



Regular City Council Minutes Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Comprising a quorum of the City Council, the meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm with the following members present: Mayor George Deiss, Council Members Jessie Gibbs, Mark Lunde, Wade Miller, and Dan Sartell.

Consent Calendar:

Claims Presented for Payment

City Administrator's Monthly Financial Report

City Council Meeting Minutes:

- January 9, 2024, Special Meeting

Resolution 2024-12: Confirming the Mayor's Reappointment of Sara Ross and Sandy Black to Park Advisory Board

Action 24-07: Accept Joe Peluso Retirement

Mayor Deiss thanked Joe for his many years of service, dedication, and job well done.

Action Motion: Approved the consent calendar items.

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Miller
Roll call vote:	Deiss, Gibbs, Lunde Miller, Sartell		

Public Hearings:

Highway 10 Utility Improvement Facility Plan

Engineer Phil Martin went over a presentation with similar project details from the December meeting regarding existing and proposed conditions, proposed utility project scope, estimated project cost and this meeting detailing state funding opportunities and anticipated schedules for funding and project timelines.

Existing conditions within the Highway 10 corridor between Birch Avenue (County Fairgrounds) and 11th Street: Sanitary Sewer is 8" and 10" vitrified clay pipe that is shallow, flat grade, and deteriorated; Watermain is 6" and 12" cast iron pipe, inefficient distribution, and potential lead presence; Street and Storm Sewer is MnDOT responsibility but has aged pipe and culverts.

A public hearing was held per state statute with a 30-day comment period available for the public. The city will decide next to apply for both the Public Facilities Authority (PFA) Clean Water Revolving Fund (CWRF) and Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF) programs. The city has met eligibility criteria to apply for both. Applications are due March 1, 2024. These grants assist municipalities to offset infrastructure expenses either by low interest bonds, historically 1%-2%, and/or principal forgiveness grants.

If the city is successful in receiving grants it will be used to lower the estimated property assessments to affected properties along the proposed project.

The anticipated project costs, project schedule, and PFA eligible project costs are below.

Action 24-09: Public Works Stump Grinding Quotes

Three quotes received:

Carr's Tree Service: Standing stumps \$2.57/inch; tipped stumps \$5.57/inch.

K&K Tree Service: Standing stumps \$4.00/inch; tipped stumps \$5.00/inch.

Triple S Tree Service: Standing stumps \$1.25/inch, tipped stumps \$1.25/inch.

Quotes are for a 22-month period starting March 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025.

Action Motion: Approved contracting with Triple S Tree Service at \$1.25/inch for both standing and tipped stumps.

Moved by:	Sartell	Seconded by:	Gibbs
Vote:	Deiss, Gibbs, Lunde, Miller, Sartell		

Action 24-10: 2024 Election Judges

Action Motion: Approved election judges as presented.

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Miller
Vote:	Deiss, Gibbs, Lunde, Miller, Sartell		

Action 24-11: Fire Relief Association Bylaws Update

Three sections were updated.

Section 5.1. As of May 3, 2023, no dues will be withdrawn from any member, starting 12-31-23.

Section 6.7. All meetings shall be conducted according to a variation of Roberts Rules of Order as follows.

1. Call to order
2. Roll call
3. Reading and accepting previous minutes
4. Report of officers
5. Reports of special committees
6. Unfinished business
7. New business
8. Adjournment

Section 7.5. After completion of typed minutes by the Secretary, the CEO, and 2 Board members will approve and sign the minutes, then place them in the book for all members to access.

Action Motion: Approved updated Fire Relief Association by-laws.

Moved by:	Sartell	Seconded by:	Miller
Vote:	Deiss, Gibbs, Lunde, Miller, Sartell		

Action 24-12: Fire Relief Association Request to Increase Pension Benefits

The increase in benefit will reduce the account to 102% funded. The increase does not require a contribution from the city.

Council member Miller recalls a past policy not allowing the pension level to fall below a certain threshold. No one at the meeting recalls the specifics and without pausing the meeting to find a policy the council moved forward with the increase contingent on review of the policy.

Action Motion: Approved increasing the annual Fire Relief Association pension contribution from \$3,700 to \$3,900 contingent on review of the pension policy.

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Miller
Vote:	Deiss, Gibbs, Lunde, Miller, Sartell		

Action 24-13: ARPA Funds, Consider Chamber of Commerce Transfer

The Chamber of Commerce is doing well apart from funding sources to support wages, benefits, and internal operating expenses. In reviewing the city's remaining ARPA funds, a balance of \$54,318.02 exists with \$30,000 reserved for Childcare.

Action Motion: Approved transferring \$24,318.02 of ARPA funds to the Wadena Chamber of Commerce.

Moved by:	Sartell	Seconded by:	Gibbs
Vote:	Deiss, Gibbs, Lunde, Miller, Sartell		

Action Discussion: Council Member Sartell, 2024 Astera Bond Payment

Sartell continued concerns from December's meeting about how the Astera project bond will be paid.

It was clarified that the Astera project wasn't completed until 2023. Assessment certification was issued to the county in 2024 with assessment payments beginning 2025. The city will make the first bond installment, however, Astera's assessments are delayed one year. The city isn't technically paying for the payment in the long term.

