**Willow River City Council Meeting**

February 1, 2021

Approved March 1, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, February 1, 2021 via WebEx and at Willow River City Hall.

**Council Present:** Brent Switzer, Chris Ketchmark, Kevin McGreanor and Vickie Whitehouse and Sheldon Johnson.

**Staff Present:** Diane Nelson and Kathi Bennett.

**Others Present:** Gerard Bennett

**Approval of the Agenda:** Vickie brought up a change that needed to be made to the minutes. Diane will correct them to be approved at the March meeting. Vickie makes a motion to have the agenda approved with the amendment of the January minutes. Kevin seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Chris Ketchmark - yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

**Willow River Fire Department, Gerard Bennett**- January was a slower month which is good. Runs to date: Fire – 0, EMS – 5, and 0 other. The equipment is holding its own. The department is hoping to apply for a grant through Essentia to get 10 sets of I-gels (for oral airways). The department is waiting for more information on getting old radios from the Sheriff’s Office. The Mutual Aid association (Sandstone) is applying for a grant through FEMA for radios. Between the old radios through the Sheriff’s Office and the grant and the CRF monies, the department should be fully equipped with radios. They received a “thank you” from the Community Club for their help with Fun with Santa and the Christmas Eve dinners. Gerard said that there is one cadet in progress but it is not official yet and 1 new officer after COVID settles down. The Department is currently looking for grants for some new PPE. There is one in FFI and FFII. To be on our department, you need FFI, FFII and EMR. Gerard is trying to set a date to do the refresh training for all EMR’s at Willow River City Hall sometime before the end of March. He is trying to get everyone on the same refresher schedule.

Gerard updated the Council on the Marquee sign. Gerard stated that they are looking for a good location for it. The Garden Club would prefer not to use the garden that is to the north of City Hall. He is open to all ideas for it.

Diane brought up the router in the Fire Hall. Sam had looked at our set up and I explained the issue they were having and Sam mentioned that our problem may be the old router. So, I ordered a new wireless router and Kevin hooked it up. Diane asked Gerard for feedback on how it is working. Diane also updated the email addresses with the County.

**Water and Sewer, John Mikrot –** Diane said that she spoke with John and he really didn’t have much other than a meter on Church Street is not working correctly.

**City Clerk, Diane Nelson** – Christmas decorations are currently on sale if we were serious about starting to replace them. The LED ones are running about $120 off per fixture. The audit was last week and seems to have gone well. Still doing some follow-up. Last year new flag poles were brought up. So, I started looking into them so we can have new ones in time to be put up. They run about $65 each. Vickie asked where all of the money is coming from. Diane reminded her of the $300 donation that needs to used towards them. Sheldon asked why they need to be replaced. Diane said that the Garden Club has asked for new poles every year since she has been here because they break off the plants. Kevin said that it should be looked into. Sheldon asked how many poles have hanging baskets that we could just replace those. We should check with them to see how many. Kevin said that he will check. Someone from the Garden Club stopped in and said that they have put caution tape by the garden with the statue. They had an issue with snowmobiles running over it and do not want the blocks damaged. To add to Gerard’s comments on the marquee sign, Sue had stopped in and mentioned that if the sign went somewhere else, that the Garden Club would be willing to help with flowers and landscaping around it.

**Water and Sewer Billing, Katie Bennett** – Kathi sent out 149 bills. 27 were emailed and the total was $10,994.63. The late fees totaled $183.68. We also had a landlord who requested that the water be shut off when the tenant moves out. We had a different landlord ask about if we were able to shut off water for non-payment and Kathi contacted the League of MN Cities and they recommend against it because it could be considered a “constructive eviction” because homes are not inhabitable if there is not running water.

**Zoning – Sheldon**; nothing new to report.

**Dam Update – Vickie;** The workers should be done by the end of the week and will start pulling the barriers out. It should take a few weeks for the lake to regain its level. They will come back in the spring and do some landscaping. Chris said he had someone ask if they were going to stock it. Vickie said no, not right now anyway. Vickie said she was going to contact the County to see if we could get some barriers so that people don’t go out there. The Sheriff’s Office has been notified as well because there is a concern of snowmobilers going onto the lake thinking that it is frozen like all of the others. When they landscape, they will be putting large boulders at the edge to prevent side by sides and ATV’s from going on the rapids.

**Old Business**

1. MN Power agreement – nothing new
2. Hydrant locks – nothing new
3. Liquor Ordinance – Chelsie should be on it.
4. Annexation – Chelsie sent the Council some information to review. The question is whether Tom had petitioned all of the parties that he should have. Then we need to wait 90 days for objections. So, we need to wait for those other entities to be petitioned and then the 90 days will begin. Chris asked if Tom has been made aware of that? Sheldon said that he would like to know Tom’s intentions with the RV park. Is he going to have a covenant for the park and/or have the renters sign something? Sheldon also said that on the 80-acre parcel, that he would like to know more of the intentions with the property. He is concerned with annexing it in and then nothing happens for 20 years and we are maintaining roads. Chris agreed that we should see some sort of proposal for the property. Brent mentioned that the only wat to be sure is to have a contract so that what they plan to do is binding. Sheldon also mentioned that as of right now, Tom’s only bringing one house into the City limits. The RV park will not bring anything in. There would possibly be a road to maintain. How many rentals will Tom have? Would there be streetlights? Diane mentioned that there would be costs with filing fees as well. We could add that into the expenses that the landowners should pay for. Kathi asked if there are any permits that would be needed to operate a RV park. Sheldon said no. Sheldon said that there should be some kind of lease with Tom and the renter. It was mentioned that Diane could possibly email Tom and ask these questions. Vickie said that she is not for an RV park.

**New Business**

1. Future meetings – Stay with what we are doing. Brent and Kevin tested the new microphone and it seems to be working much better. However, no one called in that we could check with.
2. NPR- Northern Pine Riders grant resolution and sponsorship resolution. They are hoping to apply for a Federal Recreation Trail Grant. They have asked the City if we are willing to be the governmental sponsor. You do need 25% matching funds and they have that. Vickie makes a motion to approve the grant resolution and the sponsorship resolution. Kevin seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Chris Ketchmark – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

1. Computer backup – Diane explained that we currently back up to an external hard drive and Sam was informing us that ransomware can lay dormant on the computer for a while before it is launched. That give enough time for any device that has been connected to the computer to also get the virus. So, our external backup is no longer as safe as it once was. Sam said that the safest way to back up is through a cloud-based backup. If we did it on our own, it would cost around $20/month. However, it does have to be consistently monitored to make sure it is working correctly. CybertPC does offer that service for $50/month and they monitor it daily. If there are any issues it can be immediately dealt with. Kevin makes a motion to have CybertPC do our backup. Sheldon seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Chris Ketchmark – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

1. Fee schedule – We need to review it. Federal mileage went down to $.56/mile. Diane informed the Council that she talked with Gerard and is recommending a 2% increase for fire contracts. Sheldon asked about lawn mowing. It currently says $60/hour. It was discussed to have it read: per contracted bid rate. Diane will look into the proper way to word it. Kevin makes a motion to make those discussed changes to the fee schedule. Chris seconded. Roll call vote

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Chris Ketchmark – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor. Brent brought up if anyone on the Council should be paid an hourly wage for work they do above and beyond their normal duties. Some thought that it may be looked at negatively.

Kathi mentioned that she doesn’t have spare time now to do the quality of job that she would like to cleaning the hall. She does some basic things when she works and just wanted the Council to be aware of that. It should be getting better when she is not working her other job so much.

Motion made by Chris to adjourn the meeting. Sheldon seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Chris Ketchmark – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Nelson