



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, August 5, 2024, at 6:00 PM
City Hall, 4368 Main Street, Pequot Lakes, MN

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Gardner, Council Members Ronning, Clement, and Larson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Council Member Pederson

STAFF PRESENT

Angie Duus, City Administrator; Traci Pederson, Zoning Administrator; Julie Meister, Administrative Assistant; Nick Roy, Public Works Supervisor; Andy Schwartz, Water/Wastewater Operations Manager; Mike Davis, Police Chief

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All joined Mayor Gardner in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER RONNING, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.

CONSENT AGENDA – *Staff considers the following items non-controversial and recommends that they be read and passed in one motion. Any council member, staff, citizen, or meeting attendee can request one or more items be pulled from the Consent Agenda and the item will be pulled and addressed immediately after the passage of the Consent Agenda; otherwise, the following items will be passed in one motion: (Council Motion)*

1. Approve City Council Minutes from July 1 and July 15, 2024
2. Approve the Payment of Bills and Finance Report
3. Approve the Library Report
4. Approve the Resolution Accepting Donations
5. Approve the Boards and Commissions Minutes
6. Approve Trailside Building Lease Agreement

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER CLEMENT, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RONNING TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.

OPEN FORUM – *Comments received from the public may be placed on a future meeting agenda for consideration.*



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Jeannie Haurum, 4208 Brown Street, Pequot Lakes, is present and asks the Council how the public transportation topic is progressing. Mayor Gardner confirms it is on the agenda later tonight and has been working on the topic every month. Next, Ms. Haurum inquires whether the City of Pequot Lakes has a disc golf course. Mayor Gardner confirms that we do not have a disc golf course in our city, the Baptist Church/Trailside has one the City of Breezy Point has one. Discussion ensues regarding if it would be a possibility to put a course in the park, to which was said, not at this time.

PRESENTATIONS

REPORTS

1. Park Commission

Nancy Adams updates the Council stating the Park Board continues to be very busy. Ms. Adams says Community Action received a \$500 donation from Pequot Sanitation to put toward Christmas Lights. They are still looking to expand that project. Community Action pledged \$2,500 to be matched, so Ms. Adams says that is a good start, but they are still looking for donations.

Ms. Adams says Bands in the Park have been going well aside from being rained out. As mentioned previously, all eight spots in the Community Garden have been claimed and gardeners have kept their plots looking very good.

Ms. Adams adds the Park Board voted to expand the garden next year by one plot, that will be a raised bed.

Ms. Adams thanks the Council for their support with the DNR Grant for the new shelter and bathrooms, with hopes the project will begin after Labor Day and be completed by Memorial Day next year.

Ms. Adams says the splash pad water cannons have been install and been being used, even in the rain. She adds the electrical work was being completed for the new digital community sign, and the sign should be complete and installed by the end of this week.

Ms. Adams says the condition of the popcorn wagon is still on the Park Board agenda. She states several people are looking at it to evaluate it and the options are either fix or replace it. The Park Board also approved the basic design so that next year the Public Works Department can build a gazebo for shade.

Ms. Adams says there was a discussion regarding a request from some mothers; to put one or two benches inside the fence at Adams' Family Playground so they can better monitor their



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children. She says Public Works has some unused benches and will be placing one of those inside the fencing.

The Park Board will take the lead in organizing the discussion next year as one of the projects for Trailside Park South to determine how to make it look more attractive. Ms. Adams says they will incorporate all other groups and boards into that conversation. The Tree Study has been completed; however, we are still waiting for the reports.

2. Economic Development Commission

Brad Becklin is present on behalf of the Economic Development Commission. He says they were given a presentation from Tyler Glynn from BLAEDC on the website for the EDC. He says they are still working on it and the EDC gave them some suggestions that they will use to continue putting it together.

Mr. Becklin brings to the Council's attention the spreadsheet that the EDC keeps with their goals for the year and previous years. Mayor Gardner says he would like to hear some of those goals. Mr. Becklin summarizes prior years' goals leading up to the current year that the EDC is still working toward.

