**Council Members Present:** Mayor Brent Switzer, Vickie Whitehouse, Sheldon Johnson, and Chris Ketchmark came in at 7:04 pm.

**Others Present:**  Utility Billing Clerk Kathleen Bennett, Water and Sewer Operator John Mikrot, Fire Chief Gerard Bennett, Kevin and Ally McGreanor, Victoria and Steven Prachar, David Prachar, Harold Blatz, Art Underhill, Rosie Mielke, and Alanea White from the Star Gazette.

**Call to Order:** Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order with the pledge of allegiance at 7:00 pm by Mayor Switzer.

**Consent Agenda:** The consent agenda which includes the minutes of the September regular city council meeting, the disbursements and financial reports, and accounts payable was submitted for approval. The Mayor asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

V. Whitehouse made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

Mayor Switzer asked if he could amend the agenda to include the resignations of City Clerk, Diane Nelson and Council Member, Kevin McGreanor. D. Nelson’s last day was on October 1, 2021. A letter was also presented to the council from Mayor Switzer. This letter is on file in the city office.

**Planning Commission Update:** Chair Dave Prachar reported that Leon Herzog did not want to be on the commission. He asked that the council approve Judy Kliniski to be on the commission for a three year appointment.

V. Whitehouse made a motion to approve the appointment of Judy Kliniski to the Planning Commission for a term of three years, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

D. Prachar had questions about whether the city wanted the property that was annexed designated as commercial property. The council stated that they did not. They were unsure at the time of how to zone that property. D. Prachar informed the council that the planning committee would be recommending an amendment on that wording in the ordinance.

**Fire Chief, Gerard Bennett:**  Chief Bennett reported the runs to date as 27 fire calls and 67 EMS calls this year. He also reported on the new truck #3, status of the hydrant locks and bullyards, HVAC for city hall, obtaining 2 base radios and 6 handheld radios from Pine County,

Pine County mutual aid radio grant is waiting on a grant writer, public relations with events at the Willow River School ECFE and fire prevention week at the end of October, and the WRFD and EMS gun raffle will be held at the Squirrel Cage Bar and Grill on November 20, 2021. Tickets are available at the hall. They are looking at putting the marquee sign in a different location than previously discussed. The commercial club will be discussing this at their next meeting.

**John Mikrot, Water and Sewer Operator:** J. Mikrot reported that it was a busy month. The band is on the Wyatt’s Cove manhole. The streets have been patched in town and are good until spring. The jetting is done for this year. However, when jetting the stretch by the Presbyterian Church (Church Street) he found excessive sand in the pipe. He stated there is something wrong and he can’t get the jetter through easily. On October 21st MRWA will come and check the line. He will report on this next month. Flushing the lines is being done this month. V. Whitehouse asked J. Mikrot about the bill for replacing the media at the water plant that was from Vesco. The guy was supposed to call J. Mikrot. John will check on this and get back to the council.

**Kathleen Bennett, Utility Billing Clerk:** K. Bennett gave a report on the water and sewer billing. The water and sewer bills were sent out, 123 mailed, 29 emailed which totaled 152 bills. The total amount billed out was $16, 543.55. The late fees charged totaled $408.83. K. Bennett asked for a motion to charge the water meter tampering fee of $200 to the Squirrel Cage Motel as discussed at the previous meeting. The topic was discussed, but no motion had been made at that meeting. K. Bennett also stated that she doesn’t feel comfortable taking cash payments anymore. She would like the council to approve that only payments by check, cashier’s check, or money order are allowed. She would also like permission to look into whether people could pay their bills online through UBMax, if it is at no cost to the city. The council agreed to this.

S. Johnson made a motion to approve billing the water meter tampering fee of $200 to the Squirrel Cage Motel, V. Whitehouse seconded. Motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

**Sheldon Johnson, Zoning:** S. Johnson had nothing new to report.

**V. Whitehouse, Dam Update:**  V. Whitehouse reported that she talked to B. Bohaty to see if he had taken down the trees yet. He asked if he could weed whip as there is a lot of poison ivy and cockleburs. She asked the DNR if the city could mow at the park next spring. We are waiting for Landwehr to adjust the rocks.

**Old Business**

**Hydrant Locks:** The Mayor reported that the locks are here. He asked G. Bennett about a time frame for putting them on. G. Bennett said they were waiting for the padlocks to come in. They will be put on in a “timely manner”.

**Liquor Ordinance:** The revised ordinance was published in the newspaper.

**Annexation - Costs:** Troth Law sent a bill for the work on the annexation which is included in the meeting packet. The council discussed payments and adjustments on the bill. The council remembered that Tom Jensen agreed to pay for his share of the cost of the annexation. They discussed the different amounts listed on the bill. The Mayor said he would reach out to Mike Bjerke about the bill. The council had questions about the trust account; and will need to ask Mike about that too. B. Switzer will make a call about the bill.

**ARPA Funds:** The council decided to table this topic until next month.

**Road Signs for Walter’s Road:** G. Bennett volunteered to flag, mark and put in the posts before freeze up, and talk to the county about marking the right of way. He’ll contact them.

**New Business**

**Hiring City Clerk:** The council had questions on whether they could hire internally. They wanted to check with the League of Minnesota Cities on whether to post or publish the position. They set a date for interviews as Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 2 pm at city hall.

V. Whitehouse made a motion to publish the city clerk position opening, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

**Council Member Vacancy:** The council accepted the resignation of Councilmember Kevin McGreanor. They would like members of the public to send in letters of interest to be discussed at the next meeting. They would like this posted and put in the Willow River column.

V. Whitehouse made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2021-07**, ***Accepting Council Member Kevin McGreanor’s Resignation and Declaring a Vacancy on the City Council***, seconded by C. Ketchmark. Motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

**Zoning Ordinance Amendment:** Dave Prachar, Planning Commission Chair stated that (1) there is no zoning for the annexed property, and (2) there is no Interim Use Permit in the

ordinance. His recommendation would be to send the ordinance to the planning commission. S. Johnson stated that the council put a codicil in the ordinance that the planning commission and city council has the opportunity to review the zoning for that property every year. The council and the planning commission want it made clear that if that property ever changes hands the zoning for that property will have to be re-approved by the council. D. Prachar also would like to have permission to ask the city attorney questions from time to time on the planning commission.

C. Ketchmark made a motion to approve the planning commission to contact the city attorney if need be in regard to adopting the ordinance, seconded by S. Johnson. Motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

**City Auditor, Eide Bailley Increase:** The council had no problems with the increase in charges by Eide Bailley.

**Other:** Dave Prachar asked what the hours of city hall would be now that the clerk resigned. K. Bennett will be filling in until a new clerk is hired. The temporary hours of city hall will be: Monday afternoons, Thursdays, and Fridays. The council discussed Kathi getting paid the same rate as Diane Nelson for those hours.

S. Johnson made a motion to approve the days open, the rate of pay, and the hours, seconded by C. Ketchmark. Motion carried with all members present voting in favor.

**Adjournment**

C. Ketchmark made a motion to adjourn, seconded by V. Whitehouse. Motion carried with all members present voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

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Kathleen Bennett, Utility Billing Clerk

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Brent Switzer, Mayor