

December 12, 2022

CITY OF WASHBURN COMMON COUNCIL MEETING

5:30PM

Washburn City Hall & Remote Call-In

City Council Members:

Present, in-person:

Karen Spears-Novachek, Tom Neimes, Mary McGrath, Carl Broberg, Dave Anderson, Laura Tulowitzky

Present, remote:

none

Municipal Personnel:

Present in-person:

Mayor Mary D. Motiff, City Administrator Scott J. Kluver, Assistant City Administrator Tony Janisch, City Attorney Max Lindsey, Director of Public Works Gerry Schuette

Present, remote:

none

Absent:

Jennifer Maziasz

Call to Order - Meeting called to order at 5:33PM by Mayor Motiff. Roll call attendance depicted five (5) of seven (7) members of the Common Council in attendance. Quorum of the Council recognized. Tulowitzky arriving late.

Approval of Minutes – City Council/Historic Preservation Meetings of November 14, 2022 - A motion was made by Neimes to approve the November 14, 2022 minutes of the City Council, second by Novachek. Motion carried.

Approval of Expenditures – A motion was made by Novachek to approve the monthly expenditures as reviewed, second by McGrath. Motion carried unanimously via a roll-call vote.

Public Comment – Bill Scripps, 228 W 4th St., stated he was walking dogs along the lakeshore and meet resident Craig Schowalter who has worked with small towns to develop businesses. Scripps then named six locations similar to Washburn that have lost industry, then improving their waterfronts to attract business and increase tourism (Muskegon, MI; Prairie du Chien, WI; Sheboygan, WI; Grand Maris, MN; Wabasha, MN, El Dorado, KS). He continued that the two things in common are they've treasured their waterfront and used a consultant to bring in business and development. Scripps suggested bringing in a consultant to assist the city with development. He concluded by stating the 16-acre parkway could be the excellent bait to bring in the big fish of development.

Marieke van Donkersgoed, 77460 Old C Rd., Board President Washburn Chamber of Commerce, responded to the discussion at November's Council meeting of creating a tourism committee. She stated disappointment that a large part of the exploratory discussion included the Washburn Chamber's operations and finances as a baseline that were presented incompletely and inaccurately. Donkersgoed continued that listening to the discussion, she was not surprised that the presented information created a negative, if not distrustful, viewpoint on how the Chamber operates in general and the spending of room-tax dollars. She continued that in the past two years, a small group of business owners have opposed the Chamber's operations, planting seeds of distrust. Another tourism entity was created in the past years, an initiative of the one hotelier who isn't happy how room-tax is being spent. This business association was to focus specifically on growing Washburn tourism. Not surprisingly, many of their ideas duplicated or were similar to those of the Chamber's, and at some point, this initiative fizzled out and the Chamber was asked to pick up the loose ends. Donkersgoed continued that the Chamber was not ever issued instructions on how to spend room-tax dollars, and despite the city attorney's interpretations, we could find no ruling or ordinance of how the Chamber operates is wrong in using room-tax dollars. She continued that there is a consistent increase in room-tax dollars showing a success in increasing tourism and tourism income. And when the Chamber is finally well organized, productive, and growing, it would be reasonable to make changes without a single discussion? In creating a tourism committee to be responsible for room-tax dollars and withdrawing funds from the Chamber, the Chamber will likely not survive. Jobs will be eliminated, membership upside down, rolling project interrupted, knowledge and experience thrown by the wayside.

Donkersgoed concluded by inviting Council to engage in open and polite dialogue with the Washburn Chamber Board, to create understanding and progress rather than confusion, spite, and damage. If adjustments are needed let's discuss this together based on facts and realistic expectations.

Mayoral Announcements, Proclamations, Appointments – The Mayor stated that the two full-time EMTs have been hired and their start date will be the beginning of January.

Discussion & Action on Request from Cinnaire Solutions to Dedicate 2024 TID #2 Affordable Housing Funds to Proposed Project on Tax ID 32578 (901 East Bayfield Street) – Kluver stated that earlier in the year, Council approved extending TID #2 for an additional year for funding to be used for an affordable housing project, and that this funding would be available in 2024. Novachek moved to approve TID#2 Affordable Housing Funds for Cinnaire Solutions Project at Tax ID 32578, seconded by Anderson. Novachek stated that the application for tax credits, for development projects, are extremely competitive and that this TID commitment will help in the application for other funding. Motion carried unanimously. Jerrell Harris and Nicole Solheim of Cinnaire Solutions stated they are excited to see this project moving forward.