Community Transportation surveys are still coming in and there will be more information to come in the next month.

3. Planning and Zoning Commission

Report provided.

4. Public Works

Report provided.

5. City Engineer

City Engineer Tim Houle gives a verbal update noting they had a pre-construction meeting for Trailside Park improvements, and it was mentioned the general timeframe would be to start the project after Labor Day and finish by Memorial Day next year. Mr. Houle discusses having a Council Member present at construction progress meetings moving forward as a liaison. Council Member Clement says he will take on the role.

6. Police Department



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Report provided.

7. Administration

Report provided.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Notice of Filing – Candidacy for City Office

Mayor Gardner notes this is an informational notice for the open seats this year including a Mayor – 2-Year Term, two City Council – 4-Year Terms, and one City Council – Special 2-Year Term. He says you must note what seat you are filing for on your affidavit for candidacy.

2. Sourcewell Paid Internship

City Administrator Angie Duus says they came across the opportunity to get reimbursement funds to hire an intern. She spoke with Thomas from Sourcewell who confirmed it has been a great program and is granted on a first-come-first-served basis. She says we have so many documents that need to be scanned in and other property files that were previously scanned in but not organized well, that it makes it difficult to search through city records. She says having an intern to help us get things scanned into electronic records, and make them searchable and organized, would be wonderful. Mayor Gardner clarifies that it pays \$15 per hour for up to 640 hours.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER RONNING, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON TO APPROVE MOVING FORWARD WITH AN APPLICATION FOR SOURCEWELL'S INTERNSHIP REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.

3. Request to Use State of MN Small Cities Assistance Funds

Ms. Duus says this funding is new. When legislation went through, this portion was given to smaller cities throughout the state. At the end of July, we received \$53,000. Public Works Supervisor Nick Roy is requesting to use this money to put toward the purchase of a lift. Ms. Duus adds that we do have \$20,000 in ARPA funds set aside for a lift, so this would bring the total close to what Mr. Roy has been quoted for the purchase. Mr. Roy explains this would be a person lift, that is a 4-wheel drive cart that will lift to 33 feet in the air, like what we have used for Christmas lights. He says the quotes that he has received are for \$78,900 and \$77,600.



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MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER RONNING, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER CLEMENT TO APPROVE THE USE OF THE STATE OF MN SMALL CITIES ASSISTANCE FUNDS OF \$53,000 TO PUT TOWARD THE PURCHASE OF A LIFT. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.

4. PZ, Lawn Maintenance Continued Violation

Mayor Gardner explains this issue has been ongoing and he was recently in and spoke with Traci about it. He says this is something that will be better for staff to have the support of the Council if they choose to enforce the violation consequences. Ms. Pederson states she was out to do a check of the property recently and nothing has changed. Mayor Gardner agrees that it appears no improvements have been made and adds that he would have no issues standing behind the Planning Commission on this. He says it was brought to his attention that it is becoming more popular to reestablish a more natural space. Jenny Gonczy says her view would be if this resident legitimately tried to restore grasslands and could provide proof of receipts, etc. that typically you would be able to use that property how that property owner would want to within means. Council Member Ronning says when viewing the pictures of this property it appears to him that the property is pretty neglected and there should be some sort of financial penalty. Discussion ensues on the financial penalty for different types of violations. Mayor Gardner states in this case there is a \$100 administrative fine and an amount to be determined for lawn mowing service. Ms. Pederson adds for the lawn violation the timeframe would be ten days and then begin incurring a \$100 per day fee thereafter which would be effective for the remainder of the mowing season. She says they have allowed ample amount of time to correct the issue, and it has still not been resolved. Discussion ensues regarding the lawn maintenance code verbiage stating only a \$100 administrative citation but does not mention the per day amount. Mayor Gardner states we can discuss the issue of the fees later as this item is to approve or deny hiring a company to mow the lawn at 3544 Fox Ln and allow to invoice and/or assess the property owner for those fees.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER CLEMENT, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON TO APPROVE HIRING A COMPANY TO MOW THE PROPERTY AT 3544 FOX LANE AND INVOICE AND/OR ASSESS THE FEES TO THE PROPERTY OWNER PLUS THE \$100 ADMINISTRATIVE FINE.

