166 man hours.

Zoning and Planning: A building permit was approved for Northern Contractors to install a garage for a resident down Broadway Street – motioned by Drahosh and seconded by Morgan. Another building permit was approved for a log cabin on the Connolly property on Dixon Line Rd, motioned by Drahosh and seconded by Hedtke. Cary Steeg was present to question a need for a building permit at his residence. The structure would be a covered walkway over the sidewalk to prevent falls during the winter. The council approved not having to obtain a building permit since it will not be a permanent structure and instead fastened to the sidewalk.

Ashley Lucht, City Clerk:

- The bar had a net income of \$11,556 for the month of May. Confection sales are up \$3,700 compared to this time last year. The Muni is still recouping funds from equipment purchased and installed earlier this year. Clerk Lucht estimated those costs should be recovered by the end of this summer.

Dawn Tasler, Deputy Clerk:

- Tasler provided a repair and maintenance log for maintenance personnel to complete as work is completed on both large and small equipment.
- A water line survey was created and mailed out to residents connected to city water and sewer. The EPA is requesting all cities to determine the materials used for water supply.
- Tasler submitted the required paperwork to the MPCA for the city's wastewater treatment plant permit renewal. Waiting on reply if all was included and correct. Mikrot to assist Tasler if deemed incomplete.

Hayley Erickson & Bobbi Eaton, Lead Bartenders: see “Old Business: B – Bar Cook Position and Wage”

Morgan questioned the financial reconciliation spreadsheet the clerks provide. A. Lucht replied that is completed in the fashion the new clerks were taught. More often than not, there will be an outstanding figure since not all checks issued have cleared the bank by the end of month when reconciliation is done. Motion made by Drahosh to accept May financials and pay bills, seconded by Hedtke with all in favor and carried.

Old business:

A: Gravel Bids; Bids were opened for new gravel on MacArthur, Water, and Front Street. The city received two bids. At a cost of \$19,164.00 Rydberg & Sons from Pine City were awarded the bid. Clerks to notify company and confirm completion date of July 1st.

B: Bar Cook Position and Wage; Eaton again inquired about hiring a cook for the bar and the amount of wage to be given. The bar staff is becoming overwhelmed with the increase of food sales due to the updated new menu options. After discussion the council approved hiring one part time short-order cook and depending on experience, a wage of up to \$15.00/hour. Motion made by Drahosh and seconded by Hedtke with all in favor and carried. Clerks to advertise and Lead Bartenders will interview.

C: Creamery; The clerks were contacted once more by the county in regards to the Creamery and funding that is available. If the city was to purchase the property, the city would have say as to who purchases it afterwards and what kind of business would be developed. Prior bids for the cost of demolition were discussed. Drahosh indicated there is no guarantee funding would be available and could not confirm the city has appropriate funds for such a project. Drahosh motioned to decline offer, seconded by Hedtke, with all in favor and carried.

D: Rabe Estimate; A new estimate was submitted by Trent Rabe in regards to the DSE waterline repair. The updated proposal of \$5,500.00 contained class 5 gravel rather than blacktop, however, did not include the necessary nearby sidewalk repair. Clerks to request another bid including repairs to sidewalk. Drahosh motioned to approve the waterline repair work of \$5,500.00, seconded by Hedtke, with all in favor and carried.

New business:

A: Jeff Nelson – PC Contract; Pine County Sheriff Jeff Nelson attended the meeting to discuss a potential enforcement contract with the city. Some surrounding cities and townships have contracts with the county and have benefited from it. The contract would allow Pine County to issue citations to residents that fail to comply with city ordinances such as blight. This contract would be on an “as-needed” basis and come in to play after the city’s warnings and efforts have been deemed unsuccessful. The hourly rate for 2023 would be \$61.29. Morgan motioned to authorize a contract with Pine County Sheriff’s Office, seconded by Hedtke, with all in favor and carried.

