**Willow River City Council Meeting**

April 5, 2021

Approved May 3, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, April 5, 2021 via WebEx and at Willow River City Hall.

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

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

**Others Present:** Gerard Bennet, Dave Prachar, Tom Jensen, and Don Otwell

**Approval of the Agenda:** Brent added an item to the agenda as #7 - Vickie makes a motion to approve the consent agenda. Kevin seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Chris Ketchmark - yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

**Don Otwell –** Big Bend. Don lives on the other side of the City’s property on Big Bend. He has noticed people down there fishing which he has no problem with. There was a group of guys there that had a campfire there last Saturday that got pretty large. He was concerned because it was so dry. The Sheriff’s Office was ultimately call on this and did come out. Don asked if we were enforcing the No Trespassing. He was told to call the Sheriff’s Office if he sees that again. Don also asked about the flag at the City Park at the old dam. Vickie told him that she was contacted by the American Legion and they offered to put a new one up at the new park. One of Don’s concerned was where the old pole went. They were wondering if it had ever been found. Vickie said that it had never been found and that she had asked the construction company to let us know if they found it because we did want it.

**Willow River Fire Department, Gerard Bennett**- Runs to date; Fire- 4, EMS-16, and other-0 for a total of 20 calls. All of the equipment is holding its own. Some small repairs and maintenance. They are applying for a grant to get I-gels (oral airways) through Essentia. Looking for a PPE grant for structure gear. It is getting to the age where they need to be replaced. One set of gear can run $3000-$4000. They are still on the list to do a joint grant through mutual aid for radios. They helped the Community Club with Fun with the Easter Bunny. It went well and due to the weather they used City Hall. Gerard said that they have one cadet and one adult but are waiting until COVID stuff settles down to get them started. They are still setting up medical refresher classes. The DNR has updated their Mutual Aid Financial Agreement and it will increase the base on calls to $350 to $500 and then per truck. Gerard also thanked the Council for their response to the fire when Kathi had sent out the text to all of them. Diane asked Gerard if the North Branch Fire Chief got in touch with him. He had called City Hall. Gerard said yes and they were wanting to do a burn in the area. Vickie said if they want to do it they have the Council blessing.

Gerard mentioned that he is still looking for a location for the marquee sign. Sheldon asked if there were any suggestions. Gerard said “yes” but none of them were great. It needs the visibility.

Sheldon asked how the people got into Big Bend? There was some discussion regarding that. It was clarified that there is also a spot that the township owns from the FEMA buyout that has access to that area. Tom Jensen pulled it up on Beacon. Don said that he would look into that. The City has our access marked “No Trespassing”, so it is a clear violation.

**Water and Sewer, John Mikrot –** John was not in attendance so Diane updated the Council with what he told her. Beckie has started bringing the tower up to summer height. He will start patching soon. The media is still scheduled to be changed the first part of May. Beckie will be flushing hydrants in April. Sheldon asked about patch and asked if he had enough.

**City Clerk, Diane Nelson** – I had the audit reports for the Council to look at. I checked with the County regarding street sweeping and was told that that is something that they do. They will reimburse the City for the portion that is the County’s. I would need to contact them and get prior approval. However, this year they will not because of the resurfacing project that will be happening starting in June. Sheldon asked if CIP is still doing that kind of work. Diane said that she will check. We have a smaller CD that is renewing. The Moose Lake Historical Society has sent a letter asking for support. The Council said that they support Pine County’s. I reminded the Council of the Board of Equalization meeting. It is April 22nd at 6 PM.

**Water and Sewer Billing, Katie Bennett** – Kathi sent out 150 bills. 26 were emailed and the total was $12309.50. Late fees totaled $240.86. One house that had been shut off has now been turned back on. If we were doing shut offs, we would have 3 that would need to be shut off for non-payment.

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

**Dam Update – Vickie;** Just waiting to hear back when they will start the landscaping. People have been impressed with how good it looks and how the water level has come back. Vickie suggested that we call it something else. “The Rapids” was discussed.

