**Council Members Present:** Mayor Brent Switzer, Sheldon Johnson, Shaine Parr, Dan Walker, and Art Underhill.

**Others Present:**  City Clerk Tiffany Parr, Utility Billing Clerk Kathleen Bennett, Water and Sewer Operator John Mikrot, Fire Chief Gerard Bennett, Planning Commission Chair David Prachar, Willow River School PTO President Tara Prachar, and various members of public.

**Call to Order:** Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order with the pledge of allegiance at 7:00 pm by Mayor Switzer.

**Consent Agenda:** The consent agenda which includes the minutes of the May regular city council meeting, the disbursements and financial reports, and accounts payable was submitted for approval. The Mayor asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

S. Parr made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by D. Walker. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**Petitions, Requests, and/or Complaints:** Tara Prachar with the PTO would like to request permission to use the city streets as they have done in the past for the Color Run on September 30. PTO is also involved in the Ragnar Race. They will be in Willow August 11/12. Ragnar is a relay race from the Twin Cities to Duluth. It’s a round the clock event, coming through Willow in the middle of the night. It’s a great fund raising opportunity for the school, making about 6 grand in one night.

S. Johnson made a motion to approve both events, seconded by D. Walker. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**Gerard Bennett, Fire Chief:**  Getting paperwork started for the gun raffle. Runs to date: 2 other, 20 fire, 54 ems. Three trucks that are being worked on are coming along. Once the new trucks are ready, will be looking to sell two of the old trucks on auction. Would like to have new trucks ready before freeze up. Still working on the LED lighting. Haven’t heard anything back on the FEMA grant yet. Looking into four opportunities for different grants. Pine County Mutual aid reapplied for FEMA radio grant still. Public relations: Gun Raffle will be coming up. 2023 goal is to promote addressing (House #’s) – might be next year. Ice damage cleanup went really well. Recruitment: Talking to one; no commitment yet,. Need some pavement done by north bay of fire department for the big trucks to get through. All fire fighters are cross trained with medical and fire. Bollards: would like to get one in by the school before freeze up. Reviews done for 2022. Pool fills if done will be used as a training for the fire department and done on donations. Softball escort on Wednesday. Had trucks out on Memorial Day to show support.

A. Underhill made a motion to blacktop by fire department, seconded by D. Walker. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

A. Underhill made a motion to approve the gun raffle on November 18, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**John Mikrot, Water and Sewer Operator:** Need brush and trees opened up going out to the ponds. There are also sticks and trees by the main lift station that need to be cleared away so it can be mowed.

**David Prachar, Planning Commission:** Held a public hearing for the proposed changes in the zoning ordinance. Nobody came. References to “building permit” have been changed to “land use permit”. Board of Appeals of Adjustment can be the council. Planning Commission put together a sample of an application.

S. Parr made a motion to approve the changes to the ordinance, seconded by A. Underhill. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Membership updates for the Planning Commission: asking for the one year terms of Harold Blatz and Pat Herzog go to August 24, 2024 and that Melissa Johnson, Judy Kliniski, and David Prachar go to August 24, 2025.

A. Underhill made a motion to approve the membership updates, seconded by S. Parr. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**Kathleen Bennett, Utility Billing Clerk:** April bills went out on May 5. 154 bills sent out, 36 by email totaling $15,860.46. No shut offs. Late fees $215.16. May bills went out June 2. 154 bills sent out, 36 by email totaling $13,817.98. No shut offs. Late fees $277.98. Sewer pond permits will need to be redone. Would like to come in a couple hours to sit with Tiffany to go through the paperwork.

A. Underhill made a motion to approve the extra hours, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Received a letter from MN Rural Water about a ServLine Leak Protection Plan. Council would like more info.

**Tiffany Parr, City Clerk:** Bike MS is coming June 10. They are wondering if there is a water source they can access to fill a truck that will filter water for water bottles. The state has officially made Juneteenth a holiday. No public business may be conducted. National Night Out is August 1st. Someone had asked about reserving the park at the dam for a vow renewal. Council decided they are welcome to use the park, but we will not do reservations. Tiffany would like to switch days next week and work Wednesday instead of Monday.

**Sheldon Johnson, Zoning:** Building permit on 61 for a new house.

**Old Business**

**Repairing Walters Road:**  Danny went around and filled some of the pot holes. It was noted that on Beacon, it shows that part of the road belongs to the state. Tiffany is looking into that. Initial response from the state is that they believe the road has been given back to the city in full. Waiting on verification. For the repaving project, Kettle River Township would not approve without a second bid. Art said he had a bid last year from Rocon and this year from Kiminski. John said that the bids were not for the same work. John had Rocon bid the same job that Kiminski bid, and Rocon’s bid came in about $6000 cheaper. The city is willing to pay for half of the Rocon bid, but the township will need to hire Rocon and bill the city for half.

S. Parr made a motion to accept the Rocon bid, seconded by D. Walker. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**Repairing Roads in Town:** Kiminski will begin paving in the next week or two.

**Landscaping on boulevard on 43:** Rosie would like to know when the worksite is going to be cleaned up. It is still a mess from the work that was done over the winter. Brent and Tiffany have been trying to get a hold of the CIP to get help getting that done. Tiffany also tried contacting Roberts Excavation – no response yet. Art and Danny can get out there to get it started; put some gravel and topsoil down.

**Damage to city shop building:** Ron Eaton put in a bid for the repair. The insurance adjuster received a copy of the bid and approved it.

A. Underhill made a motion to accept the bid from Ron Eaton, seconded by S. Parr. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**Floodplain ordinance:** Discussion on whether to repeal our floodplain ordinance and adopt the DNR’s recommended ordinance or simply amend our existing ordinance to reflect the new map panel number associated with the annexed property.

S. Parr made a motion to amend our existing ordinance, seconded by D. Walker. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Will hold the public hearing next month at 7pm at the beginning of the regular city council meeting.

**2024 Election location:** Discussion about whether to stick with mail in voting for next year or move to an in-person option. If having in-person option, should we do it here in Willow River or go back to sharing a polling place with Rutledge.

S. Parr made a motion to hold 2024 elections in Willow River, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**New Business**

**Selling bulk water:** Discussion about how to handle selling of bulk hydrant water. It was decided to leave it up to John Mikrot and/or Gerard Bennett/fire department on a per time basis since they are the ones that will have to be there to facilitate hooking up to the hydrant.

**Shop Rental:** Discussion of the agreement of the shop rental with John. John is still interested in continuing the rental as previously agreed upon. Tiffany will look up the agreement expiration.

**Lead Service Line Inventory:** MN Department of Health is requiring cities to inventory their water service lines. Bollig Engineering reached out offering to apply for grants to get paperwork and inventory work done. John stated that the city only has plastic and some copper. Will check in to what the reporting requirements are before deciding if we would like to have Bollig involved.

**Northern Pine Riders:** Northern Pine Riders need a new resolution signed. This is the same resolution that is signed each year.

S. Johnson made a motion to sign resolution #2023-04, seconded by S. Parr. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Dan Walker brought up the fact that he has been using a lot of his equipment to help with various city projects and doesn’t believe that it is fair to have to personally cover his equipment costs. He has created a list of prices for equipment usage that would be $50 cheaper than it would be to hire normally.

Mike Fanum said that J&L, Pizza Pub, and the Squirrel Cage are offering free drinks to all of the volunteers that helped with the storm damage clean up.

**Adjournment**

S. Parr made a motion to adjourn, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.

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Tiffany Parr, City Clerk

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Brent Switzer, Mayor