In further discussion, Council Member Larson suggests in the future with violations like this, they include a copy of the city code and make the fee amounts evident in the letter.

MOTION CARRIES 4-0.

5. City Festival Sponsorship Agreement



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Ms. Duus explains that they are seeking approval of the attached sponsorship agreement. She says they reached out and received several other example agreements from other cities within the state and after reviewing those created their own. She adds it would be similar to the donations report monthly, so if anyone was to sponsor an event, it would go on the next Council Meeting agenda for approval. Discussion ensues regarding the process of sponsoring, where the documents would be posted, sponsorship options, etc.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RONNING TO APPROVE THE SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.

6. Community Action Water Fountain Approval Request

Barb, with Community Action, is present to address the Council with the request to place a drinking water fountain near the playground. She says she understands the plan now is to have one in the area of the new bathroom/picnic shelter, but believes they need one closer to the playground. She states that Community Action would like to donate the water fountain. Mayor Gardner suggests getting Mr. Roy and Mr. Schwartz's opinions on getting water lines run to the area where the requested water fountain would be placed. They said it would be costly to run the lines with several different lines and utilities running through that area. Discussion ensues regarding different areas for placement that would work for both splash pad users and the picnic shelter and bathroom areas. It is agreed that we need more information and numbers on this topic before making a decision. Staff will work on getting the numbers together.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Police Officer Hiring Update

Sergeant Franz updates saying they have interviewed two candidates a week or so ago and the interview panel decided to move forward with one that they saw as being a better fit. He says upon beginning the backgrounding on this person, it was discovered that they are not eligible, due to an education requirement to reactivate their POST license. Discussion ensues on the timelines of getting the required training completed to be POST license eligible. Sergeant Franz states it could take a couple of months. In the meantime, he says they are actively backgrounding and intend to continue to interview candidates as application come in. The posting will remain open until the position is filled.

2. Public Transportation Update

Staff continues to get information about possible options for public transportation in our area. Julie Meister states she invited people from Call-A-Cab to attend the meeting. She says they are willing to provide a service in our area for a couple of times a week. She says they wouldn't be



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available until later morning or afternoon. They are also trying to work with Medicare to help with some of the costs that would be incurred by residents using the service for medical appointments, etc. Traci Pederson adds that she spoke with people from Faith In Action, but unfortunately, they only service Cass County currently, but will reach out to us when they expand to our area. She says she has also spoken with Ann from Interfaith Volunteers Program who delivered good news. She says they would like to promote in the community that they are available and that they are looking for volunteers to help their program. Ms. Pederson explains the Interfaith program is donation-based, and all volunteers are backgrounded, however, they are limited to residents aged 60 and up. Mayor Gardner responds by saying if we promote this, it is important to stress that it is not a city-run program. Ms. Pederson will get contact information to Nancy for the information gathered to this point.

3. Trailside Estates, Monthly Update

Mayor Gardner states letters were sent out to all Trailside Estates property owners in June. Ms. Pederson says they had almost everybody come into City Hall and sign the mylar. She says they are now working on getting the consent to plat documents from mortgage companies, and this step has been the most difficult part to get accomplished. She adds they have changed the date for the final staking of the corners to September 3, 2024, since this step has been timely. Discussion continues regarding how to keep things moving forward. Ms. Pederson says they have involved the city attorney for suggestions.

4. HOTGL Looping Study

City Engineer Tim Houle says they have included a report from the HOTGL Looping Study for the purposes of budgeting. Mr. Houle summarizes the study and the layout of a potential looping of the watermain. He says the round number cost for the project would be \$1.1 million. He adds the project would take a couple of months to design, a month to bid, and another couple of months to construct. There are several options to pay for this project. He says the users of the water system pay for those systems. If you are not hooked up to city water and sewer, they would not pay for the taxes of that system. He recaps this is a high-level study but if the HOTGL continues to expand, sooner or later it will have to be done. He says the study does have inflation for 2025 built-in because this study was done to assist with budgeting for the future.

