



**Regular City Council Minutes
Tuesday, March 12th 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:

- February 13, 2024, Regular Meeting

Action 24-14: Massage License

Action Motion: Approved the consent calendar items.

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

Unfinished Business

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

a. Wadena Fire Relief Association (WFRA), Policy on Benefit Increases

A WFRA policy on benefit increases was created in 2014. The policy requires the relief association to maintain a pension balance of 110% or higher during an increase request.

Relief Association President Shawn Swenson reports past requests have not followed the policy. Review of historic requests from 2014-2018 indicates at least one request was allowed below the policy threshold.

Fire Chief Cody Yglesias spoke with Molly Rasch at the State Auditor's relief association pension office; reporting that any agreements or policies should be titled guidelines and should not be created to minimize future raises.

Councilmember Miller asked where the fund would stand if a raise was given, it was reported 102%. He then asked if Cody had the language from the auditor's office stating they could not make agreements or policies for future raises. Cody did not, stating he spoke with her on the phone and offered to provide her phone number.

City Administrator Schroeder and all council members agreed they would like to research and receive statutes and further guidance before making the decision to change or update the policy.

Action Motion: No action taken, tabled to April's regular meeting.

New Business:

Resolution 2024-14: Authorizing 2023 Year-End Adjusting Transfers

The funds leftover from the Highway 10 Phase 1 Project will be transferred, 60% to sewer and 40% to water fund. A separate fund is already set up for the next phase of the project.

Action Motion: Approved transferring leftover funds from Phase 1 of the Highway 10 project, 60% Sewer, 40% Water.

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

Resolution 2024-15: Support Wadena County, Rural High Risk Roads Project Submittal

Wadena County Highway is applying for state funding for the roundabout intersecting Highway 10 and CSAH 54 and seeking support from the city.

Action Motion: Approve supporting the Wadena County project application submission for the Rural High-Risk Roads Program.

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

Action 24-15: Consider Snowmobile Purchase for Ski Club

Dan Kovar was approached by the Ski Club, asking the city to be a fiscal agent for a new snowmobile purchase. A fiscal agent is needed for donors to agree to the project and receive tax benefits. The snowmobile is used to maintain trails in Black's Grove Park and in need of replacement. The Ski Club has secured \$15,000 in donations to cover the \$14,125 snowmobile purchase, a rear light add-on, and any other unforeseen overages.

The only known expense to the city is annual insurance.

Action Motion: Sponsor and allow the Wadena Ski Club to purchase a 2024 Ski Doo Expedition LE 900 ACE snowmobile and acceptance of \$15,000 in donations. The City of Wadena will be the fiscal agent, seasonal storage, and insurance policy holder for the purchase.

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

Action 24-16: Mini Excavator Purchase

Utilities Superintendent Dave Evans reports the electric department has had a number of joint utilities projects needing a backhoe to trench multiple facilities (Arvig, MERC, Charter). Projects continue where crews need to trench to maintain depths. In these cases, our utility is renting backhoe's or paying other sources for joint trenching. There are few excavators in the area and at times availability is limited.

With a city owned excavator, trenches and city underground utility repairs could be made with the convenience of city crews, in a timelier manner, and without the added cost of a contractor. Dave recommends purchasing a Bobcat E42 R2 unit from Bobcat of Alexandria. Bobcat has service centers in proximity, and the lowest cost of the three manufacturers. The E42 R2 is a 2023 holdover, new, and priced using Sourcewell discounts, 10% lower than State pricing. If the stock unit sells before March 13th, 2024, he recommends a purchase of the 2024 E48 R2 from Aldrich Tractor. The wait time for this is approx. 8 weeks. The final cost after tax is estimated at \$69,190.30 and includes full warranty. The budgeted amount for this item is \$75,000.

Action Motion: Approve purchase of the 2023 Bobcat E42 R2 from Bobcat of Alexandria. If unavailable, approve purchase of the 2024 Bobcat E48 R2 from Aldrich Tractor. Not to exceed \$75,000.

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

Action 24-17: Hire PT Police Officer Erika Penner

Action Motion: Hire Erika Penner part-time contingent on successful background check and mandatory psychological review.

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

Action 24-18: SWAT Mutual Aid Agreement

This is a yearly agreement with Lakes Area S.W.A.T. team that allows peace officers from each of the signing law enforcement agencies to assist S.W.A.T related deployments.

