

**MELROSE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2024 – 6:00 P.M.**

A.I. #1 CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Melrose City Council met in a Regular Meeting on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. pursuant to due notice being given thereof. Present were Council Members Tony Klasen, Justin Frieler, Travis Frieler, Joelene Wieling, Mayor Joe Finken, City Administrator Colleen Winter, and City Clerk Patti Haase. Mayor Finken presided thereat.

The Council then recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

A.I. #2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Ms. Wieling, seconded by Mr. Klasen and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as amended.

A.I. #3 OPEN FORUM

Mayor Finken then opened the floor to public comment.

Streets/Parks Supervisor Gary Middendorf thanked the past and present city council, boards and commissions, city staff and residents that he has worked with over the past 40 plus years. He also listed a number of projects that have been completed during his tenure. Mr. Middendorf stated how the city has grown and the many new developments that have occurred over the past several years.

Mayor Joe Finken stated that he has received numerous phone calls regarding the newly redesigned state flag and seal. He noted that other cities are passing resolutions opposing the state flag redesign. Mayor Finken is encouraging residents to contact himself or council members to let them know their thoughts on this issue.

A.I. #4 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were considered for approval under the Consent Agenda

- a. the minutes from the November 11, 2023, Special Joint Meeting with the Melrose Public Utilities Commission November 16, 2023, Budget Meeting December 11 Special Joint Meeting with the Public utilities Commission and the December 14 Regular Meeting.
- b. List of bills in the amount of \$947,360.78
- c. List of investments for the month of December 2023
- d. Donation Resolution
 - 1) Resolution No. 2024-5 Donation from Mark and Mary Monroe in the amount of \$100 towards the Melrose Fire Department.
 - 2) Resolution No. 2024-6 Donation in the amount of \$500 from Dwight and Sharon Anderson towards the Melrose Fire Department
 - 3) Resolution No. 2024-7 Donation in the amount of \$96.97 from Lindsey Chmielewski to the Parks and Recreation Department for trees.
 - 4) Resolution No. 2024-8, Donation in the amount of \$2,000 from The Greenwald Lions towards the Melrose Ambulance Department

- e. Gambling Resolution
 - 1) Resolution No. 2024-9 Resolution Approving Gambling License to Midwest Outdoors Unlimited Wobegon Partners for an exemption from lawful gambling license to hold a raffle on March 23, 2024, at the Melrose Legion Club, 265 County Road 173 SE.
- f. The City received Invoice #220-2023, which is through Pay Voucher #13, in the amount of \$21,042.50 for our portion of the construction costs. The City's share is \$17,469.03, and the Utility share is \$3,573.47.
Transfer from the Capital Improvement Project fund in the amount of \$17,469.03 to the 5th Ave Bridge Improvement fund to pay final Pay Voucher #13 and close the fund. (Total transfers to close fund equal \$135,557.38).
Council to approve Pay Voucher #13 and Transfer from the Capital Improvement Project fund in the amount of \$17,469.03 to the 5th Ave Bridge Improvement fund to pay final Pay Voucher #13 and close the fund.
- g. Resolution No. 2024-10 Resolution Appointing Election Judges for the Presidential Nomination Primary.

A motion was made by Ms. Wieling, seconded by Mr. Klasen and unanimously carried approving the consent agenda items.

A.I. #5 REPORTS

Streets/Parks Supervisor Andrew Rousslange introduced himself to the Melrose City Council.

- a. Police Chief Craig Maus presented the Police Department's December 2023 report. He noted there were 187 calls for service during that month, compared to 193 for December of 2022. A total of seven citations were written for the month of December. There were 43 verbal warnings and 2 written warnings. The year-to-date number of calls is 2,863 compared to 3,394 in 2021. For the month of December 2023, the Department received 6 agency assist calls.
- b. During the period from December 7, 2023, through January 11, 2024, City Attorney Dymoke has not given significant attention to any projects on behalf of the City of Melrose.
- c. Community Development Director Sheila Hellermann provided the following update.

We are looking forward to a work session with the City Council in early February. We have several important items to discuss at greater length, including special assessment costs on single family residential development lots, a potential commercial redevelopment project, a possible easement area purchase from the State of Minnesota, and an inquiry we have received about the wellhead protection area.

The Planning & Zoning Commission this month will be holding a public hearing on a rezoning request on a parcel, which will be followed by a conditional use permit request for a billboard on the west side of town.

