City Council Meeting

Minutes

The January 7th, 2020 Council Meeting was called to order at7PM by Mayor Koester. Council members present were Able, Becker, Dauner, Klos, and Tyler. The City Attorney Mr. Miller was also present.

Pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor Koester.

Sheriff Jacobs was present to receive questions about council members hearing about doorbell ringers. New Year’s Eve there was vandalism and kids running down the street. Councilman Becker asked about the dog ordinance and what the disposition was regarding the dogs across the street from the grocery store. Sheriff suggested a letter should be written to the occupant identifying the city ordinance. Mr. Miller suggested they should be sited for the violation and go to court if necessary. A $100 fine can be issued each day the violation is active; however, the fine is for the day the violation occurred not accumulative, meaning each day must be charged separately. Mr. Miller suggested that there could be jail time if the judge finds the violator guilty.

Mr. Miller is in favor of using city court for violations. Mr. Miller suggested sending a letter of the violation to the owners. Neil said a letter would be fine. Kristi Westgate asked who will be delivering the letter? According to Mr. Miller the ordinance states that the letter should be delivered by the sheriff. Susan mentioned that barking dogs can also be a nuisance.

Councilman Becker asked the Sheriff about the car at the mixing strip that had Oklahoma tags on it. The Sheriff Jacobs said that a lady from Oklahoma owned the car was lost and was suffering from Alzheimer’s. He said her family picked her up and took her back home to Oklahoma. Sheriff Jacobs departed the meeting at 7:16PM.

Minutes from the December Council Meeting were read and approved at 7:17PM.

Old Business:

Kristi Westgate updated the council on the sewer project. Councilman Dauner asked if we had a contract. Kristi said that Mayor Koester had signed one for not to exceed 10,000 feet at $20,000. Councilwoman Able asked if the lines will have a TV inspection. Councilman Klos asked about manholes in the road. Kristi Westgate said the contractor will be back in March to dig them up. Mayor Koester stated that in the sewer contract there were no allocations for lining the sewer mains just clean, vacuum, and CCTV them.

All council members said they remember asking that lining be included in the contract. Kristi Westgate said it was not in the contract. Mayor Koester said he had a hand written note that the contractor will charge $35/ft to line sewer pipes. Councilman Dauner suggested we do a grant for the sewer project. Mayor Koester said a grant would take too long. Kristie Westgate suggested we start at the beginning. Councilman Donner said our infiltration problem is near the pool and a thousand feet starting at that location should have CCTV. Councilman Klos suggested we do the lining in addition to all other work to save time and have it started or completed by storm season. Councilman Tyler asked what is the possibility of getting a grant for water and sewer.

Kristi Westgate updated the council on the water project. Rob called Kristi Westgate about blueprints for the reservoir. The contractor wants the reservoir to be inspected. Kristi Westgate mentioned the reservoir is in two sections and can be inspected without water service interruptions. Kristi Westgate said that Rob will talk to Barry Parsons about the water project and update him on what has been discussed so far.

Mayor Koester said that the entire water project is estimated to be $3,650,000 for the entire water project. The mayor suggested to use a CDBG grant, USDA grant, 40year loan with a 2.75% interest. Mayor Koester said that Rob will be glad to assist with these grants. Mayor Koester noted of the loan was for 20 years it will cost the city $ 185,000 annually for loan payments.

Kristi Westgate noted that there are only three payments left on the sewer lagoon. Mayor Koester said this should free up some additional funding.

The Council agreed that the auditor will need to provide cost information regarding Family Health insurance for city staff. Councilwoman Able motioned to let the auditor look at the health plan and Councilman Becker seconded. Motion carried 5-0

Councilman Dauner suggested we go through the League of Municipalities for advice on health care. Kristi Westgate said we cannot get single spouse, single family plans. Mr. Miller will check on the reason why the city cannot get single family or single spouse health insurance from Blue Cross. Councilman Becker suggested we check with other health insurance plans and let the auditor look at it.

The backup generator was for the lift station only. Kristi Westgate said that Chris Rhea made the proposal for the lift station only and not City Hall.

Kristi Westgate said the generator at City Hall needs replaced. Steven Porter suggested a 36KW. Councilman Becker suggested we go with the 45KW and not the 36KW. Council agreed. Councilman Tyler asked about a grant. Mayor Koester said we can only get $5000. The council agreed to pursue any funding we can get. Councilman Becker motioned we go with the 45KW at $16,000 and Councilman Tyler seconded. Motioned carried 5-0.

DEMO bids were discussed. Ursula’s house was discussed. Ursula is still living in the house. Mr. Miller said that action needs to be taken in district court with a lawsuit and estimated time to court is about two months. The city has no authority to move her without a court order. Mayor Koester asked Kristi to firm up the bids for the DEMO. Tabled until we find the disposition of a court order.

LMI Survey was discussed and updated.

New Business:

Councilman Dauner was nominated to continue as the council president. Councilman Tyler motioned to approve and Councilman Becker seconded it. Motion carried at 4-0. Councilman Donner sustained.

The city seal was discussed and the Mayor asked for volunteers to research and develop an official seal for the City of Mankato. The Mayor appointed, Barry Parsons, Kristi Westgate, Kris Klaus, and Lyle Dauner to research and propose a city seal.

City Administrator suggested a consent agenda be used by the council. City Administrator read to the council and mayor what the consent agenda was. Mayor Koester suggested we try it next meeting and see how it works. Councilman Dauner motioned to approve and Councilman Klos seconded. Motioned carried 5-0.

