**Willow River City Council Meeting**

April 1, 2019

Approved May 6, 2019

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, April 1st, 2019 at 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, Chris Ketchmark and Vickie Whitehouse

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

**Others Present:**  Gerard Bennett, John Mikrot, Beckie Morse, Dave Kliniski, Rosie Mielke, Steven and Victoria Prachar, Cindy Duke, Kevin and Alley McGreanor, Kevin Prachar and Dave Prachar.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Sheldon made a motion to approve the agenda. Chris seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

**Cindy Duke, Water and Sewer bill –** Cindy addressed the Council about her concern regarding her freeze up and having the water run. She was concerned about her being billed for that usage. The Council decided to discuss the whole city having to run their water and how they were going to adjust their billing. Kathi informed the Council that she cannot adjust the actual water meter readings. She gave a few options. She could credit everyone for a certain amount of gallons. Or, they could charge everyone the same amount of total gallons. Or, she could credit each account a dollar amount. She could also figure an average over a few past months. When Kathi was entering the usages, she did notice that not everyone was running their water. She thought that doing the average was probably the most fair. Vickie asked what the credit amount would be. Kathi said what the Council would determine. John said that he thought the water would probably need to run for the month of April. The mass credit is the easiest, but the average is the most fair. The Council discussed the averages option. Darryl makes a motion to adjust the bills by doing an average for each account. Chris seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

**Kevin and Alley McGreanor, chickens –** Alley addressed the Council regarding allowing residents to have chickens. She stated that people in Minneapolis, Sturgeon Lake and Askov can have chickens and it doesn’t make sense that we cannot in Willow River. She suggested limiting the number as well as not allowing roosters. She also suggested we address how they are kept to help limit problems. She would like the Council to reconsider this ordinance. Vickie stated that if we allow them, then we would have to reconsider the people who wanted a pig and a horse. The Council also brought up the fact that we do not have anyone to enforce the ordinances. Vickie suggested we table it. The rest of the Council agreed. It is tabled until next month.

**Kevin Prachar, Willow River School** – Kevin wanted to discuss the water issue from last year at the school. He haskept track for seven months of the water usage. They are averaging 43,000/month. He was asking for a credit on the bills to adjust the amounts. Vickie thought that this was taken care of. The Council discussed what was decided last year when it was discussed. Kevin gave the Council a copy of his averages. Sheldon asked Kevin how he was hoping it would be handled. Sheldon asked Kathi her opinion. Kathi said that it was determined that there was no leak in the meter. She also stated with residents that if they have a large usage and it isn’t a City problem, then they are responsible for paying for it. Kevin stated that this had already been discussed and taken care of. Kevin was under the impression that by him keeping track of the usage that we would credit him back for the average. However, at the meeting, there was no decision or motion made. Kathi explained the billing around that timeframe. The Council discussed usages. Kathi asked if the Council wanted to see a copy of the water ordinance.

Kevin asked about the bus garage addition. They want to add a floor drain so that they can wash buses in the winter. Do they need to put in a pump to pump it out on the ground or can they run it into the storm sewer. Kevin seemed to think that there is no difference between washing the busses outside and having the water on the ground or washing them inside and having the water pumped out. Sheldon asked John. John said that it is state law that you can’t pump it out on the ground. Kevin asked if they could bury a barrel and have it run out that way. John said that they need to comply with the state guidelines. Kevin then said that they wouldn’t do anything and just let the water run out the overhead doors. John said that the state would not allow that either. John told Kevin that when it is a business or a school like they are, that they need to be in compliance with the State and that it really doesn’t involve the City at that point. Gerard suggested that they talk to a building inspector.

Back to the water discussion – Sheldon asked what the Ordinance reads. The homeowner is responsible for any leaks. They would credit the sewer amount because that water did not go down the sewer. Kevin was adamant that they did not go through that many gallons. Some of the issue may have to deal with be billed for averages when Bernie left and there were no readings. Sheldon asked if we have waived the sewer portion in the past. Kathi said yes and explained how that would be done. The readings were discussed. Vickie makes a motion to credit the sewer portion of the overage. Darryl seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