MADA at its January meeting welcomed Jose Morelos. He will now also be serving on the Commercial Rehabilitation Deferred Loan Program subcommittee

of MADA.

The Comprehensive Plan update process is continuing. The next meeting of the steering committee has been set. There is a meeting for our Hispanic community on Saturday, February 10th. The public engagement tools, survey #2 and the mapping feature, will be closing soon so we encourage everyone to use those features before they close. We have received preliminary results, and they are very interesting. We look forward to presenting them after the tools are closed and everyone has hopefully had a chance to share their thoughts and ideas.

Despite it being winter, there is still construction -- at both apartment buildings and Kwik Trip. Kwik Trip is still on schedule for a February 29th opening. Riverside Flats, next to City Center, plans to have tours in spring and move-in by early summer. Wobegon Crossings is the name of the apartment building on the west side and they plan to open two-thirds of their units by September and the rest by December. Looking forward to 2024 and more new projects – building permit applications and site plans are being reviewed.

Regarding the LRIP funds, MnDOT received 379 applications, requesting a little over \$418 million in LRIP funding. They have a little over \$100 million to give away. We will see how our applications fare. We closed out the final reporting on the Bernicks grant and submitted an application in conjunction with the Arts Council on a historical marker near the Edwin Clark bridge. I am starting to pull together pieces and work on a large redevelopment grant.

- d. City Engineer Dave Blommel provided the following update:

Sanitary Sewer

The biggest discovery to date was the ability to achieve additional depth on the sanitary sewer. The sewer is steeper than required near the east end of the project, so by reducing the slope to the minimums allowed by the MPCA, we are able to gain over 2' of depth on the west end of the system. Installing sanitary sewer at minimum grade is standard practice and is not an area of concern. We also discovered there is ductile iron sewer under the trail that is badly corroded. Replacement will greatly help a potential future bottleneck.

Water Main

No major surprises with the water main have been encountered so far. The water main is being replaced in the same alignment and elevation in most locations. Water services that have been replaced by the homeowner will be salvaged unless field review discovers a reason to replace them.

Storm Sewer

We are in the process of modeling the storm system to determine the adequacy of the pipe sizes. This exercise is only to confirm the County's system is up to standards. County records regarding the storm sewer are minimal and need updating. If any major differences are discovered, we will work with the County to determine the next best steps. Our goal is to replace the minimum amount of storm sewer possible without jeopardizing the function of the system.

Open House

While working on the design, we are also getting ready to meet the residents at the open house on January 22, 2024. Hopefully those with questions or concerns will join us. No formal presentation, just stop by between 5 and 7 to chat with staff about the project.

- e. City Administrator Winter provided the following update:

Informational Items:

Stephanie Perez will begin her duties as the Police Department Administrative Assistant on January 16th. She will split her time between the Police department and the reception desk until a full-time Receptionist/Building Permit Technician is hired. We have posted the position.

Applications for the Police officer position closed on Friday, January 12th.

Reminder that we have a Work Session on February 6th at 5:30 p.m.

Capital projects:

The City will be hosting an Open House on **Monday, January 22nd from 5 – 7 pm** for the public to discuss the 2024 Main Street Reconstruction project.

Cell phone stipend

Since 2020, the City has had a policy that allows employees to be reimbursed for a portion of their cell phone. The amount of reimbursement varies depending on what the employee's use of the phone is. However this is not applied to ALL employees. Our cell phones are used more than regular phones. This is a day-to-day operation matter and I would like to be able to offer that stipend to ALL employees as allowed by policy. The amount ranges from \$25 - \$50 a month depending on what type of data (SCADA, Cameras, etc.) the employee has on their phone as part of their responsibility in their job description.