It was clarified further that the 2024 library bond payment is tax levied at more than \$146,000 with approximately \$50,000 budgeted to draw down from the IF Foundation [donated funds]. The city will draw down the entire library bond amount leaving the levied funds available for the Astera payment.

The remaining levied dollars will be set aside for the upcoming Highway 10/71/29 projects.

Action: No action taken.

Action Discussion: Council Member Sartell, Tree Trimming

Sartell shared concerns received from the public regarding tree trimming the public works (PW) department has been performing. PW Director Dan Kovar provided a detailed explanation of their processes, specifically that a certified arborist employee is on staff to know the right balance without destroying the trees. It does look aggressive, but the safety and health of the trees is always in place.

Action: No action taken.

Meeting Open to the Public: Public portion opened at 5:36 pm. County Commissioner Ron Noon was present to inform the city that as a secondary administrative support, county board members and the auditor are attending the county legislative day at the capitol and will be advocating for the Highway 10 bill language update for use of the remaining environmental funds. He's also supporting county measures for the county and city to work together on housing and economic development efforts. The county has a 5-year road and bridge plan. County road 101 is scheduled to be reconstructed with a bike path.

Department Reports:

Public Works Department – Dan Kovar

- Working on park equipment and preparing for summer.
- Noted he's received communication from area residents requesting a walking path along 1st Street NW to continue across to Walmart on Juniper. The cost isn't in any upcoming plans and wondered what the council thought. It was noted the 2025 Highway 71 project has a path on the west side to Juniper. Council members were not opposed to it with Sartell asking if painted shoulders for paths could be done. Kovar stated the width of the street isn't consistent for the entire length to do that. Gibbs questioned how difficult it would be to add one. Kovar explained

an estimated project and cost would have to be developed with assessments similar to a paving project.

- With no snow, work has started on the Folkestad/Pinewood Estates walking path.
- Council member Sartell thanked PW for replacing the Depot exterior lighting, that it looks great.

Utilities Department - Superintendent David Evans

- Ordering product and lead items are shortening.
- The water tower SCADA system was successfully replaced and went well. The water plant wasn't operable for a day but with proper planning and advertising to reduce resident and business usage there was enough in a full tower to sustain water consumption for the day.

Wadena Development Authority and Planning & Zoning – Dean Uselman

- Not present. Administrator Schroeder updated that Uselman has been approved to return to work from FMLA. Uselman will work from 9-2 pm Monday-Friday.
- With the earlier ARPA funds agenda item, it was updated that a grant was secured for \$10,000 for engineering design plans in the Astera Legacy building (old TCHC hospital). It took quite a while to secure three engineering quotes, and the grant has since expired. Unless the council provides disagreement, city staff will utilize \$10,000 of the ARPA funds to complete this. No one disagreed and the funds will be used.

Police Department – Naomi Plautz

- Safety Resource Officer (SRO) agreements have been terminated with Freshwater and WDC school districts. M-State has since notified the city they would like to discontinue retro-effective to 1-1-24. Their SRO contract is for 4-5 hours per week. The use of force law changes caused the SRO officer agreement changes.
- Buckwheat Growers Property: Plautz spoke with owner Peter Mursu and the building contractor regarding the safety and concern of the building. They both told her they'll work on it and are going to demolish it. However, it appears only the parts of the building that provided income has been removed and it's now left in a condition that can be considered a nuisance and safety concern. An extension permit was provided by the planning and zoning department to clean up the property. That extension is set to expire around summer. Once the extension expires the council agrees to have the police department move forward with any nuisance(s) that does not meet the city code.
If still not cleaned up following nuisance notices, the next step would be to receive contractor quotes to remove the building. If the city has to use this method it would be very costly, assessed to the property, and not in the best interest of the taxpayers.

Fire Department – Cody Yglesias

- Not present.

Wadena Liquor Store – Tim Booth

- Not much to report other than steady like previous years.

Maslowski Wellness and Research Center – Lisa Anderson

- Not much to report other than it's been busy with increased memberships. Typical at the beginning of the year.

Whitetail Run Golf Course – Kevin Ross

- Not present.

City Administrator – Kim Schroeder

- Noted a Hwy 71/29 public open house is suggested for March 12, prior to the regular meeting. MnDOT representatives will be asked to be present. This meeting is meant to share the details of the project. MnDOT hosted a public open house in December 2022, however, that meeting focused primarily on Hwy 10. Schroeder has asked the council to host another open house as there are property owners and residents inquiring about these projects.

Council Reports:**Dan Sartell:**

- Is planning to attend City Capital Day at the Hill March 7, 2024.

Wade Miller: Nothing to report.

Mark Lunde: Nothing to report.

Jessie Gibbs: Nothing to report.

Mayor's Report:**George Deiss:**

- Shared that the HR policy will need to be updated to include legalized cannabis.
- Shared that he's been receiving information from other city Mayor's that are considering municipal cannabis dispensaries.

Upcoming Meetings:

March 2024, Hwy 71/29 Public Open House

March 12, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting

April 17, 2024, 3:00 pm, Local Board of Adjustment and Equalization

Adjournment**Action Motion: Unanimously adjourned at 6:13 p.m.**

Moved by:	Lunde	Seconded by:	Gibbs
Vote :	Deiss, Gibbs, Lunde, Miller, Sartell		

Kim Schroeder, City Administrator

George Deiss, Mayor