**Old Business**

1. MN Power agreement – nothing new
2. Hydrant locks – nothing new
3. Liquor Ordinance – nothing new this month
4. Annexation – Tom was in attendance. He asked if any of the Council had any questions. He stated that he has been doing what has been needed. He had a map with the RV sites and camping sites on it. Tom let the Council know that he has applied for licensing through the State of MN. He basically has the same footprint as it was before. There will be 8 sites with water/sewer hookups. The sewer has passed County requirements and the water passed MN testing. There are several requirements that the state has in order to be a RV park. Tom said that he is doing all of that or has it done. Sheldon asked what it is currently zoned. Don Otwell said the township has it as agricultural and the county has it as mobile home park. Sheldon was questioning what the City would zone it as. Don Otwell said that it is currently zoned agricultural because anything with 1000’ of frontage the County does the zoning for the township. Tom suggested commercial with an intended use as \_\_\_\_\_\_. Vickie said seasonal/recreational. Brent said that he is concerned about the road maintenance. Kevin said that he thinks we should give Tom an answer and vote on it tonight. Kevin made a motion to approve the proposed annexation. Sheldon seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Chris Ketchmark - yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor. Tom thanked the Council and Diane will contact Chelsie regarding zoning.

1. Future Council meeting format- Keep doing what we are doing. We do not have enough square footage to have a larger number of people here. Sheldon suggested that we go outside.

**New Business**

1. Tax forfeited land sale- There is a parcel on Willow Street that will be going up for sale due to tax forfeiture. We do have first option to buy it to clean up any issues like blight. Diane was told that the County was going to clean it up before they auction it though. When I was talking to the County, it didn’t look like we have access to our property through there. Vickie stated that there should be an easement filed for it. Diane will check with the County on that. If there isn’t an easement, this would be the time to figure one out. Vickie was sure that there is one. Vickie said that she wasn’t for it. Chris agreed. It was decided to let the County proceed with it.
2. City Park – There was some interest from residents to help with the rebuilding of the City Park at the damn. Vickie said that we don’t have much of a choice, the DNR is restoring it back to the way it was before. Dave Prachar was interested in helping. Dave said that this is our park and we should be able to have some input. He found it strange that they didn’t ask. Vickie said that she would look into it.
3. Hwy 61 resurfacing resolution for State of MN – Mark LeBrun sent us a Resolution to approve that allows the resurfacing of Hwy. 61 to go through the city. Vickie clarified that they are doing the box culverts next year after resurfacing this year? Yes. Chris makes a motion to adopt the Resolution. Kevin seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Chris Ketchmark - yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

1. Insurance liability waiver – We do not waive the monetary limits on our yearly insurance renewal. Motion made by Kevin to “not waive” the monetary limits. Chris seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Chris Ketchmark - yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

1. Roof – We had a few bids come in. Commercial roofing came out and fixed the leak at no charge and then told us it would be $1775 to fix the spots that need work. We received bids from Commercial Roofing, Beaver Roofing and Royalty Contracting. The Council discussed the bids. Chris made a motion to accept the bid from Commercial Roofing. Vickie seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Chris Ketchmark - yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

1. Lawn mowing bid- We received one bid from Eaton’s Lawncare. The Council discussed changes from the previous year. Vickie makes a motion to approve Eaton’s Lawncare’s bid with the stipulation that they do the sewer ponds once per month as well as the freeway ramps. Chris seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Chris Ketchmark - yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

1. Community Service – Vickie has a relative that contacted her to see if he could do community service at the City. He is also doing it through another place. Some jobs that were suggested were: clean/rake cemetery, clean City Hall, paint fire hydrants, sweep the sidewalks. The Council thought it would be good to have him help out.

Chris addressed the Council stating that there is an issue with a property where people are living with no bathroom and/or heat. It is a garage. Brent thought that we should discuss it with our City Attorney. One point that Brent had was that it is a fire hazard to have someone living there without proper egress window to get out in case of a fire. Brent said that he will look into it this month to see if there is something that we can do.

Motion made by Vickie to adjourn the meeting. Chris 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 8:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Nelson