**Willow River City Council Meeting**

December 4, 2017

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, December 4, 2017 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, Chris Ketchmark, Sheldon Johnson, Darryl Poslusny and Vickie Whitehouse

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

**Others Present:** Gerard Bennett, Rosie Mielke, Natasha Watercott, Art Underhill, Dave Prachar, Tom Jensen, Steve Andrews, Bill Mueller, Rick Borchardt and Jon Herdegen.

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

**Special Guest, Tom Jensen-**  Tom addressed the Council regarding easement for the property he owns at 8097 County Hwy 61. Tom had maps to show where the City property line and the house’s property line are to show that the house uses the city property to access its current driveway. Tom is asking the City to approve an easement agreement that our attorney (Mike Bjerke) will approve to allow that easement. Tom has agreed to pay all of the fees associated with this. Vickie made a motion to go ahead and grant the agreement as long as Mike has gone over it and feels it is ok for the City to do so. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

**Jon Herdegen – MSA.** Jon presented the bids for the sewer ponds as well as an updated agreement between MSA and the City. They opened bids on the 16th of November and were very impressed with the amount of interest this project produced. Because of that the bids were competitive. There were 25 downloads of the project specs, which was very good. TNT Aggregate of Grand Rapids was the low bid at $1,000,900.00. MSA has estimated the project at 1.7 million. Jon felt that the City got a good price. They have checked their references. The next step is to issue the notice of award letter. Then TNT can get their insurance and bonding done as well as obtain sub-contractors and get that into MSA and then we can have a pre-construction meeting. Jon is hoping that we can have that meeting in early January. Vickie makes a motion to approve TNT Aggregate and send them their award letter. Darryl seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Vickie asked about mileage quoted in the agreement if that would change if the Federal rate changes on January 1st. Jon said that they will follow the Federal rate. Jon stated that he would like to have someone here during construction around 20 hours/week to oversee the work. Sheldon makes a motion to accept the amendment to the MSA agreement. Vickie seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Jon stated that there is a shortfall for the project funding. There is 10% margin included in the estimate. There will be a balance test that the MPCA requires. There is also going to be a connection between the two ponds. These preliminary tests at the front end will let them more accurately determine the total costs and shortfall. We have HSEM monies of 75%, some insurance monies which leaves around $300,000 to come up with. Vickie stated that she has applied for a DEED grant. Vickie wants to hold off on submitting a loan application because using that would require the City to raise their rates. Jon suggested that we apply for that so that we are on their list of intended use projects. We should know shortly after we apply for the grant if we make the list for that before we apply for the loan. The only other option is to reach out to the legislature and support the special appropriations in the bonding bill.

**Gerard Bennett, Willow River Fire Department** – 113 First Responder calls; 26 Fire calls and 1 other call. Gerard thought that those numbers were close to the most we’ve had in a year if not the most. In house air will be worked on over the winter. We have a total of 4 reps for the SCBA grant that they will be asking for bids on. The Gobble Wobble was a success and the gun raffle went very well. Recruitment will also be done over the winter. Gerard informed the city of a cadet program that the City of Carlton has started. He asked if he could get more information to possibly start a similar program. Sheldon thought it was a good idea. The Council said to go ahead and look into it.

**Steve Anderson and Bill Mueller** addressed the Council regarding a pit bull that lives on Church Street. They are concerned because it has come at people and it a serious issue since there are children that live nearby. It was told to the Council that it behaves this way every time that it gets out. Brent pointed out our Ordinance that needs to be adhered to. It was discussed and determined that this is their warning. If there are any further issues, the dog needs to be removed from the premises. Vickie made a motion to send a last chance letter to the property owner. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Brent and Diane will draft a letter and Brent will deliver since he is the Animal Enforcement Officer.

**Water and Sewer-** Diane reported that John in working with Vessco and that one of the chlorine heads is bad and is hopefully going to be rebuilt but if not, we may need a new one. He will be in touch when he gets those dollar amounts. The hydrants are at winter height.

**Public Works, Todd Anderson –** Todd, Gerard, Bruce Bohaty, Dave Prachar, Corey Prachar and Steven Prachar helped put up the Christmas lights. It took about 2 hours. The gas company was putting a new line under Willow Street and repaired the street with cold patch. It looks pretty good but we will see how it looks in the spring and if it needs repair, they will be back to do that. They had cold patch left and asked if the City wanted it and Todd took it. Todd ordered 1 pallet of salt from the lumber yard. There was a leak at the Fire Hall. Commercial Roofing came out and looked at it and said that it looked good but there was one area where it appeared to have been patched and that was also where the leak was. They worked in that area and hopefully that took care of it. He did this at “no charge” to the City. Todd took down the gun raffle sign and put the City one back up. Vickie asked if anyone had any tasks for Todd.

**Diane Nelson, Clerk –** Checkbook is in balance. I completed the Census of Government Survey of Public Employment and Payroll. Sent letter to Eugene Balut at Tom’s place stating that he needs to make contact with the City of fix the blight issue by Jan. 31st, 2018. Drew Abrahamson wanted to thank the Council for the quick reimbursement for the City’s ½ of the work done on Lake Street.

**Kathi Bennett, Water and Sewer** –mailed out 118 bills; emailed 21 bills for a total of $17,449.44. Diane sent down the assessments to the county totaling $6,538.03. 14 friendly reminders, 7 notices, 3 door hangers and 0 shut-offs.

**Old Business**  - none

**New Business:**

1. Budget – Diane wanted to go over a couple of things. In the revenue section, should we separate the Fire along with the water/sewer? On paper it is easier if we separate the Fire from the General Fund. Diane pointed out that the Fire Department is pretty much self- supporting at this point. She suggested that we set aside monies for the Department in case of vehicle breakdowns; equipment, etc. Sheldon asked if Diane meant a CD and she said “yes”. Sheldon asked Gerard for his opinion. He agreed and pointed out that repairs could be very costly if needed. Vickie pointed out that the restitution that we get each month should go into the Fire savings.

Going back to last month’s Community Club request and the Garden Club, Diane spoke to the auditors and they said that it is best if we give these organizations a dollar amount that we would reimburse them and then they could bring in receipts for us to reimburse up to that amount. Vickie said that if they come in and request the funds, then they would think about it. Diane told Vickie that she thought we should earmark an amount since this is the budget meeting. She asked why they weren’t here and Diane said that she told them she would address it. Chris and Sheldon agreed that they make our town look good and that we need to appreciate those who volunteer. Chris makes a motion to give the Garden Club up to $250 for reimbursement of expenses. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Diane then asked about the Community Club and what we wanted to do for them. They do the Easter Bunny and Santa for Willow River. Chris makes a motion to budget $250 for reimbursement of expenses. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Diane brought up the banner system instead of the flags. The Garden Club and Gerard thought it was a good idea. It would be around $100 each banner. We could start on Hwy. 61 and expand if we decide to. The Council agreed to have Diane look into how much it would be to get the system started.

Other than that, everything looks good with the budget. Darryl makes a motion to keep the budget the same. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Gerard asked about the CD again – Sheldon makes a motion to open a CD for $15,000 for the Fire Department. Vickie seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

1. Polling Place – Darryl accepts a resolution to keep Rutledge the polling place for Willow River. Sheldon seconded. Resolution accepted with all in favor.
2. Public meeting regarding the Dam – December 6th. Just to go over the meeting so everyone is aware. Dave Prachar asked where the Council stands. The Council would like the dam replaced.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Nelson