**Willow River City Council Meeting**

June 7, 2021

Approve July 6, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, June 7th, 2021 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 Bennett, John Mikrot, Rosie Mielke, Gary Novak, Carl Novak, Don Otwell, Jeff Danielski, Alley McGreanor, Clint Nylen, Dean Nylen, Jennifer Thompson, and Alanea White.

**Public Hearing regarding annexing 3 parcels into the city.** Brent clarified that this is a time to hear the residents and that no decisions would be made until it would be discussed later in the meeting. Gary Novak had sent the city some notes that Diane had printed out for the Council. He is hoping to develop his property that is next to one of the considered properties to be annexed. He has concerns about the campground that is going in and wondering if it enhances the city or not. He stated that there is a high probability that it will begin to look run down and if it changes owners, that it will not be kept up. He is asking the city to consider having covenants for this campground so that that doesn’t happen and the city can retain some sort of control. Tom encouraged people to drive by and see that it is clean and the campers that he has there are supporting the establishments in the city. Tom stated that it would be easier to have it zoned with the City instead of part being county and part being township. Tom stated that it was currently zoned for a manufactured homes not recreational vehicles with the township. Don Otwell clarified that it is not currently zoned for manufactured homes because it has been more that one year since they were vacated so the conditional use permit is no longer in place. Tom and Don discussed this. Jeff Danielski asked about his driveway and if it would become a city street. Sheldon said it would remain private. Jennifer Thompson asked about her property since the city street runs through the corner of her lot.

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

**Willow River Fire Department, Gerard Bennett**- Runs to date; Fire- 16, EMS-35, and other-0 for a total of 51 calls. They are keeping up with the small repairs on their work nights once a month. The I-gel grant is in the application process and they are looking for PPE grants. A DNR 50/50 grant has been applied for. They did the WRHS graduation parade and at the Memorial Day services. Gerard said that they have one adult interested. The aluminum cans are appreciated. They have been very busy lately. Still looking for locations for the marquee sign. The EMR/EMT refresher will be hosted here. The DNR mutual aid agreement amounts have been updated. Gerard will get an updated list of amounts to Diane.

**Water and Sewer, John Mikrot –** The media is in, the filter is running. Their work is not done. They broke something. John feels they did a poor job and didn’t send a representative up and things didn’t get done right. Vessco subcontracted this. John has put in a lot of extra time. John is recommending not to pay excess charges for stuff that was not done correctly. Sheldon asked how much patch is left. Sheldon is going to do some soon and will let Sheldon know next month.

**City Clerk, Diane Nelson** – Original paperwork needed to be signed for the Board of Equalization (not faxed copy). WRFD Relief Association is asking for a gambling permit for their raffle this fall. Diane will sign. Someone had asked me if a welcome packet was available to new residents. Someone will ask the Community Club if they are interested. Diane brought up that we are having issues with our email through Frontier. Customer service has been difficult and we are having issues getting it fixed. She asked permission to start a new address and begin the transition to start transitioning to that new address. Brent thought that would be good.

**Water and Sewer Billing, Katie Bennett** – Kathi sent out 151 bills; 27 email bills for a total of $14,760.86. Late fees totaled $364.45. Can’t do shut offs yet. Willow River Community Club is asking for a donation of employee time and ink and paper to print out flyers for Fun with the Easter Bunny and Music and Memories. Brent said that he thought that would be fine. Kathi asked if she could work June 30th instead of July 2nd.

**Zoning, Sheldon**- One permit for Lake Street

**Dam Update, Vickie-** The DNR is recommending that we keep the park closed. They would like to give it enough time for the vegetation to get established which will probably be September or October. They gave the city permission to take down trees to the north of where the water access was so that we can put a gate up. They do not want any ATVs up there. It is completely off limits. They left the poly binder for the city to use as well. We cannot put the flag pole up until September but they are going to order in now due to cost. Chris felt that if people are out there, they need to be ticketed. Vickie said they would be. Vickie needs to take pictures in case there is any damage. Kevin picked up 20 t-posts to block off General Andrews. The road barriers can go in anytime. Vickie is thinking to get CIP out there to do the fence. The garden club is no longer interested in putting a flower bed up there. Kathi mentioned that Sturgeon Lake is getting ride of some big cement barricades. The city will borrow some to use. Don Otwell asked who is going to put up the flag pole. Kevin will coordinate.

**Old Business**

1. MN Power agreement – nothing new
2. Hydrant locks – nothing new
3. Liquor Ordinance – Sheldon went through and highlighted some items. Examples he was questioning was having liquor at the Pavilion or giving away liquor (which was done at the fishing contests in the past). Diane clarified that we wanted Chelsie to make sure that everything from our existing liquor ordinances was included in this one. Diane suggested that she take a copy of the highlighted one and compare to our existing ordinances to make sure they are consistent. The Council agreed.
4. Annexation – Chris brought up that the items/concerns in the letter have previously been discussed with Tom. Brent agreed. Chris makes a motion to approve the annexation. Kevin seconded. Sheldon stated that we should know how it is to be zoned. Tom shared his thoughts on zoning. Sheldon said that he is looking at residential with a conditional use permit. Tom clarified that a conditional use permit moves with the property. Don Otwell confirmed that. Vickie asked to see the email Chelsie sent regarding the zoning. Gary Novak strongly suggested we look at conditions for that property. He also suggested that Tom may have a nicely run business, however when the next owner comes in, we need to be sure that it is kept up as well. That is why he feels we need conditions. Sheldon would like to table. Chris makes a motion to table this until next month. Kevin seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. We would like to look at the zoning closer.
5. Future Council meeting format- We no longer need to do the online format.
6. Garage used as a residence- We sent out a letter to the owner stating that she needs to hook up to water and sewer in order to live there. She has applied for a building permit and is going through the process to hook up. Brent asked what to do when we get to the 13th and they haven’t hooked up? Diane felt that since she is making a good faith attempt to hook up so she is acting on the letter that we cannot really do anything at this point. Normally we would send a second letter if they don’t comply by the set date. It was suggested to check with Chelsie. Vickie suggested that a deputy deliver the letter. Diane said that she has been decent and that we could send another letter because she did respond to that one.

**New Business**

1. Park bathroom – John opened that bathroom for a function that was there this last week. Diane asked if we wanted it to be open for the summer and who is going to take care of it. The council said that it should be. Kevin will take care of it.
2. National Night Out- It is August 3rd this year. Are we going to participate? Vickie makes a motion to have NNO. Kevin seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.
3. ATV grant – Northern Pine Riders. It is our yearly grant agreement. Sheldon makes a motion to approve the grant agreement for Northern Pine Riders. Chris seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.
4. Road agreement with Kettle River Township – Don Otwell was in attendance for any questions. Brent felt this agreement would be the best for the maintenance of Walter’s Road. Vickie said that we haven’t finished the annexation so we shouldn’t sign this yet. Vickie asked what this does with our contract with snowplowing. Kathi asked for a speed limit sign to be put up on that road. This will be discussed again next month.
5. Flags – Diane put it on the agenda because Memorial Day has come and gone and they aren’t up. The council discussed several options.

Motion made by Sheldon to adjourn the meeting. Chris seconded.

Motion carried with all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Nelson