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

**Others Present:**  City Clerk Tiffany Parr, Utility Billing Clerk Kathleen Bennett, Water and Sewer Operator John Mikrot, Fire Chief Gerard Bennett, 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 December 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 S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**Petitions, Requests, and/or Complaints:** Clint Nylen questioned about the Novak annexation and if there was any additional land to be annexed. The Novak property is the only property being annexed at this time.

**John Mikrot, Water and Sewer Operator:** Lift station maintenance this spring. With no objections from the council, would like to also clean the lift stations with the vac truck. There’s a broken tube at the sewer pond possibly hit by a goose or something. Will need to be replaced.

**Kathi Bennett, Utility Billing Clerk:** Tiffany did billing last month, and next month’s billing will be done on Friday. No shut offs. Received a letter from MN Rural Water, see copy in packet. Travis Aijala sold his house and the closing company overpaid final bill, will need to refund overpayment.

S. Johnson made a motion to approve the refund, seconded by S. Parr. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

All caught up on DMR reports. Discussion about whether we want to do like we did last year and have homeowners read their own meters for the months of January-March. It was decided to remain consistent and have homeowners send in meter reads for January-March. Kathi will send out a letter with the bills.

**Tiffany Parr, City Clerk:** Included a letter form LMC regarding insurance dividend received – amount was $417. Also a letter from the Pine Area Hospital District. Just an informational letter. We will need to schedule a public hearing for the annexation. Decided to schedule 15 minutes before the regular meeting. Tiffany asked about taking down Christmas lights. Council agreed to hire John to take them down at the same cost as previous years.

**Sheldon Johnson, Zoning:** Nothing new.

**Old Business**

**Repairing Roads:**  Tabled.

**Blight:** Tabled.

**Pine Street:**  Chelsie needs the date the public hearing was held in order to create the documents for the vacation of that section of Pine Street. Sheldon suggested checking with Askov American to see if a notice was published back in 1980.

**Gerard Bennett, Fire Chief:**  Runs to date: 2 ems. Last year, ended with 121 ems calls, fire 39, 4 other, total of 164 calls. Did 22 events. 24 meetings required per year, up to 60. There were 6000 hours possible. Minor repairs done on trucks. Trying to do it all in house. Still working on grants for Federated Oil, MN Power, ECE, & Essentia grants. We did get awarded the DNR 50/50 grant, total $10,000 ($5,000/$5,000) that will be used to get those trucks on line. Public relations: Tree Lighting went well. Helped out the Community Club with Fun With Santa. Recruitment: Roster of 13 now with one more interested. Got a $300 private donation. End Zone cookie elves dropped off some Christmas cookies for the fire department. Commercial Club submitted a payment to the city to cover the rapids lighting project. Gerard submitted his application for fire chief.

S. Parr made a motion to approve Gerard as fire chief for 2024, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Gerard wanted to state that he does not agree with having the Northern Pine Riders trail come through by the city/fire hall. Nothing against Northern Pine Riders. Concerned about the carbides destroying the concrete slab. Also would like to increase the fire department budget to $75,000. Still have the insulating of the shop on the to-do list. Art said he can help.

**New Business**

**Approve Dan Walker payment for use of equipment:**  Presented invoice of equipment use throughout the year for approval.

S. Johnson made a motion to approve payment to Dan Walker, seconded by S. Parr. D. Walker abstained from voting. Motion carried with all remaining members voting in favor.

**2024 Organizational Resolution:** Discussion of changing the start time of the meetings to 6pm for the rest of the year. Other organizational items discussed.

S. Parr made a motion to approve the 2024 Organizational Resolution, seconded by D. Walker. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**2024 Fee Schedule:** Some discussion about the amount of the water and sewer hookup fees. Council will look further into that. Fee schedule will be approved as is with potentially revisiting the water and sewer hook up fees.

S. Parr made a motion to approve the 2024 Fee Schedule, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**Election Judges:** First election judge training is coming up in early February. Will need to have at least 3 judges on site with 4 being better during election hours. Divided into two shifts, that would be 8 election judges.

S. Parr made a motion to approve finding 8 election judges, seconded by D. Walker. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**Adjournment**

D. Walker made a motion to adjourn, seconded by S. Parr. Motion carried with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 pm.

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Tiffany Parr, City Clerk Brent Switzer, Mayor