

Lewiston City Council
Council Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2020
Lewiston City Hall – 7:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

Electronic City Council Meeting called to order by Mayor Beth Carlson at 7:00 pm May 13, 2020.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Present (5): Mayor Beth Carlson, Councilor Larry Rupprecht, Councilor Carol Boynton, Councilor Dan Robertson and Councilor Niles Lavey. Not Present (0).

Others present: City Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Knight, Ambulance Director Matt Essig, Police Chief Scott Yeiter, Public Works Director Curt Benter, Bryan Holtz and Machel Frisbie.

4. Agenda- Changes and additions

Councilor Rupprecht motioned for approval of the Agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Robertson. Approved 5-0.

5. Adopt Consent Agenda

- A. Regular Council Meeting Minutes- April 22, 2020
- B. Accounts Payable
- C. Accounts Payable 2
- D. Accounts Payable 3

Mayor Carlson motioned to adopt the consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Boynton. Approved 5-0.

- 6. Citizens' Concerns-** Nick Ebnet, a representative of the Circle Pines Area, requested needed repairs be made to the streets in that area as the streets are horrible and sub-par. The streets are dangerous and unsightly. Discussion followed. The next large City of Lewiston project is not slated to be done until 2024. Bryan Holtz, the City Engineer, stated that he agreed that the streets were in terrible shape and that a paving contractor could be called to see what they would recommend and at what cost. Further discussion ensued. Councilor Rupprecht said there was not an inexpensive and 4-year lasting answer. Rupprecht felt that having an asphalt contractor review the streets and give the City an opinion and a cost estimate before any decision was made would be prudent. Councilor Lavey inquired if the SEMLM (Southeast Minnesota League of Municipalities) would rent out equipment to make the hot mix repairs? Public Works Director Curt Benter said that he

has never used hot mix, and that the pavement on those streets is so bad his payloader could scrape it up. Benter will contact Asphalt Armor tomorrow.

7. Ambulance Department Monthly Report- Matt Essig

Ambulance Director Matt Essig stated the monthly report was in the packet. There were 8 calls for service in the month of April, and all were transported (which was unusual). Elective surgeries can now resume in Minnesota, so that might make the ambulance busier. For staffing, 14 of the 26 members are available to take calls, so scheduling is being done weekly and is working out okay. EMS week starts this upcoming Sunday, but there will be no Open House this year. Due to COVID-19, there are numerous online meetings and additional reports needing to be done. The Ambulance Department purchased a UV light to disinfect the ambulance. Area hospitals can let the ambulance know if anyone they transported was COVID-19 positive, in order that they can conduct contact tracing. A truck committee was formed to start talking about a new truck. Essig has spent his yearly total budgeted amount in his repairs and maintenance account on the ambulance. The high school had 17 students signed up for the 4th quarter EMR class. Essig worked with the curriculum expert to adapt his classes to an online format, and there are 4-5 wanted to obtain their certification so Essig will work to set up their testing.

8. Ambulance Department Resignation of Member- Matt Essig

Essig stated there was a resignation in the packet from Ambulance member Marie Gernes, effective May 1, 2020, as she has moved out of the area.

Councilor Boynton motioned for approval of the resignation of Marie Gernes from the Ambulance Service effective May 1, 2020 with the City's thanks. Seconded by Councilor Lavey. Approved 5-0.

9. Resolution 2020-11 Accepting a Grant from the US Dept of Health and Human Services- C Knight

City Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Knight stated this grant was received by the Ambulance Department in the amount of \$2,096.15. This money came from the CARES Act that President Trump signed into law on March 27, 2020.

Councilor Boynton motioned to accept Resolution 2020-11 Accepting a Grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services. Seconded by Councilor Rupprecht. Approved 5-0.

10. Police Department Monthly Report- Scott Yeiter

Police Chief Scott Yeiter stated the monthly report was in the packet. There continues to be a downturn in the number of calls received, both locally and throughout the state. There were persons cited for disorderly conduct. The new squad should be done at the outfitters next week and will hopefully be in Lewiston soon. Both new part-time officers are taking shifts and doing a

good job and their training is going well. This week is National Police Week, but most memorial celebrations are cancelled due to the pandemic, with some still being conducted online.

11. Public Works Asphalt Armor Manhole Repair- Curt Benter

Director Benter stated that there are several manholes above grade which should be repaved so plows will not hit them next winter. An estimate from Asphalt Armor was received in the amount of \$8,691.25. Most are located on North Benson street, but some are also on Tews Avenue and Park Drive.

