The Council met at 6:30 pm for the review of Tiffany Parr. Tiffany was given a $0.75/hr cost of living increase.

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

**Others Present:**  City Clerk Tiffany Parr, Water and Sewer Operator John Mikrot, Fire Chief Gerard Bennett, School Board Member Dave 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 October 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.

**Public Hearing for Special Assessments of Delinquent Water/Sewer Bills:** No one had any comments.

**Petitions, Requests, and/or Complaints:** None.

**Gerard Bennett, Fire Chief:**  Runs to date: 4 other, 33 fire, 92 ems. Trucks 1 and 2 had pumps tested – still waiting on results from that. Repaired a leak in the Memorial tanker. Working on other 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) for wild land equipment and we can get some PPE out of that as well. Public relations: October was fire prevention month. Visited school. Kindergartners visited fire hall. Halloween handed out candy at the fire department. Got a candy donation from the Squirrel Cage. Gun Raffle tickets are available. Gobble Wobble coming up Thanksgiving. Tree Lighting is also coming up. Recruitment: Mackenzie Franko applied. Would like pre-approval from the city to hire her pending an interview.

S. Johnson made a motion to approve for hire Mackenzie Franko, seconded by S. Parr. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Donations: Got a donation from Linda Volk and John Wandryk for $300. They are very consistent with their donations every year. They are thankful for the help that Dave provided checking on their dogs when they were in the hospital and continue to donate. Misc: Arch Rapids lights are proceeding. Waiting on electric permits and wiring. Gerard brought up an issue with a lot of potholes on Walters Road. Also large vehicles on the road that the road is not designed for.

**John Mikrot, Water and Sewer Operator:** Park bathroom has been winterized. Valve fixed at sewer pond. Wyatts Cove lift station plugged up with rags/wipes. Vactor truck had to come pump it out. This is the second time this year that the pump was clogged with wipes. Suggested to send letters to the homeowners on that lift station along with a copy of the bills for the repair. Well inspections were done. VFDs (Variable Feed Drives) max at 60 htz. They are slowing down. Need to keep cranking them up to keep with the water level. Currently running at 57 htz, so they will need to be replaced soon. One pump is about $20-30,000. There are two that will need to be replaced. The heaters in the water plant are stuck on full blast. Need to have those looked at and repaired. The PC in the water tower failed. That is the part that tells the wells to fire up. It doesn’t show the water level, so does not automatically call the wells. John has to come and manually run the wells. Will have the new part here to be installed Friday. The new part is about $3,000.

**Tiffany Parr (filling in for Kathi Bennett), Utility Billing Clerk:** Bills were sent out on Thursday. 155 bills sent out, 36 by email, for a total of $15,672.44. Late fees $343.56. No shut offs. Kathi is still out for at least a couple more weeks.

**Tiffany Parr, City Clerk:** Board of Appeals and Equalization meeting is scheduled for April 25th at 6pm. Sheldon and Shaine are both current on the training. Liquor license renewals are coming up for both Cage and Corral. Mlaskoch paid half of the Church Street bill. Pine County would like to know if Willow will be using a tabulator for the election next year.

S. Parr made a motion to approve use of a tabulator, seconded by D. Walker. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

Received email from Tom Kurjahetz in regards to the campground on Countryside Loop. He would like them to have a fence between the road and the RVs. The council did not see the need for any action on their part at this time. Received a letter about the solar farm that is being proposed in Kettle River Township. It is just notifying the neighboring areas of the proposed plans. None of this will be located within city limits.

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

**Old Business**

**Repairing Roads:**  Some discussion about the potholes that need to be filled on Walters Road. Also discussion that the road is only a 5 ton road and the logging trucks should not be driving on it accept in the winter time. Dan and Art could go out and fill some of the potholes on the city portion of the road. There are also some potholes by the merc that should be filled in as well.

**Blight:** Some discussion on the current state of the blighted properties in town. Art suggests that the council reviews the blight ordinance over the month.

**Earned Sick and Safe Time Leave:**  Some discussion about clarification on what is meant by accrual is backdated to the first date of employment. Council would like some answers on that before making a decision in the accrual process that will be selected. Will table until next month.

**New Business**

**Assessment of Delinquent Sewer Bills:**  There are three sewer bills that have not been paid that will need to be assessed on to taxes.

A. Underhill made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2023-06, seconded by S. Parr. Motion carried with all members voting in favor.

**Petition for Annexation:** Gary Novak made a petition to annex in 80 acres of property that he owns on Countryside Loop for the purpose of subdividing and starting a housing development. Some discussion regarding potential plans. Council would like to meet with him prior to making a decision.

There was some discussion about Pine Street at the school. There was a motion passed in June of 1980 to turn that portion of the road over to the school. Art is wondering if that is something since it was already passed that can just be recorded now. Will follow up with the attorney to find out what can be done. Dan expressed that the rest of Pine Street is narrow and with the school traffic, it is tight. Would like to know if we could look into widening that street.

**Christmas Lights:** Vickie Whitehouse and Judy Kliniski volunteered to change the light bulbs in the Christmas Light fixtures. Shaine suggested having John hang the lights again this year as in the past, but Sheldon had spoken with Joe Martin who said he could volunteer and use SCI’s boom truck to get them put up.

**Adjournment**

S. Johnson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by S. Parr. Motion carried with all members voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm.

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Tiffany Parr, City Clerk

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Brent Switzer, Mayor