**Willow River City Council Meeting**

January 2, 2018

Approved February 5, 2018

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Tuesday, January 2nd at the Willow River City Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Brent Switzer.

Meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Council Present:** Brent Switzer, Sheldon Johnson, Darryl Poslusny and Vickie Whitehouse

**Staff Present:** Diane Nelson, Kathi Bennett and Todd Anderson

**Others Present:** Gerard Bennett, John Mikrot, Rosie Mielke, Natasha Watercott, Art Underhill, and Dave Prachar.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Vickie made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda and Darryl second. Motion carried with all in favor.

# Special Guest, Mike Peloquin, DNR- Mike commented that we had a great turnout for the public meeting regarding the dam. He thought it went well and he learned a great deal regarding how the community uses the dam and its history. He wished he could have gotten to mingle more. Sheldon asked why only one option was placed at the front of the auditorium. Mike commented it was because they had a slide show showing rock rapids that they had done in other communities. Mike felt that the majority of the people were concerned about the reservoir and getting that back to where it was. Sheldon asked what the parks system wants with the campground back there. He stated that he has seen a number of people passing by with boats and/or campers heading out to the campground and then heading back out. Mike said that the next step was to look at some feasibility studies at the rock arch rapids to see if that is a possibility. He thought by April they would have more details and some ideas put together to bring to the Council. Darryl asked how many people said that they wanted the dam back. He thinks that the town wants the dam back and feels that they are pushing the rock arch rapids. Sheldon questioned what they meant about the fish passage and why that is all of the sudden so important. Darryl asked what the odds are that they would get the dam back. Mike couldn’t say. Sheldon asked what Mike thought would be good. He said that the rock arch rapids are a good option and that financially it makes sense. Darryl thought that the money was there to do a dam. Diane commented that we, as a city, are tied to the current dam that is there and we need to understand that it will never be that again. If we have a dam it will be completely new. Sheldon stated that there was nothing wrong with the dam, the flood eroded the property around the dam. Vickie stated that we have never gotten the results back from when they inspected it. Rosie asked “Don’t you have to listen to the people of Willow River?” There was $4 million that came out of the bonding bill for 7 projects. Mike stated that they have not done any engineering work on this project yet. Therefore, we wouldn’t know how many bays would be in a new dam. Dave Prachar asked what the next step is. Mike said they would be going into design work. Probably the rock arch rapids feasibility studies and getting information together regarding the stability of the existing structure. Sheldon asked who makes the decision on what will happen. Mike stated that it would ultimately be the Commission of the DNR based on recommendations. Mike said that he understands how important the dam is to the community and he takes that seriously. Mike recommended that we look at other cities (Hutchinson) that had similar situations and how they like the rock arch rapids. Dave stressed that if they go with the rock arch rapids that the reservoir level needs to be restored. Diane asked about the meeting notes that Molly was going to send out to the people who gave their email. He was going to check on that. Mike said that he is hoping to get back here in April.

**Gerard Bennett, Willow River Fire Department** – We have had one run already. That was an EMS call. 2017 totals – 27 fire calls 119 medical and 2 other for a total of 148. Unfortunately, it was a record year. We had 15 events in 2017 and 14 trainings and meetings. The in house air will be worked on over the winter. We are working on the SCBA grant. We have had 4 sales representatives come and talk to us. We will be getting the bid requirements out to them and have our bid opening at the Council meeting in February. The Fire Department is working with the school to learn their new fire alarm system and back up sprinklers. They are hoping to look at some recruitment of new officers early spring. We received $965.50 from the Gobble Wobble and Mayor Switzer donated $992.71. Those funds will go for gas meters. Gerard wanted them to know how much the department appreciates it.

**Water and Sewer-** Hydrant by school got knocked over. We have the parts and will get that fixed. John had 3 calls for water freezing up due to the extreme cold.

**Public Works, Todd Anderson –** Todd burnt the brush pile over at Big Bend. The cutting edge on the big plow is getting down to less than 1” so he ordered a new one. He turned on the water for Drew Abrahamson. Todd asked when the Council would like the Christmas lights to be taken down and they said anytime now would be fine.

**Diane Nelson, Clerk –** Checkbook is in balance. We got a bill from Bradd Mlaskoch. The bill does not specify dates of service, hours of labor or price of parts. Brent said that he looked at it and it is not acceptable without those. If the auditors pull that invoice, it needs to be more specific. Sheldon brought up the fact that they have been generous in the past. Diane will check with Bradd or Kelly to get that information and pay that bill. Genesis Wireless has taken over Moose Tec. We received a letter from them stating that they would still honor our contract with them. They are also opening a shop in Moose Lake and will be retaining the same employees. Diane asked if she could switch days one week later this month to go to a doctor’s appointment in the cities. The Council is fine with that. The sewer CD is coming due Jan. 11 and asked if we wanted to cash that in for the sewer repairs. If we need to cash it in later, the penalty for cashing it in early is a loss of 6 months of interest. The Council said to let it renew. The auditors will be here Jan. 29th for our annual audit.

**Kathi Bennett, Water and Sewer** – The billing for December will go out on Jan 5th. Last month we had 16 friendly reminders, 10 shut-off notices and 0 door hangers and shutoffs. Kathi pulled the numbers of water and sewer usages and payment breakdowns for 2017.

**Zoning – Sheldon**- The cell phone tower decided not to build here. The Council decided that we do need to look at setting zoning guidelines for this for future purposes. We will address at the March meeting.

**Old Business**  -

1. Budget – Diane wanted the Council to look at the budget for 2018. She did tweak a couple of lines but the overall numbers are the same.

**New Business:**

1. Fire Hydrant- There was a fire hydrant that was broken off by a truck by the school parking lot. Deputy Anderson made contact with the individual and we have his insurance information. The cost will be around $300 to repair the hydrant. Diane asked the Council what they wanted to do. They decided to make contact with the party and ask how they want to pay for it.
2. Organizational meeting – meeting dates. All meetings will be the first Monday of the month with an exception of Jan and September. They will be the first Tuesday of the month. The Council made a motion to keep the organizational chart the same. **Master fee schedule-** Vickie would like to see the fire pay increased. She would like meetings increased from $5 to $10. The pay for minimum wage should increase to $9.65. Sheldon makes a motion to increase the pay as specified above. Darryl second. Motion carried with all in favor.
3. Fire Contracts – The CPI as of December is 2.2%. Gerard thought that a 2% increase would be fair. Gerard wanted to find a midline so that we charge enough so that it isn’t a burden to the City taxpayers but not to overcharge. Sheldon makes a motion to increase the fire contracts 2% for 2018. Vickie second. Motion carried with all in favor.
4. Fire Chief – Sheldon makes a motion to have Gerard be the Fire Chief for 2018. Vickie second. Motion carried with all in favor.

Motion made by Darryl to adjourn the meeting. Vickie seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Nelson