Action Motion: Approve the S.W.A.T. mutual aid agreement. Effective upon signatures received by all agencies.

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

Action 24-19: Police Department, Squad Vehicle Lease to Purchase

Chief Plautz requests permission to lease to purchase a 2025 Ford Explorer. The oldest squad car will be traded in. Quotes were received from Nelson Ford and TenVoorde Ford. After trade-in value, Nelson Ford quote is \$30,806 and TenVoorde quote is \$26,284.

Plautz reviewed the two units and verified with Administrator Schroeder that they are relatively identical. Chief Plautz recommends TenVoorde Ford.

Action Motion: Approve a lease to purchase of the 2025 Ford Explorer from TenVoorde Ford not to exceed the budgeted allowance.

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

Meeting Open to the Public at 5:33pm:

No one present.

Department Reports:**Public Works Department – Dan Kovar**

- Had inquiries from people about street sweeping. Dan reported the sweeper is being repaired and waiting for parts. Street sweeping will be completed once repaired.

Utilities Department - Superintendent David Evans

- Will be attending Missouri River Energy Services annual meeting in Souix Falls.
- Recommends looking at acquiring service territory rights for the remainder of the Business Park lots since the city developed the land. Council members agreed. Evans will send a preliminary letter along with territory review with Todd-Wadena Electric.

Wadena Development Authority and Planning & Zoning – Dean Uselman

- Additional new interest is coming in for the Pinewood Estates Lots. Dean thanked Nicole Stracek for her work on the article in the paper about the trail.
- The Folkestad Nature Trail has received positive feedback, people are impressed with the work that has developed.
- Has been working with a group about building a tiny home village for veterans. The village would include 15 homes. The organization received a \$2 million grant to help with associated costs. The community is planning to be staffed for additional services. The idea is to create steppingstone opportunities towards home ownership.
- New permit inquiries and interest spurring for new construction.

Police Department – Naomi Plautz

- Not Present

Fire Department – Cody Yglesias

- Three new firefighters will complete training in Frazee.
- Jeremy Zaic is the new Fire Department Secretary.
- Received two new applications for 1st assistant, is hoping to hire someone by April.
- Relief Association recently donated over \$19,000 to the city for equipment.

Wadena Liquor Store – Tim Booth

- Not Present

Maslowski Wellness and Research Center – Lisa Anderson

- Not Present

Whitetail Run Golf Course – Kevin Ross

- Not present.

City Administrator – Kim Schroeder

- Noted the Hwy 71/29 public open house went well and answered many questions or concerns. MnDOT and the appraisal consultants were also pleased with opportunities to speak with property owners they've had difficulty connecting with.
- Received an email from Lisa Fawver continuing her nuisance complaint made at a previous council meeting. It'd been forwarded to attorney Jeff Pederson, returning from vacation in April and dealt with then. Fawver has been notified of this timeline.
- Spoke with Joel Beiswenger at the Hwy 71/29 open house. MnDOT is requiring Astera to remove the underground tunnel this fall [2024]. Beiswenger is speaking with MnDOT project manager Eric Schiller to accommodate a scenario in conjunction with the 2025 project. The city will be asked to make a decision to add it to the 2025 Highway Project, accept responsibility for financing, with Astera agreeing to reimburse the city. Administrator Schroeder will consult with bond council for financing and reimbursement options along with how this may affect the city's own bond and rating abilities.

Council Reports:

Dan Sartell: Nothing to report.

Wade Miller: Installed cameras at the golf course.

Mark Lunde: Nothing to report.

Jessie Gibbs: Nothing to report.

Mayor's Report:

George Deiss:

- Lloyd Lanz, Finance Director, received a certificate of achievement of excellence in financial reporting. He thanked Lanz for his years of service.
- Wadena County Historical Society is currently closed. They had someone agree to be interim, however, due to depleted funds, they are going to remain closed for now.
- League of MN Cities has been pushing information out about Autonomous Zoning Package. The purpose is to remove cities individual zoning rights.
- Will be doing an interview with Business Week Magazine on an article about best managed cities under 10,000 people. WDA and Bolton and Menk will sponsor the magazine and ad.

Upcoming Meetings:

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 5:56 p.m.

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

Kim Schroeder, City Administrator

George Deiss, Mayor