

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING ----- JUNE 17, 2024

The Regular Council Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Mayor Karst. The following Council members were present: Heitman, Austin, Koski, Carr and Nistler. Council member Ozark was absent. Also present was DPW Skubinna. Candy Lagerquist, Karen Breigenzer, Randon Stormer, Paul McColly, and Mary Fahlgren were also in attendance. City Clerk Amundson, City Attorney Pekovitch, and City Grant Writer Byers attended via Google Meets. There was no media representation.

Mayor Karst led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment on any Agenda Item: NONE

Council member Koski made a motion approving the consent agenda including the payment of claims for June 17, 2024 in the amount of \$180,922.92, the Valley Court Apartment claims in the amount of \$2,544.80, and the minutes of the June 3, 2024 Regular Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Council member Nistler, and carried unanimously.

Paul McColly was in attendance to talk to the council about the water charges during the fair. Mayor Karst stated that the water that is used to fill the water truck to wet down the track is metered off of the hydrant and isn't charged to the fair board and is charged at the bulk water rate and not attached to the water bill. The amount of water that is used during the fair is only for the restrooms. The majority of the water bill is the sewer charge since it's a 2" service. Paul mentioned to the council that they are welcome to come and volunteer during fair time. Council member Koski said that finding volunteers any more is very difficult; the Chamber even has a hard time during all of their events they host.

Council member Carr made a motion approving the modification to the animal contract from a one year to a three-year contract. The motion was seconded by Council member Heitman, and carried unanimously.

Council member Nistler made a motion to approve the additional language in the animal contract to allow the contractor to request a monthly increase within 30 days of the end of the fiscal year to become effective the next fiscal year. The motion was seconded by Council member Carr. There was discussion on if the council had the ability to negotiate the request if it came in too high. City Clerk Amundson explained that the request would have to come to the council in writing and it would have to be approved at a regularly scheduled council meeting in June before it could go into effect July 1st of the next fiscal year. Motion carried.

Council member Austin made a motion approving the recommendation from the wage comp committee to pay up to \$900.00 for health insurance for non-bargaining employees for fiscal year 2024-2025. The MMIA employee only rate for fiscal year 2024-2025 will be \$877.00 per month. The motion was seconded by Council member Heitman, and carried unanimously.

Council member Koski made a motion approving the recommendation from the wage comp committee to extend the police department hiring incentives for another year. The motion was seconded by Council member Nistler. The current hiring incentives are \$4,000.00 for newly hired employees; receiving \$2,000.00 as a sign on bonus, and the remaining \$2,000.00 after successfully completing a one-year probationary period. The other incentive is for \$6,000.00 for those who are hired with POST certifications with \$3,000.00 as a sign on bonus and the remaining to be paid after completion of a one-year probationary period. Motion carried.

Council member Nistler made a motion approving the recommendation from the wage comp committee to increase Chief Weber's wage to \$43.44 effective July 1, 2024. The motion was seconded by Council member Carr. There was discussion on how much of an increase it was compared to his current wage. It's about an \$8.00 an hour increase. Mayor Karst stated that he would work 86 hours during a pay period and would have to get approval from him to work overtime hours. The council wanted to know how many overtime hours he has worked since he became chief. City Clerk Amundson stated from 9/8/2021 to 6/30/2022 it was 19 hours, 7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023 was 126 hours, and from 7/1/2023 to 6/17/2024 it was 153 hours. They then asked how much of an increase from last fiscal year including overhead costs. City Clerk Amundson said it would go from about \$106,000.00 to \$138,000.00 for the fiscal year. The council thinks he should receive a raise, just not an \$8.00 an hour raise; they would like it to go back to the wage comp committee for further negotiations. All council members voted against; motion failed. City Clerk Amundson will set up a wage comp committee meeting and let them know when it will be scheduled for.

Council member Koski made a motion approving the employee longevity payment for fiscal year 2024-2025. The motion was seconded by Council member Heitman, and carried unanimously.

Council member Austin made a motion approving the 4.5% wage increase for non-bargaining employees for fiscal year 2024-2025. The motion was seconded by Council Nistler. The council asked City Clerk Amundson what the increase to the budget will be for the next fiscal year with the 4.5% increase across the board for all employees, since this is what was offered to both the union and the police department. She said across the entire city budget, it will be about \$106,000.00 increase, but this also included the increase for Chief Weber. Motion carried.

Unfinished Business – Levee Safety Committee Report – DPW Skubinna mentioned DNRC is looking at scheduling a meeting around the 1st week of August; he suggested to them having a meeting in September. The SWIF should be updated by the end of August.

Committee Reports: There were no reports for personnel, water, or cemetery. City Grant Writer Byers talked about the public meetings coming up for the housing grant that is being applied for. She then inquired on the Cherry Creek grant assistance. She wanted to know if the city was going to be the sponsor for them or not. There was discussion on how the grant would work. She explained that if the city was a sponsor, they would have to pay the construction invoice up front and would have to wait to see if they would be awarded the grant or not to assist Cherry Creek. City Clerk Amundson stated that she doesn't feel comfortable enough to pay this money upfront and then have to wait to see if we are awarded the grant or not, but it's ultimately up to the council. City Attorney Pekovitch said she would like to look into this first before giving her approval. She would like to make sure that it wouldn't hinder the city from receiving any future grants. City Grant Writer Byers told the council that she is waiting to hear back from CDBG to see if it's possible to have two (2) planning grants open at the same time.

Department Head Reports:

DPW Skubinna said he had updated the paperwork for the ISO fire rating. The water department has been working on hydrants and the lift station pump. He had a meeting with Urban Forestry, the street department has been working on the levee, and Thompson Contracting will be back this week to finish up the project before the substantial completion report is signed.

Council member Austin mentioned there was a fire the other day at Shady Rest and the representatives from ISO will be here in July.

City Clerk Amundson told the council she's been working on budgets and she will have Alicia look for the Tree City file in the morning for DPW Skubinna.

City Attorney Pekovitch said the MOU for the skate park has been routed back to Dave Irving and she has emailed the hours worked for the city to both DPW Skubinna and City Clerk Amundson.

Mayor Karst asked DPW Skubinna about the status of the street shop roof project. He said that he is submitting the foundation information to the engineer to see if it's possible to install a pitched roof on it instead of the membrane roof. The council would like him to continue researching this.

Public Comment: Paul McColly had inquired on why the Police Chief position isn't salaried. It was explained to him that the Chief would have to do 80% of his position in administration and only 20% could be used as patrol. If he were to work over the 20% on patrol, then overtime hours would have to come into play and it could become difficult on the payroll end of things.

Council member Nistler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Council member Koski, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

Stacey A. Amundson

Stacey Amundson
City Clerk-Treasurer

Rod Karst
Mayor