A.I. #6 ACTION ITEMS

- a. The Council to give consideration to approval of the following renewal liquor license applications:

1) Intoxicating Liquor:

- a. License #3 – Melrose Bowl Inc. DBA Melrose Bowl – On Sale, and License #3 – Sunday On Sale
- b. License #4 – Whiskey Street LLC. DBA Whiskey Street – On Sale, License #2 – Off Sale, License #4 – Sunday On Sale
- c. License #1 – LQR, Inc. DBA SPIRITZ Off Sale Liquor – Off Sale
- d. License #1 – Meadowlark Country Club – On Sale, and License #2 – Sunday On Sale
- e. License #2 – Ana Hernandez DBA El Portal – On Sale, License #6 – Sunday On Sale
- f. License #3 – Coborn's Inc. DBA Coborn's Liquor – Off Sale
- g. License #5 John Dough's Inc – DBA John Dough's Pizza/JD Taphouse -On Sale and #5 Sunday On-Sale

2) Club and Sunday On Sale:

- a. License #1 – American Legion Post #101 – Club On Sale License, and License #1 – Sunday On Sale

3) a. 3.2% Off Sale Malt Liquor License

- License #1 – Martinez Meat & Grocery – 3.2% Off Sale Malt Liquor
- b. License #2 -Coborn's – 3.2% Off Sale Malt Liquor

4) a. Wine License & 3.2 % On Sale Malt Liquor

- License #1 - Martinez Meat & Grocery – Wine License & 3.2% On Sale Malt Liquor

All applications must be executed, fees paid, and certificates of insurance as to liquor liability coverage obtained for Council approval.

Minnesota law requires cities to obtain proof that all licensees provide workers' compensation insurance for their employees. The city must also obtain licensees' social security numbers, and Minnesota and federal tax identification numbers for the Department of Revenue's use.

All of the Intoxicating Liquor License applications must be signed by the Police Chief.

The licenses to be effective March 1, 2024, to March 1, 2025.

A motion was made by Ms. Wieling, seconded by Mr. Justin Frieler and unanimously carried approving the liquor license renewal applications contingent upon receipt of all necessary documentation and payment of all necessary fees.

- b. Ambulance Coordinator Gina Eggert is requesting approval to be given to the appointment of Allison Hiltner as a Transport Nurse to the Ambulance Department effective 03/01/2024 Starting at the Start Step on the wage schedule. Contingent upon a successful background check, pre-employment physical and drug test.

A motion was made by Mr. Klasen, seconded by Mr. Justin Frieler and unanimously carried approving the hiring of Ms. Hiltner as a Transport Nurse to the ambulance department effective 3.1.2024 at the Start Step on the wage scale.

- c. Ambulance Coordinator Gina Eggert is requesting approval to be given to the appointment of Nick Guzek as a Paramedic to the Ambulance Department Starting at the Start Step on the wage schedule. Contingent upon a successful background check. Nick Guzek is a current EMT for the Melrose Ambulance Department

A motion was made by Mr. Travis Frieler seconded by Ms. Wieling and unanimously carried approving the hiring of Mr. Guzek as a Paramedic to the ambulance department at the Start Step on the wage scale.

- d. Since 2022 when we switched engineering companies from WSB to SEH we have been operating under SEH's GIS platform. It is an open based ESRI platform of which we hold the license. We have had limited interaction with the GIS department and their public works platform is not as good as what we had with WSB. I received a quote from WSB for hosting our GIS services again and would like to switch back to them for this purpose. We had WSB give a presentation on Thursday, January 4th to public works and administration staff that regularly use GIS. The consensus from staff is that WSB's platform would be better suited for our needs. As staff we also discussed the needs, especially on the public works side to begin using GIS out in the field regularly. The initial price to switch back to WSB would be:
Year 1 Costs: **\$8,000** (That includes \$3,600 for a yearly hosting cost and \$4,400 to turn the app back on, make application updates, and refresh the data to be

current)

Costs after Year 1: \$3,600 Annually for Hosting

Our ESRI license is \$1,221.00 a year and includes both a desktop and mobile application.

These costs would be split between the General fund and PUC.

A motion was made by Mr. Klasen, seconded by Mr. Justin Frieler and unanimously carried approving the contract with WSB to provide GIS services.

- e. The Melrose Police Department is requesting council approval for the hire of Dawson Waldvogel to the Melrose Police Reserves, pending a successful background check, physical exam and drug testing.

Dawson is a Melrose native and currently attending Alexandria Technical and Community College for Law Enforcement.

A motion was made by Mr. Travis Frieler, seconded by Ms. Wieling and unanimously carried approving the hire of Mr. Waldvogel to the Melrose Police Reserve.

- f. Two policies will be added to the Melrose Police Department Policies: Public Assembly and First Amendment Activity Policy and Extreme Risk Protection Order Firearm Storage Policy. Mr. Klasen explained the Extreme Risk Protection Order Firearm Storage Policy. Minnesota law will allow certain people starting Jan. 1, 2024, to request an order from the court to temporarily prohibit someone from purchasing or possessing a firearm during a period of crisis when they are at risk of harming themselves or someone else. This type of order is called an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO). An ERPO directs a person to surrender their firearms and prevents a person from purchasing firearms while the ERPO is in effect.