Discussion & Action on Request to Purchase Lot 34 (Tax ID 33405) in the 200 Block of East Bayfield Street – Norvado, Petitioner – Anderson moved to approve Norvado to purchase of Lot 34 on East Bayfield St, Tax ID 33405, seconded by Neimes. Kluver stated that he was speaking with another party interested in the property but with no particular use. Then when Norvado showed interested, the other party withdrew. Novachek noted that the use of a generator could be a concern to area residents, but that it will only run once a week. Motion carried, McGrath abstaining.

Discussion & Action on Request to Create and Place on “For Sale” List a Parcel Consisting of a Portion of Lot 52 East of the Intersection of South 8th Avenue West and Bigelow Street – The Mayor began discussion that upon planning for the new intersection at Holman Lakeview Dr for the Bayfield St. detour, it was discovered that the house north of Lot 52 was encroaching on city property. She noted the recommendation to divide the parcel, place it on the For Sale list and transfer the property to the homeowner, which would eliminate the non-conformity/trespass issue. McGrath moved to approve and place on the For Sale List a portion of Lot 52 at the intersection of S 8th Ave. W and Bigelow St., seconded by Neimes. Kluver added that this process would take a few months, and then the parcel would need to be listed for 30 days before any action could be taken. Anderson added that he would support a transfer of property to the homeowner, Ms. Collins, at no cost. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on 2023 Wage Schedule – Novachek stated that the Personnel Committee discussed wages including the implementation of a Step System to help retain and recruit employees. Novachek moved to approve the 2023 Wage Schedule, seconded by McGrath. The Mayor asked if the step pay increases were contingent upon satisfactory performance. Kluver responded that this was discussed, but there were other mechanisms in place to address performance, and the step system is more to reward longevity. Discussion continued regarding performance improvement motivators and discipline procedures. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Proposed 2023 TID #2 and TID #3 Budgets – Novachek moved to approve the 2023 TID #2 & TID #3 Budgets, seconded by Anderson. Kluver stated that there was an error with the County appropriations which will create minor adjustments; TID #2 will have \$5 less in revenue, and TID #3 will have \$1 less. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Final 2023 General Fund and Capital Budget Adjustments, and Resolution #22-010 Adopting All 2023 Budgets and Expenditures – Novachek moved to approve Resolution #22-010 adopting all 2023 Budgets and Expenditures, seconded Neimes. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Writing-Off Certain Outstanding Ambulance Bills – McGrath moved to approve the writing-off of presented outstanding Ambulance Bills, seconded by Broberg. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Writing-Off Certain Uncashed Checks – McGrath moved to approve the writing-off of presented Uncashed Checks, seconded by Tulowitzky. Discussion occurred. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on 2023 Meeting, Election, and Holiday Calendar – The Mayor requested that the August Council meeting be moved back one week, due to a conflict. Novachek moved to approve the 2023 Meeting, Election & Holiday Calendar with the August Council meeting being changed to Aug. 7th, seconded by Neimes. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Ordinance 22-011 Eliminating Private Alarm Permit Requirements – Broberg moved to approve Ordinance 22-011 eliminating Private Alarm Permit requirements, seconded by Novachek. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Ordinance 22-012 Eliminating Cemetery Monuments Permits and Fees – Broberg moved to approve Ordinance 22-012 eliminating Cemetery Monument Permits and Fees, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Ordinance 22-013 Related to Parking on 8th Avenue West Between 4th and 5th Street – Broberg moved to approve Ordinance 22-013 parking on 8th Ave. W between 4th and 5th St., seconded by Neimes. Discussion occurred regarding notification of winter parking. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action on Amendment to “Class B” and Class “B” Alcohol Licenses for Superior Shores Eats (Patsy’s), 328 W. Bayfield St. to Allow for Outdoor Service Area – Robert Stadler, Petitioner – Broberg moved to approve the amended Alcohol License for Superior Shores Eats, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session - Consideration of Sale of Property to Purchase Lot 34 (Tax ID 33405) in the 200 Block of East Bayfield Street – Norvado, Petitioner – Council did not go into closed session.

Adjourn – Mayor Motiff adjourned the meeting at 6:36PM.

Tony Janisch
Assistant City Administrator

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 4:30pm

Committee Members Karen Spears-Novachek & Mary McGrath reviewed monthly expenditure vouchers.