Councilor Rupprecht motioned for approval of the proposal from Asphalt Armor to do manhole patching in the total amount of \$8,691.25. Seconded by Councilor Lavey. Approved 5-0.

Public Works has been busy removing ash trees at the dog park and will be grinding stumps. Leveling the area and reseeding it are planned also. The next trees to be removed will be at the City Hall parking lot. Trees will be replaced when the City is able to obtain trees from Cedar Valley Nursery. Mayor Carlson stated that public works has an employee who will be out on medical leave so there is an ad looking for temporary help mowing. Benter stated there was only one applicant, who was under 18, and in order to operate the mower, persons need to be 18 or older. Police Chief Scott Yeiter inquired as to whether his part-time officers could mow, as they are asking for additional hours. A personnel meeting will be scheduled to discuss.

12. PeopleService Monthly Report- James Creaghe

The report is in the packet. Both maintenance and chemical budgets are over 100%. A proposal was made to add a specific line item in the budget for tracking WWTP expenses. Benter stated the treatment plant is near the end of its life term, so expenses will continue to escalate.

13. City Administrator's Report- Cheryl Knight

13.1 Resolution 2020-10 Certification of Utility Bills

Knight stated this Resolution updated today decreased the total amount owing by \$600. This process creates more work for the office for tracking purposes. \$5,397 is the current proposed certification amount out of the original amount of \$9,300, so roughly just short of \$4,000 has been paid on these amounts owing. Knight also stated she had a request in to the Winona County Auditor as to when they will want to receive this information. Included in that request is information obtained from a LMC (League of Minnesota Cities) memo which indicated that these certification amounts should be listed as "property taxes" and not "special assessments" as special assessments are deleted in case of foreclosure or forfeiture.

Councilor Rupprecht had several questions/comments he made.

Of the 31 original accounts, letters were sent out which caused payments to be made, and the delinquent accounts are now down to 16.

Councilor Rupprecht commented that he had received his \$1,200 stimulus check, as did his wife, and wanted council members to state if they had also. Governor Walz commented in the Star-Tribune that even though there was a March stay-at-home order, there were exemptions made for 78% of persons deemed essential for Minnesota. (Only 22% of persons faced unemployment.) A further point was that not only were those persons eligible for unemployment but could also receive a federal \$600 unemployment amount per week as well.

Much of what was owed to the City was due before the March 2020 pandemic started (the 60 and 90 day past due amounts). Councilor Rupprecht read from the City Code starting from 401.04, Water system accounting, billing, and collection. He is against certification without following the City Code. City Administrator/Clerk Knight stated that of the accounts certified, there have been no phone calls, emails, or messages in the drop box-either asking for a hearing or wanting to make payment arrangements. Rupprecht stated if the certification process happens, payments will not be received until May of 2021. Significant discussion followed. Mayor Carlson read the Certification for collection with taxes paragraph in the City Code 401.04 #3e. 3b discusses a past due bill notice-which has not been sent for several years.

Councilor Rupprecht recommended Resolution 2020-10 be put on hold and that the past due bill described in 3b be sent out. More discussion followed. Knight stated she will be happy to send out these past due notices to residents.

13.2 Water and Sewer Bills 60-day delinquency list

No discussion needed on this item.

14. COVID-19 Information and Updates-

Mayor Carlson stated she listed to the Governor's address tonight. Instead of Stay Home the slogan is now Stay Safe. Things can change quickly, so we should all stay aware. Knight stated plans are being made in preparation for an office opening, whenever that might be.

15. Additional Council Concerns-

Councilor Lavey wondered if a rain barrel could be brought to the dog park so the dogs have something to drink. Public Works Director Benter will see what he can work up.

Councilor Robertson inquired as to what plans are for summer rec? Knight stated there will be an LMC webinar on Park Rec Thursday 5/14 that will hopefully have some information. Rick Schaber from St. Charles is stating the league is waiting to hear further from the Governor. Mayor Carlson mentioned a Personnel meeting should be scheduled.

City Administrator/Clerk Knight stated the 2019 financial audit is finished, and that the audit partner from Hawkins Ash will present results at the next Council meeting.

Mayor Carlson mentioned that Councilors should be mindful of mail they might have at City Hall. Mayor Carlson reminded all to continue to take care of themselves!

Councilor Rupprecht motioned to adjourn the City Council meeting. Seconded by Mayor Carlson.

Approved 5-0.

The Council Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:43 pm on May 13, 2020.

Submitted By:
Cheryl A. Knight
City Administrator/Clerk