5. Front and Main Street Design

Mr. Houle says the Council had previously approved and Widseth had previously prepared a Front and Main Street Study for some underground utility and surface improvements. That study projected a project cost of just over \$4 million. The Council then asked what the design fees to do those improvements would be. Mr. Houle states to do the overall design, it would be just shy



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of \$200,000. He adds if it were to be broken into segments, it would cost a little more, due to the fact there is more that goes into breaking everything down, and that cost for the total of the segments would be \$220,000. Mayor Gardner notes the design of the mini roundabout is pretty substantial. He inquires whether the removal of that in the design would cut down on the cost. Mr. Houle states depending on what segment the Council chooses to move forward with would affect the cost a little bit, however, if you remove the roundabout completely and keep the signalized intersection, that line item would be removed from the design costs. Council Member Ronning states we previously discussed closing off the north end of Front Street. Mr. Houle responds by saying the design would include the physical considerations of rerouting that area, turning it into a cul-de-sac, etc. Mayor Gardner asks Water/Wastewater Manager Andy Schwartz for clarification on the age of the infrastructure on Front Street. Overall, he says there are water and sewer needs on both Main and Front Streets. Council Member Clement says we need to listen to our advisors on the needs and the best way to approach this. Discussion ensues regarding the priority of each of the segments. The consensus is to add the numbers to the Capital Improvement Plan and discuss this with Jason Murray.

6. Larsen Parkway Partial Payment Estimate

Mr. Houle says construction for all intents and purposes is basically done. He says they are trying to get some good grass growth. Mr. Houle says this partial pay estimate is in the amount of \$95,767.50. He says we are approaching the original contract amount, and he thinks that we will stay close, but there may be a little bit of difference when we hit pay estimate number 3. Mr. Houle is hoping that pay estimate 3 will be the final pay estimate and they will release the five percent retainage.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER RONNING, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON TO APPROVE THE PARTIAL PAY ESTIMATE NO. 2 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$95,767.50, TO PRATT'S AFFORDABLE EXAVATING. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.

7. Budget Update

Ms. Duus says we are still waiting for some suggestions and questions from the Council. She says Council Member Ronning has been in to discuss a few things already, which was great. We have also been passing around the CIP form making sure that we have everything ready for Jason Murray. He is requesting to be here on August 19, 2024, asking the Council to call a Special Council Meeting.

MAYOR GARDNER CALLS A SPECIAL MEETING ON AUGUST 19, 2024, AT 6 PM, TO DISCUSS BUDGETING FOR 2025.



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Mayor Gardner reminds the Council that if there are further questions to please get them to Administration, so they have the ability to do some homework and find the answers they need.

COUNCIL REPORTS

1. Mayor

Mayor Gardner states he and his wife attended the Choke Cherry Festival. He says he was gearing up for the street dance later, but that was rained out.

2. Council Members

Mayor Gardner addressed Council Member Ronning regarding his previous thoughts on fees associated with planning and zoning violations and administrative fines. Council Member Ronning says he thinks there should be something like a monetary consequence to address someone who keeps avoiding the rules. He states we should have something with laws so that those issues don't fall under storage. Discussion brings up whether it is appropriate to have a police escort for chronic abusers. Further, it is said it might be best to remove the monetary amounts from the ordinance and instead refer people to the fee schedule, which lists each fee. Council Member Ronning adds that when things get out of hand, they lose the salability for properties in our city, and he believes this needs to be addressed. He credits a team effort that helps beautify our city.

Mayor Gardner thanks all the staff for all the meetings and time they put in, especially in the evenings, is great. He says thank you for taking the time away from your families to come in and participate in the boards and commissions.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER LARSON, SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBER RONNING TO ADJOURN THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.



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THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL ADJOURNED AT 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Johnson", written over a horizontal line.

Emily Johnson

City Clerk/Treasurer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tyler Gardner", written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Gardner

Mayor