**Willow River City Council Meeting**

May 3, 2021

Approved June 7, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, May 3rd, 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, and John Mikrot.

**Approval of the Agenda:** 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.

**Willow River Fire Department, Gerard Bennett**- Runs to date; Fire- 9, EMS-26, and other-0 for a total of 35 calls. Gerard said that they have one cadet interested and one adult. When things get back to normal, they will get them going. The can cage has been emptied. They are getting their refresher training in sync. Mutual Aid agreement will be updated soon. Air exchanger is up and running. Gerard thanked the Council for that. There is a grant for I-gels in the works and they are keeping an eye out for a grant for turnout gear. Mutual Aid grant for radios is still in the works.

Gerard mentioned that he is still looking for a location for the marquee sign. It does need 110V power supply.

**Water and Sewer, John Mikrot –** The hydrants are flushed. The media will be replaced in the next week. John has done a couple of repairs in town. He did some maintenance at the shop, patched roads, and some street sweeping. John and Sheldon discussed the Dracy’s house. They had a fitting come loose that flooded part of their main floor. They had inquired to see if the City had done anything extra that would cause a pressure surge. They are trying to make sure this doesn’t happen again. Sheldon said that he was told it was the valve below the meter that came loose. We do not check the pressure at the home. The City is responsible for the water to the curb stop and anything after that to the house is the responsibility of the homeowner. We do supply the meter, a shut off valve and a loop if they want it. Their plumber should be hooking it all up. Sheldon asked if there is a shut off key in case water needs an emergency shut off in the future. John said that the Fire Department should have one and there should be one at the shop.

**City Clerk, Diane Nelson** – I did some research on the easement on the tax forfeited land on Willow Street and did find that we have an easement to our property through there. Diane asked the Council to consider letting the County take over the Board of Equalization meetings. As it is now, we have not had anyone show up for the past few years and we need councilmembers to take training and attend the meeting. Also, the county is limited on what they can talk to the landowner about since the City handles it. We are one of the few city’s left that have it here instead of doing it open book. If we transfer to the County, it would save the City some money. The HVAC has been installed. It is not something that should be left on. The Fire Department has a switch that will turn it on and it will run for 20 minutes and then shut off. I received a call for Steve at CIP regarding the work crew. He was wondering if we needed them and also if they could dump debris at Big Bend. Diane asked if we wanted them to do the cemetery. Sheldon said “yes”. The Council said that they have no problem with them putting debris back there as long it is locked afterwards. City Hall has received a few complaints regarding Brett Mlaskoch’s shop on Park Drive and garbage there. It is blowing into the neighboring properties. A letter was sent out to him letting him know that it needs to be kept clean. Diane asked for some time off in June and the Council approved.

**Water and Sewer Billing, Katie Bennett** – Kathi sent out 150 bills. 27 were emailed and the total was $14352.60. There are currently three houses that are shut off and vacant. Total usage for the month was 403,855 gallons.

**Zoning – Sheldon**; 1 building permit on Gander Drive. Diane asked Sheldon about the addresses at the lots at Wyatt’s Cove. Diane and Sheldon discussed the building/zoning ordinances and we will address that when the liquor ordinance has been finalized.

**Dam Update – Vickie;** The contractor will be back to do some clean-up and they are not allowed to put up our gate or fence because it is not in their contract. The DNR said that they will work with us to get it put back up. They asked about keeping the boulders where they are currently (along 61 and the park). Vickie will talk to them about the handicap accessibility. Vickie also addressed how to avoid ATV traffic in there. They suggested that we post it “no ATV’s, no dirt bikes”. The park will not be as big as it was before because they extended their easement. The DNR also asked Vickie about a boat landing and she said that there never was one there, that the one at Chipmunk park was always used. The DNR is having a meeting later this week regarding the ATV’s and handicap accessibility. Vickie will be attending that. The Council thought it would a good idea to leave the boulders. Sheldon asked if they would be filling in the south side and Vickie said she thought they would be. Dave Prachar added some suggestions for the City Park. There was additional discussion on how to keep ATV’s out of the park.

**Old Business**

1. MN Power agreement – nothing new
2. Hydrant locks – nothing new

Liquor Ordinance – Our attorney had a copy of a proposed liquor ordinance for the Council to review. This ordinance combines all of the ordinances pertaining to liquor into one. Sheldon said that he would like more time to review the new one. Vickie makes a motion that we table it until next month so the Council has more time to review it. Chris seconded. Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

Chris Ketchmark - yes

Sheldon Johnson – yes

Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

1. Annexation – Diane sent out the letter to adjacent landowners as well as the township last week as well as by regular mail. She has gotten some questions regarding it. A copy of the Ordinance was sent out to the Council for their review. Chelsie had given me the total of charges that she has into the annexation process and there would also be the certified letter mail costs. The Council thought that these were costs that Tom had agreed to pay. Chelsie also gave me the portion of the taxes that we will pay Kettle River Township over two payments. There was some discussion regarding zoning. Sheldon thought that we shouldn’t include commercial in how it is zoned. Currently, it is zoned seasonal/recreational. Brent met with Kettle River Township regarding the annexation and Countryside Loop. They suggested that they come up with a written agreement that we both can agree upon for the road maintenance. We should have that for our next meeting. Kathi brought up a performance bond and questioned if we needed one.
2. Future Council meeting format- Brent asked if we are good to keep as it is. The Council felt it was.
3. Roof- It is done. They were here quickly and had it done and he appreciated that we went with him.
4. Garage used as a residence- There is some concerns from residents of the city. We do have an ordinance regarding an inside toilet. It states that you are required to have an indoor toilet at a residence. Diane also brought up the public nuisance ordinance, however, there hasn’t been any real complaints. It was discussed to send a letter regarding the inside toilet ordinance. It was decided to send a letter to both owners of the property.

Vickie had a flyer that was sent to each resident in the city of Sandstone. It had important information in it regarding City business, information and local events. Vickie would like to see something like this mailed out to our residents as well.

Motion made by Sheldon 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 8:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Nelson