B. 4th of July Fireworks Permit; Jerry Pizella has submitted his application and provided permit for the Fireworks display for the 4th of July. A liability waiver was also initiated outlining neither himself or Victory Fireworks are liable for any incidents. Finlayson-Giese Lions to issue check to city for payment of this year’s fireworks. Drahosh motioned to approve fireworks display, seconded by Hedtke, with all in favor and carried.

C. Liquor License – Finlayson-Giese Lions Club; FGL Club submitted a liquor license application for hosting a wedding in October. Drahosh questioned the type of alcohol being served. Currently the city’s fee schedule states a “3.2 Liquor License”, however, the State of Minnesota does not specify. Clerks to update fee schedule to omit “3.2”. Drahosh motioned to approve liquor license, seconded by Hedtke, with all in favor and carried.

D. Maintenance Summer Help; The city’s maintenance employee is requesting summer help. Potential candidate would need to be at least 16 years old. No city equipment is to be operated by an employee unless they are 18 years of age or older. Approximate hours would be 12-15 hours per week at minimum wage. Hiring summer help for maintenance work motioned by Drahosh, seconded by Hedtke with all in favor and carried.

E: Northern Contractor's Building Permit – Peterson Garage; see Zoning & Planning

F. David Connolly Building Permit – 2022 Dixon Line; see Zoning & Planning

G. Website Renewal and Other Company Offers; The city's current website host, Catalis, has vastly increased their cost this year. To continue to use their services the price would amount to around \$11,000.00 total throughout the duration of a four-year contract. Previous annual costs have been roughly \$630.00. Clerk Lucht has researched and reached out to similar vendors and collected a few proposals. After viewing all proposals provided, Morgan motioned to switch to Municipal Impact for \$660 per year, seconded by Hedtke, with all in favor and carried.

H. Fire Department Charges and Fees; The Finlayson Fire Department has not updated their charges and fees in numerous years. In an effort to keep up with increasing costs of equipment and supplies, Fire Chief Lucht made the following recommendations: increase fire calls for the first two hours from \$600 to \$650, for calls after the initial first two hours, increase the hourly rate from \$150 to \$250, along with adding charges for foam and miscellaneous tools and materials. Mayor Price indicated he was pleased to see the initiative taken to change these costs and stated it will help the fire department generate more funds for their expensive, but necessary, gear and supplies. Motion made by Drahosh to update the fire department charges and fees, seconded by Morgan, with all in favor and carried.

I. Revote on Peace Lutheran 4th of July/Methodist Request; the result of the vote in May for the fire hall to be utilized by the churches was unfavorable by local church members. It was communicated to them the problems that occurred last year. After much discussion and various ideas by members of the fire department and community members, they reached a compromise. Morgan motioned to allow the churches to use the fire hall for the 4th of July, seconded by Hedtke.

J. Fire Hydrant Hook-ups; the clerks have been approached by a local utility company requesting to access the fire hydrants in town. At this time, it cannot be allowed because if not properly attached, there is a chance the city water could become contaminated. An idea mentioned was to purchase our own water meter with a back flow valve to monitor for contaminates. The cost would be between \$3,500-\$4,000. The city could rent the meter out for a deposit and charge a to-be determined water usage amount. It would be up to the public works department to complete the hook up to the hydrants to ensure it would be done properly. Subject tabled.

K. Special Council for Fire Department; being three of the council members are also on the fire department, Mayor Price would like the clerks to contact the League of Minnesota Cities regarding a special council for the fire department and if it is something that can be created. A special council would assist the decision-making process since the majority of the council abstain from voting when concerning the fire department.

L. Depot; B. Morgan questioned the ownership of the Depot. The clerks have spoken to the county and reached out to the Pine County Historical Society attempting to determine the correct owner without success. The clerks also searched through old and historic documents and didn't find any sufficient data assigning ownership. Search is ongoing.

A motion was made by Price to adjourn, seconded by Drahosh.

Dawn Tasler
Deputy Clerk