**Water and Sewer, John Mikrot –** It was a wild month. The lift station froze up last month so we have been pumping it. There is an estimate in your packet for the repairs. That would update it a bit. It would be steel pipe, move the check valves and drill holes at the bottom of the pipes so that it would drain better and doesn’t freeze again. We could also put some industrial heat tape around it or dig it up and insulate around it. He is ready to go with whatever we decide. Vickie reminded John that we are tax exempt. Chris makes a motion to accept the bid from Wiikwaibaan Inini, Inc. and to have them do the work. Darryl seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. One of the pumps at the main lift station locked up and John found that there was a broken bolt in it. It has been repaired. We have had 4 places freeze up and three have all been thawed out and the fourth one will be done tomorrow when the resident is back in town. John received a call from Vickie and Diane and was told that the fence had been damaged at the sewer ponds and people had been through there on snowmobiles. He will be fixing it and making sure it is secured. There is a place on Doe Street that had their water meter freeze. When John went to fix it, it was turned backwards. So, it was a long time when there wasn’t usage charged. It was Tom Jensen’s rental. The Council discussed it and agreed that he is responsible for paying the usage. The sewer drain on Lake Street has cleared out. John asked if he should take care of the potholes. The Council said that they would appreciate it if he would. John will order some cold patch. They told him to order a whole pallet. The light is in process of being fixed.

**Willow River Fire Department, Gerard Bennett**- the Fire Department has had 4 fire calls, 23 EMS calls and 1 other for a total of 28 calls. Tanker #5 is still at the FCI. We are applying for a 50/50 grant for radios. Pine County is still looking at a package deal for radios so Gerard is waiting on them to see if it will save some money. The Fire Department attended the St. Urho’s Day parade in Finlayson and it went well. When the snow begins to go down, John and Gerard will get together and figure what is needed for bollards to protect the hydrants. Training is going on for some of the volunteers. We have 2 in EMR, 3 that are doing the refresher course, 1 in firefighter 1 and 1 going through EMT training. All will be going through CPR and fit test for the SCBA’s,

**City Clerk, Diane Nelson –** Two students have been coming and cleaning City Hall each Monday for about ½ hour. It has been going well and they are doing a good job. Over the course of the winter we have gotten a couple of complaints regarding the plows hitting a mailbox. Rick has been really good at going and talking to the resident about it but it usually comes down to the fact that their mailbox is not installed to USPS guidelines. There is a CD that is a general fund one that is coming due. We will let it roll over. I am getting Surplus Services signers updated and will send it in this month. Sue Sloper came in and talked with me about cleaning up debris at City Park. The men from CIP are coming out the first Wednesday in May to rake at the church and Todd usually had them rake at the park as well. Sue is willing to have them do that again, but we need someone to haul it away. Sheldon mentioned that we need to discuss the things that Todd did and we need to address what we are going to do moving forward. Diane also mentioned that we need to think about the park bathrooms. The Council discussed some items we need to think about with the possibility of a seasonal worker. Sheldon and Chris said to tell Sue to go ahead and we will get the debris taken care of. I let the Council know that I got a phone call from one the companies that gave us a bid last year to see if we were interested in doing the work this year. The Council talked about the streets. Vickie found what Todd had left regarding the streets. We will address this again at the next meeting.

**Water and Sewer Billing, Katie Bennett –** Kathi sent out 115 mailed bills and 28 e-bills. The total billing was $11344.97. Late fees totaled $223.84. The water usage for the month was 393,743 gallons. Kathi also sent out 13 shut off notices, did 5 door hangers and had no shut offs. Kathi asked if she could work Wednesday this week instead of Friday so that she can attend some training for Kettle River Township on Friday. The Council said that that would be fine. Kathi had sent the Council a couple of emails that needed to be discussed. One was for Tourville’s and she was wondering what option the Council wanted to go with. Chris makes a motion that they should have a meter installed. Darryl seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

**Flood Update – Vickie –** Vickie has nothing new to report.

**Zoning – Sheldon –** Sheldon said that the school just got a permit to do a lean to off of each side of the bus garage. Laura will be dropping a check off.

**Old Business**

1. Lawn mowing- Vickie reported that there were two areas that they forgot to add to the list of areas to be mowed. The lot south of McGreanor’s and the lot kitty corner from the Corral. Kevin McGreanor had mowed that lot for us last year in exchange for use of that property. He said that he was willing to do that again. The sewer ponds only need to be done once per month (depending on the weather). We received two bids. Chris makes a motion to accept Eaton’s Lawn care bid. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.
2. Equipment Sale – Vickie asked if the loader was on MinnBid yet? No, it is not yet. I have the process started with MinnBid but it is not listed. We have an auction date of May 18th. There is a listing of what we are selling. Do we want to advertise?
3. Board of Equalization – reminder that it is April 18th at 6 PM
4. Out of State Travel Policy – State of MN requires that we have one. The limits are set for $8 for breakfast, $12 for lunch and $15 for dinner. The Council discussed the lodging amounts. Vickie makes a motion to approve the policy with the changes noted above. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

**New Business**  -

1. Audit Report – The Council was given the information in their packets. We will discuss it and approve it next month.

Motion made by Chris to adjourn the meeting. Darryl seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Nelson