Cost of living raise of 1.3% across the board for employees was requested by City Administrator and approved. Councilwoman Able motioned that the council approve the increase and Councilman Becker seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

City Administrator recommended a pay increase for Kristi Westgate to align her with the state average for an administrative assistant salary. The Councilman Able suggested we go into an executive session to discuss the recommendation. Council went into executive session at 8:45 PM and ended the session at 9:05 PM. Regular council session resumed at 9:06 PM.

Safety boots and uniforms were discussed. City Administrator recommended that a safety toed boot stipend be approved for the employees up to $120 annually. Employee will buy the boots and bring the receipt to the City Administrator for reimbursement. Moreover, if the employee damages their boots on the job they can have them replaced with City Administrators approval. Uniforms for employees are recommended. However, an approved city logo will need to be developed before ordering uniforms. Councilman Dauner motioned that council approve boot stipend and uniforms. Councilman Tyler seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

City Administrator recommended that the City Code of Ordinance be updated. Mr. Miller agreed. City Administrator said he will start the process by talking to the citizens keeping the Council and Mr. Miller informed of all interaction with the public pertaining to City Ordinances. The Mayor and City Council suggested that the City Administrator and Mr. Miller get together on updating the codes. Mr. Miller said that was very prudent. This will improve city operations administratively and operationally. Citizens will know in advance what the city is looking at pertaining to codes. Mr. Miller agreed.

City Administrator recommended the city develop its own website. Mayor and Council agreed a website will be good for the City of Mankato and asked the administrator to bring back some options at the next council meeting.

Community Center backup lighting was discussed. Councilman Tyler suggested there be battery backup and look at getting a grant to install the backup lighting at the Community Center. The Mayor also wanted to know what the classifications are for emergency shelter at the Community Center and City Hall.

The cookstove at the Community Center is not working properly and is recommended to be replaced. Councilman Dauner said the Senior Center owned the stove. Councilman Becker suggested we just go ahead and buy new burners for the stove and have it installed for safety reasons. Councilman Becker motioned that the city buys a new stove for the Community Center. Councilwoman Able seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Ordinance 725 (street light charges) was discussed. Councilman Becker motioned to approve the ordinance and Councilman Tyler seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0

Electrical issue was discussed regarding a local business not being charged the proper electrical rate due to a lower multiplier being applied than what should be on the metered connection. The business was being under charged for several years. Once the correction was entered for the past several years a substantial dollar amount was owed by the business. The council suggested we do not charge the business for the additional charges since it was the cities error. The council said to start charging the business the corrected rate based on the correct multiplier. Mr. Miller suggested we set down with the business owner and explain what happened.

There was a brief discussion on the need for an ordinance for the sale of tobacco changing from the age of 18 to 21. Mr. Miller said an ordinance was not needed.

Mayor Koester discussed the letter from Sunflower electric and said they are raising rates immediately. FERC suggested the increase. KMEA is currently working on behalf of the cities to either reduce the rates or not at all. Councilman Dauner aske d the Mayor if the city will need to increase their rates. He said yes. Mayor said we will discuss the rate increases later.

A request was made by Dollar General for the city to approve a beer/wine license. Councilman Tyler motioned to approve the license and Councilman Becker seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Building permit was discussed regarding Richard Ridgeways request. Mr. Miller suggested that the City Administrator find out what his intentions are. Council agreed and look forward to the update next council meeting.

Ms. Marlene Brown initiated a complaint regarding the property owned by Mahammad Nobi on 115 South Commercial Street. The complaint was the building was unsafe and an eyesore for the community, causing property values to decrease. The council agreed this building needs to be torn down. Mr. Miller suggested the City Administrator notify Mr. Nobi and request to look at the site. The building will need to have a structural engineering inspection condemning the building to be unsafe. Councilman Dauner motioned that we pursue this complaint and Councilwoman Able seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Kristi Westgate informed council that individuals needed to be appointed to EMP2. The suggestion was to make Steven Porter Director and Barry Parsons and Hunter Kohler the alternates since Steven Porter is our electrical expert. Councilman Tyler motioned to approve and Councilman Able seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Request to add Barry Parsons to signature cards and agent for; KPERS, BC/BS, and delegate for KRWA, KMEA, KMU, and LKM. Councilman Tyler motioned to approve and Councilman Becker seconded. Motioned carried 5-0.

Councilwoman Able said there will be a Landbank meeting on January 15th at 5 PM at city Hall. She also requested the city assist with setting up the community center on January 13th from 12 PM to 6 PM. The American Red cross will be performing a blood drive. Request noted and will be accomplished.

Councilman Tyler requested information and disposition on tree trimming in the city. Councilman Tyler said that several trees in the City Park needs trimming. Councilman Tyler asked if the city staff could trim the trees. The City Administrator said he would look into it and suggested the tree board be notified. In addition, Doc noted there was a large cypress tree near the pool that needed to be taken down since it is in the power lines.

Fireman pay for 383 responses was recommended a total payout of $3,830 be approved. Councilman Dauner motioned to approve and Councilwoman Able seconded. Motion carried 4-0, one sustained.

Sunflower letter approved by Mr. Miller.

Mr. Miller received an engagement letter from Mapes and Miller for our upcoming audit. Councilwoman Able suggested we approve. Mr. Miller agreed. Councilwoman Able motioned to hire Mapes and Miller for the City Audit. Councilman Tyler seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of bills for the city. Councilman Klos motioned to approve the bills and Councilman Becker seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Since this was Mayor Koester’s last meeting all the council members thanked Mayor Koester for the support and a job well done over the years as Mayor. Mayor Koester thanked them and said that he truly enjoyed his time as mayor and offered his assistance in the future.

Meeting Adjourned.

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Donald H. Koester, Barry K. Parsons

Mayor City Administrator