**Willow River City Council Meeting**

September 8, 2020

Approved October 5, 2020

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Willow River City Council held its regular meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 via Webex and at Willow River City Hall.

**Council Present:** Brent Switzer, Kevin McGreanor, and Vickie Whitehouse were present at City Hall. Sheldon Johnson and Chris Ketchmark were via webex.

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

**Others Present via Webex:** John Mikrot, Gerard Bennett and Aleana White

**Approval of the Agenda:** Kevin makes a motion to approve the consent agenda. Vicki seconded.

Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

 Sheldon Johnson – yes

 Chris Ketchmark - yes

 Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

**Willow River Fire Department, Gerard Bennett**- the Fire Department has had 17 fire calls, 68 EMS and 1 other call for a total of 86 for this year. There are small repairs on #6 needs a heater core. The department is working on truck driving and operation practice. Pumpers #1 and #2 have been tested and serviced and are in good shape. The SCBA packs flow test is completed. Mutual Aid Association will be giving some suits and masks to the Fire Department. We did not get the 50/50 DNR grant this year. We are still looking at a grant with Sandstone for radios with the Mutual Aid Association to upgrade radios. Gerard said that they have one application that came in but they are holding off until COVID-19 settles down. They are following COVID-19 standard operating guidelines. The department is sanitizing and cleaning equipment after each call. Hydrant locks and bollards are also on hold until after COVID-19. Gerard commended the crew on their work and dedication. Diane mentioned an I-Pad as a possibility to receive medical history from Mercy Ambulance. Vickie mentioned the ongoing monthly bill for wireless. Sheldon mentioned CRF should be used for the needs of the Fire Department. Metal lockers were mentioned.

**Water and Sewer, John Mikrot –** Tower is dried, done and in service. Diane called the place in Superior about fixing the meter and they do not work on it, so John knows someone in Mora that does so he will take it there for him to look at and give an estimate when he goes over next time. When they were out to fix the pumps over at Wyatt’s Cove, they discovered that the check valves were not working properly. They sent John an estimate to fix those. The total is $2985.50. Sheldon asked if John thought the price was fair. He said yes, we get hit for the travel expenses. Chris makes a motion to fix the check valves. Kevin seconded.

Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

 Sheldon Johnson – yes

 Chris Ketchmark - yes

 Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

John brought up street patching. Sheldon talked to Nathan from Kettle River Township to get who does what straightened out. The City is responsible for all of Walters Road through the curves past Gamsts’ and then the north side of the road out to Dan Walkers’. Vickie makes a motion to repair the potholes on our portion of Walter’s Road. Kevin seconded.

Roll call vote:

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

 Sheldon Johnson – yes

 Chris Ketchmark - yes

 Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

**City Clerk, Diane Nelson** – A message was left for Bradd Mlaskoch regarding hooking the shop up to water. City Hall has been getting complaints regarding the tattered flags on Hwy. 61. I also received a $300 donation for the purchase of flag poles. The garden club let me know that the posts for the welcome sign will need to be replaced next spring on the north end of town. The schools also let us know that they are rerouting the student drop off due to the needed changes from modifying for COVID-19.

# Water and Sewer Billing, Katie Bennett – Kathi sent out 149 bills on September 2nd. 121 bills were mailed, 28 were emailed for a total of $14293.50. If we would be charging late fees they would have been $465.11. The usage for the month was 382,756 gallons for a daily average of 12,758 gallons. There is one place that needs to be looked at by John because it looks like the meter is rolling backwards. Sheldon asked about the late fees that are being waived as well as the assessments.

**Old Business**

1. MN Power agreement – nothing new
2. Hydrant locks – nothing new
3. Liquor Ordinance – nothing new
4. Bulk water meter – See above in John’s report.