A motion was made by Ms. Wieling adopting the Public Assembly and First Amendment Activity Policy, and the Extreme Risk Protection Order Firearm Storage Policy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Travis Frieler with a roll call vote recorded as follows:

FOR: Council Member Wieling, Travis Frieler, Justin Frieler, and Mayor Finken
AGAINST: Council Member Klasen

- g. The Police Office Assistant position needed clarification and general cleanup of the job description. City Administrator Winter, Police Chief Maus, and HR Generalist/Payroll Clerk Rieland reviewed the job description.

A motion was made by Ms. Wieling, seconded by Mr. Klasen and unanimously carried to adopt the revised Police Office Assistant Job Description.

- h. The Receptionist-Building Permit Technician position needed clarification and general cleanup of the job description. City Administrator Winter, HR Generalist/Payroll Clerk Rieland, and Finance Director Ryan Meyer reviewed the job description.

A motion was made by Mr. Klasen, seconded by Mr. Justin Frieler and unanimously carried to adopt the revised Receptionist-Building Permit Technician Job Description.

- i. There is interest by a business in purchasing a lot in the Melrose I-94 Industrial Park. It would require re-platting as Lot 4, Block 1, would need to be widened and the Industrial Parkway Road would be shifted west. We would use the opportunity to redesign the lots on the north side of the park to be re-sized with better I-94 visibility.

A motion was made by Mr. Klasen, seconded by Mr. Justin Frieler and unanimously carried conditionally authorizing the re-platting of the Melrose I-94 Industrial Park, subject to an executed purchase agreement.

A.I. #7 OLD BUSINESS

- a. At a special joint meeting with Council and PUC presentations were provided by ABDO and DDR for a Compensation and Classification Study. The costs are as follows:

ABDO – 13,000 with an update yearly for 3,200 and 1,900 for a formal position reclassification policy

DDR – 15,000 with an update yearly that is negotiable.

Please note that these quotes do not include the updating of the current job descriptions. We as staff feel that is something that can be dealt with inhouse.

Compensation Study

While pay equity compliance is an important aspect of designing and revising a compensation program, here are the other components of a compensation study

1. Defining the market which the city draws talent from.
2. Defining where the city would like to position its compensation program relative to the market.
3. Clearly articulate what the city would like to pay for and the behavior it would like to reward.
4. Describing how pay increases are delivered; step pay progression and general increases reward employees for their seniority while merit increases emphasize the importance of employee performance and meeting individual goals.

Developing a clear understanding of compensation strategy is important to ensure that the city's pay program implementation meets the objectives expected from the program. The Melrose Public Utilities Commission at its January 8, 2024, meeting approved the Compensation and Classification with DDA.

A motion was made by Ms. Wieling concurring with the Melrose Public Utilities Commission approving moving forward with a Compensation and Classification study and allow her the ability to negotiate with the consultant to ensure that the study will meet expectations and be delivered in the first quarter of 2024. Cost not to exceed \$18,000.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Travis Frieler with a roll call vote recorded as follows:

FOR: Council Member Wieling, Justin Frieler, Travis Frieler, and Mayor Finken
AGAINST: Council Member Klasen

A.I. #8 NEW BUSINESS

- a. The Melrose City Council will host the German students on Wednesday, February 15, 2024, at 5:15 p.m. at the Melrose City Center. The Melrose City Council February 15 Regular Meeting will be held at the Melrose Fire and Ambulance Station. The meeting with the area township and city officials will immediately follow the Council's Regular meeting that evening.
- b. Finance Director Ryan Myer stated that credentialing and conversion to EMS|MC, our new Ambulance Billing Provider, is complete and claims from 10/1/2023 through 12/31/2023 have been billed out. Our previous provider completed billings through 9/30/2023. Finance Director Meyer provided a demonstration of the new customer and billing portal.

Council Member Klasen left the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

A.I. #9 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

The following informational items were then reviewed:

- a. Utilities Commission's December 11, 2023, Regular Meeting minutes

A.I. #10 ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Travis Frieler, seconded by Ms. Wieling, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

PATRICIA HAASE – CITY CLERK