**Willow River City Council Meeting**

August 2, 2021

Approved September 7, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Monday, August 2nd, 2021 at Willow River City Hall.

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

**Staff Present:** Diane Nelson

**Others Present:** Gerard Bennett, John Mikrot, Rosie Mielke, Don Otwell, Alley McGreanor, Dave Prachar, and Alanea White.

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

**Willow River Fire Department, Gerard Bennett**- Runs to date; Fire- 24, EMS-45, and other-0 for a total of 69 calls. The department bought a truck from the state (through their surplus military vehicles) to replace truck #3. It is a Chevy diesel max crew cab. Number 3 is operational but are trying to plan ahead and it is a stronger truck. Vickie asked if #3 will go up for sale then and Gerard said yes it would. The I-gel grant is in progress through Essentia. There is also a PPE grant in process and the Lions gave a donation towards PPE. This is a 50/50 grant through the DNR and the Lions donation would help with the half that the fire department would be responsible for. There is also a mutual aid grant in the works. The Fire Departments helped at the music and memories program, will be at National Night Out and they are planning to be at Askov Rutabaga Days. They are still planning on having the gun raffle. There are two recruits in the works. EMR and EMT refresher training starts up August 10th. The Commercial Club is looking at a different spot for the marquee sign. They are looking at a spot along County Road 43. They are going to check with the property owner to see if that is a possibility. Gerard wanted the city to approve them going ahead with the process in that spot. Brent asked if the sign was double sided. Gerard said yes. He also asked if the city would be willing to pay the power bill there and to let the staff do the programming of it. Kevin made a motion to approve the site pending land owner approval. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. The council also agreed to the staff to do programming for it and to pay the power bill. Gerard gave an update on the HVAC. They are in the process of getting bids for it and then will make a decision.

**Water and Sewer, John Mikrot –** Vessco is still waiting for the part and then they will be up. John will be doing some road repair around the corners that ae getting worn down. He may need to get some fill from Bonks. He needs to add some fill by the lift station at Wyatt’s Cove as well as some paint with the band that was added around it. Brent needs his meter fixed and there are bees by it. Brent and John will get that taken care of. John asked if we accepted the manhole by Jensen’s shop when the city took over Wyatt’s Cove? That manhole is Tom Jensen’s and would not be the City’s. We took Wyatt’s Cove and the lift station. The council talked about his duplex he’s building and the water and sewer there. John said he will tell him to get in touch with the city. The council discussed an issue that one of our residents had with a meter issue. Diane informed the council of what went wrong with the meter. Due to a combination of errors the council discussed waiving the sewer portion of the bill. Sheldon made a motion to waive the sewer portion of the bill. Kevin seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

**City Clerk, Diane Nelson** – Juneteenth was approved by the state of MN in June. Diane asked the Council if she should update the Policy Manual. The council agreed that she should. There is a Red Ribbon Ride to raise money for AIDS awareness that will be riding through town on August 20th. There is also the Ragnar Run happening at that time as well. The school is helping with the Ragnar Run and asked for the city’s approval to close down part of Main Street while they come through to the school. This will be overnight into the morning when they will be in Willow River. The council said yes. Diane reminded the council that we will need to schedule our budget meeting next month to be held sometime in September. Diane also let the council know that the yearly contribution went out to the Pine County History Museum for the 2021 year. She let the council know of someone who was disgruntled with the city on how door hangers were done.

**Water and Sewer Billing, Katie Bennett** – Kathi was unable to attend so Diane read her report. She will be doing billing this coming Friday. Mlaskoch and Knife River are being billed for hydrant usage. Two houses have sold and have new owners. Shut offs can start as of the 1st of the month and right now there are 4 that need to pay or be shut off on the 5th.

**Zoning, Sheldon**- 1 garage permit on County Hwy 61.

**Dam Update, Vickie-** By the end of August we can access the park. She is looking at Saturday, September 11th to put up the flag pole. She will be looking for volunteers to help with trees and fencing. Landwehr has left some poly-binder. She may have a lead on a couple people who may donate some construction materials (i.e., boulders).

**Old Business**

1. MN Power agreement – nothing new
2. Hydrant locks – Kevin is looking into them. Diane mentioned that the ARPA funds should cover this. A regular padlock goes on there. Gerard suggested a log arm padlock would be preferred.
3. Annexation – The ordinance has been sent off to the Administrative law judge, the township and the county for approval.
4. Liquor Ordinance – The changes that we approved last month have been sent to Chelsie and she will get it done. The next step is the public hearing.
5. Planning Commission- According to ordinance #37, we need 8 members. We have the eight and they are: Brent Switzer, Alley McGreanor, Dave Prachar, Pat and Leon Herzog, Art Underhill, Harold Blatz and Tom Brabec. They will have staggered terms. The council needs to approve the Planning Commission and then we will sent letters to set the first meeting date. Kevin makes a motion to approve the Planning Commission. Vickie seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.
6. National Night Out- August 3rd. Starts at 5pm. Vickie thanked the Commercial Club for donating the funds for the bikes this year. She requested that Diane send them a thank you. Kevin said that they will start setting up for it at 3pm so come and help.
7. Road agreement with Kettle River Township- The township board will meet next week and it will be signed at that time.

**New Business**

1. Transportation Bill- $17,599. Diane said that ½ of it has come in already. Vickie makes a motion to put it into the public works fund for roads. Possibly to repair Walter’s Road. They discussed a letter or if Sheldon should attend a meeting. Sheldon said that he would attend their meeting.
2. ARPA funds – American Rescue Plan Act are funds. Diane went to a meeting last week through the County. It is a broad range of things that are covered that we can use these funds for. Diane asked the council to think outside the box with ideas of things that we could use to benefit the city. How can we better the city? There was some discussion regarding this. We have plenty of time to figure out what to do with these funds.
3. Walter’s Road – Adjust the speed limit. It is not currently posted. Around the corner it is 15 mph. Gerard suggested 35 mph. Once you get further east it could go back to 55. Gerard has been to the Kettle River Township meeting and is thinking 5 signs. 3-35mph signs and two end 35 mph signs. We could split this with the township. Chris makes a motion to purchase 3 – 35 mph signs. Kevin seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Motion made by Chris to adjourn the meeting. Sheldon seconded. Motion carried with all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Nelson