Water/Sewer hookup fees- Diane has talked to nearby cities and they do not assess or charge an assessment fee to hook up. There wasn’t any other paperwork that I have found that would suggest charging anything other than the $500 to hook up to sewer. Kevin makes a motion to charge per our fee schedule for any water/sewer hookup. Chris seconded.

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

 Sheldon Johnson – yes

 Chris Ketchmark - yes

 Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

**New Business**  -

1. Future meetings – We will continue to use WebEx.
2. Primary election results – Diane updated the Council with the results and how things went with the Primary election. It went really well. The process is efficient and thorough. We also had a significant increase in the number of ballots that were turned in verses voting in person. In the previous primary election we had a 23.5% voter turnout and with this primary we had a 42% turnout. It took 2 election judges about 3 hours to count. It is definitely a savings to the City as well. Diane did talk some about tracking ballots and other security measures.
3. Walter’s Road – See above
4. 2020 Levy – Diane updated the Council with what the area Cities have set their levies at. We need to have it set by September 30th. Vickie thought that we were doing quite well on what we have. Kevin thought that we should increase slightly so that we can start fixing roads and such. Sheldon stated that we have not raised it in the 13 years that he has been here and he thinks it is fine, but he is open to idea if there are things that need to be done. It was decided to have a special meeting September 24th at 6:30 pm so that we can set the levy before the September 30th deadline.
5. Parking lot sign – We had someone parking in our lot for several days at a time. The Sheriff’s Office would not release the name of the individual to use so that we could send him a letter. They did tell us that it is our right to have the vehicle towed. We put a letter on the windshield and he did move his vehicle. It was suggested by the Sheriff’s Deputy that we put a sign up to as least deter people from parking there. The issue is that we need the spaces for our Fire Department when they need to respond to calls. We don’t even have enough spaces for all of the first responders. Chris said that we could get a generic sign to deter people. Sheldon felt that we were getting way too extreme. Diane said that the car was parking there for weeks and that is not okay. Sheldon agreed. Vickie said that one time is not grounds for a sign. Chris said either way is fine with him, he could see both sides. No action was taken.
6. CARES Act monies – Diane said that we received $29, 759. We need to pass a resolution accepting those funds as Coronavirus Relief Funds to aid the City in responding to needs brought about from the virus. Vickie makes a motion to accept Resolution 2020-4 accepting the CRF. Kevin seconded.

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

 Sheldon Johnson – yes

 Chris Ketchmark - yes

 Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor. The Council discussed how to designate those funds. Some ideas were: air exchanger with HEPA filter, lockers, chairs, business grants, sanitizing, laptops or I-Pads, special meetings, and WebEx. The air exchanger was discussed for City Hall and the Fire Hall side. Vickie was in favor of an air exchanger. We got a quote for City Hall but didn’t know the Fire Hall was on a separate system. Small business grants were discussed. The application process would be lengthy and there would need to be W-9 and 1099’s at the end of the year. With the small amount that we would have available, it would not be worth it for the business to apply. They should go through the county process since they have much more to offer. When Diane looked into the grants through the County, the local businesses were not utilizing them. Kevin makes a motion to get the air exchanger for City Hall and to get a bid for the Fire Hall side. Chris seconded.

Vickie Whitehouse – yes

 Sheldon Johnson – yes

 Chris Ketchmark – yes

 Kevin McGreanor – yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

Chris said that we need to get additional PPE for the Fire Department. Diane said that Gerard would also like a locking cabinet for storing the PPE. Diane went over the list that was put together of possible items to use the funds for. Chris mentioned that the UV light would be good for the Fire Department. We have to have unused funds to Pine County by November 15th. Vickie asked if we could also use the special meeting on the 24th to designate how to use the funds. The Council asked Diane to put together some prices on items that were discussed so that it can be talked about on the 24th.

1. National Night Out – Vickie mentioned that it would be a school night and it gets dark so much earlier. She mentioned maybe doing something in the spring after COVID-19 is done. The Council decided not to have National Night Out on October 6th.

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 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Nelson