**Willow River City Council Meeting**

May 6, 2019

Approved June 3, 2019

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, May 6th, 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, Harold Blatz and the Askov American

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

**Bruce Westerberg**, Lake States Tree Service– removal of tree on lot on Willow Street. Bruce addressed the Council and told them that Lake States was contracted by MN Power to clean up trees by the power lines. The City has a lot on Willow Street that they obtained from the flood of 2012 and there is a Jack Pine there that is leaning into the line and he would like to know if they can remove the tree. He said that they would clean up the brush but leave the wood if someone wanted it. The Council said to go ahead and remove it.

**Willow River Fire Department, Gerard Bennett**- the Fire Department has had 7 fire calls, 35 EMS calls and 1 other for a total of 43 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 Department had a Fire/EMS reunion at the Squirrel Cage and that went well. Parade season will be starting up soon. Ben is coming up to be done with probation so a recommendation to approve him will be coming. Mariah Youngberg will be turning 18 soon and she is staying in the area so they may be looking at bring her on. Vickie asked if we will look for more cadets and Gerard said that they would continue with the cadet program. The Department received a $1000 donation from the Lloyd and Anna Antilla family to go towards the purchase of pagers and radios. It is very appreciated. Gerard brought up the sand shed and asked the City to think about taking it down or moving it. Gerard also asked the Council to consider letting the Fire Department us the shop on Doe Street for storage. The Department is also looking to burn the pile at the lot on Willow Street. The Relief Association is going to be ordering patches for the department. The SCBA fit test went well and they are 95% certified. Sheldon asked if they were looking at burning any fields or anything this year. Gerard said that they have nothing planned at this time. Sheldon asked them to think about that possibility.

**Water and Sewer, John Mikrot –** The lift station is repaired at Wyatt’s Cove. John does have the band to build around it and he will do that so it doesn’t freeze up next winter. The water tower is at summer height. The hydrants were flushed and everything went fine with that. Cold patch came in and he will be out using that. Sheldon asked to take note of any issues while he is out and to let him know. John looked at the storm drain by the school and he is going to wait until school is out and then fix that. They have started the water balance test at the sewer ponds. Sheldon brought up that he had Steve Whited from CIP call and inquire about street sweeping. Todd used to go behind them with the loader and pick it up and take it back to the County lot on 61. Sheldon asked John if they could line something up with the County to have them pick up the sand. John would look into it and see what he could do. John asked when he should open up the bathroom in the park. The Council said that anytime would be fine.

**City Clerk, Diane Nelson –** Checkbook is in balance. CIP didn’t have enough time to rake the City Park. The school is wondering if they could use some of the City picnic tables for after their elementary school program. The Fire Department has some we could ask Gerard about and the ones at the shop are available as well. The City was fine with it as long as it is ok with the Fire Department. Melissa Johnson from the school asked about raking the cemetery for the senior to get some of their hours in. She, however, needs rakes and someone to haul the debris. Sheldon suggested asking Dave if he could with his dump truck and see what he would charge us. I said that I would check with Melissa and Dave. Diane addressed the checkbook. We have received 75% of the 75% that HSEM is going to reimburse us. There is still a sum of money coming from that. We have not been able to start submitting for reimbursement from the grant. We should have $300,000 - $400,000 coming in from those two things. Right now, there is about $150,000 in checking and $45,000 going out in bills which leaves us tighter than normal. Our local government aid and tax monies should come in the end of July. We will be close in the interim. There is no concern long term; it is just getting through this spot. We can look into it closer next month.

**Water and Sewer Billing, Katie Bennett –** Kathi sent out 116 mailed bills and 27 e-bills. The total billing was $11,249.92. Kathi also sent out 16 shut off notices, did 2 door hangers and had no shut offs. This month’s billing will go out Friday. Vickie brought up purchasing a hand held meter reader that is on sale through UB Max. It would save Beckie and Kathi a few hours per month because the readings would not have to be manually entered. Darryl makes a motion to spend up to $700 to purchase a handheld meter reader.

**Zoning – Sheldon –** Dracy’s got a permit to build a garage. We have not gotten a check yet from the school for their permit. Chris said that he spoke with Kevin and Kevin informed him that he spoke with the County and they said that a catch basin is fine for their bus garage. Chris recommended that he get it in writing from them and give the City a copy as well.

**Flood Update, Vickie –** dam site easement, Jason Boyle and Vickie spoke and that draft is not ready for approval. Another thing they didn’t look at is restoration for the City Park and the DNR is going to do that. They are going to put in a box culvert now on Hwy 61. We started the water balance test. We are hoping to wrap up the sewer ponds shortly.

**Old Business**

1. Chickens – Askov has an Urban Chicken Ordinance with a licensing fee. It is quite lengthy on the conditions that have to be met. The Clerk there did say that they have 2 people in town with chickens and they have not had any issues. Vickie mentioned that the City of Sandstone requires 100% neighbor approval. Sheldon mentioned that we represent the citizens and that there should be a way to survey them and see what the people want. Vickie makes a motion that we do not allow chicken within the City. Darryl seconded. Motion carried with Chris voting no.
2. Equipment sale – the loader will be on MinnBid for 10 days. There are flyers for the auction available for people to take and put up. Do we want to put an ad in the paper? Yes, put an ad in the Evergreen. Chris makes a motion to spend up to $100 for an ad in the Evergreen for the auction. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Sheldon and John will get some of the stuff down here to have in the parking lot.
3. Approval of audit –Vickie makes a motion to approve the audit. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

**New Business**  -

1. MPH sign on Kandiyohi – Brent said that he was told that people drive too fast and are concerned about that. He looked at the area and we could put one there. Vickie said that we only have 20 mph signs. Diane said that signs are about $30. Brent said that he would put a 20 mph sign up.
2. Part time worker – Darryl said that we need someone on an “on needed” basis. The Council discussed volunteers.
3. Debris at Big Bend – People have starting dumping stuff that shouldn’t go back there since we don’t have anyone to monitor it anymore. Do we still allow people back there? Vickie makes a motion to not allow debris to be dumped back there. Chris seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.
4. Watering flowers- We will start a volunteer list. I will put it on the website.
5. Sinkhole – There used to be a garage between us and the house to the north. It is sinking. We will ask Rick to haul some fill in.
6. Dog bite – Beckie was reading meters last week and got bit by a dog. It was a pretty deep bit on her side. She went to the doctor. She is an employee of John’s, so it isn’t our insurance. We did contact the Sheriff’s Office and the dog should be quarantined. For the City, a letter was sent along with a copy of our Ordinance. The letter explained that it is now a documented case and that the dog is considered a potentially dangerous animal. If something happens again, she will be asked to put the dog down.
7. League of MN Cities liability waiver form – Vickie makes a motion the sign the liability waiver form. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Motion made by Chris to adjourn the meeting. Darryl seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Nelson