

City of Prairie City
City Council Minutes
September 13, 2023 6:00 pm

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: The City Council of Prairie City, Jasper County, Iowa met on September 13, 2023, at City Hall and via Zoom. Mayor Chad Alleger called the meeting to order at 5:59pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Mayor Alleger, Councilors Joe Disney, Derek Ingle, Phil Holland, Emily Simmons, & Deb Townsend. Also present: City Administrator Jerry Moore; City Clerk Christie Busby; Police Chief Kevin Gott; Public Works Superintendent Carl Van Der Kamp; MSA representative Preston Moon; Celebration Committee reps Amy Witte and Sam Mastin; Citizen Steve Zimmerman. Via Zoom: Library Director Sue Ponder, Dianne Taylor, Kirsten Weiland, Jamee Pierson-NDN.

AGENDA APPROVAL: Simmons moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Ingle. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Amy Witte, 107 E 2nd St- Questioning status of abandoned house on north side of 2nd across from her residence. Mayor advised that it is being addressed with nuisance letter.

CONSENT AGENDA: Townsend moved to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Simmons. Motion carried.

a) July Financials; b) August Claims; c) Resolution 9-13-23-1 Approving Bills and Transfers; d) City Council Meeting Minutes from August 9, 2023; e) Park Board Meeting Minutes from July 24, 2023; f) Celebration Committee Appointments; g) Resolution 9-13-23-2 Resignation of Police Officer Nick Aldrich and Request for Part-time Status; h) Library Board Meeting Minutes from June 20, 2023

OLD BUSINESS:

a) MSA Update (Preston): Carl asked about well site progress, Preston stated he has sent Northern Natural Gas plans for the well site, and they would expedite their review. Ingle asked if there was anything found on fire/EMS site, Preston advised nothing concerning.

b) Public Works Update (Carl V.): Doing monthly tests and samplings with couple additional this month. Lift station rehab is complete with new 4" pumps. May eventually need an alarm in the system. Met with CIT about sewer repairs. Working with library project. Looking for a wastewater pump and have received varying delivery estimates for receiving a pump. Due to this, recommend keeping a pump on hand in future. Working with Preston to locate the gas line at the well site and it is now GPS'ed. Trimming trees at Waveland and parks. Have done several One Calls and new construction locates. Ingle asked how to track the need for keeping a pump on hand and Carl stated it will be brought up at budget time. Busby stated notes can be put into the system software to track it as well. Holland stated if there were other critical components to keep on hand to suggest keeping a list.

c) Police Update (Police Chief Gott): 240 calls for service/99 citations and 31 warnings and officers were doing GTSB enforcement again. Since speed cameras were raised 1 mph there has been some decrease in citations, but high speed is still an issue. Fire/EMS calls were up with 16 assists. 68 salvage inspections. Animal complaints held steady, with dogs still being prevalent. With school starting, the speed trailer was placed on E 2nd as a reminder. DOT requested locates on State and on 2nd. One is also requested on Hwy 163. Based on numbers, BLS has not approved based on possible legislative changes coming. Ingle questioned the impact on westbound versus percent on the report. Townsend asked if cams work at night, Chief Gott said yes. Working with city attorney who will work with attorney handling the worst offenders to go to court. Challenges are up but most are invalid reasons except lease companies should be going to the leasee instead and will work on a case-to-case basis. Short staffed as Officer Aldrich has resigned to take a medic/EMS position that will utilize his current schooling. Currently looking for his replacement but going to be selective in the candidate that will work well within the small community aspects of the job. Will be utilizing our part-time and reserve officers to help keep necessary shift coverage.

d) City Administrator Update (Jerry Moore): In front of council is a speed camera letter, building permit report, FNBO credit card report, revised purchasing policy document, Simmering-Cory bid. Janet was on vacation for a week and very thankful to have Christie back in the office from medical leave. Signed HomeServe agreement and working on resident documentation to be sent out. Received first chickens permit request and was reviewed, approved, and will be inspected. Received comments back from city attorney regarding the employee handbook and they stated this is the most comprehensive handbook they have reviewed. MSA worked on adding easements, ingress/egress, and electrical work to library site plan. City received 3rd pay application from Accurate Commercial for around \$276,000 after a cost discrepancy was identified. Simmons asked if it was communicated to Accurate Commercial that it would be on October agenda and Moore said yes. Well land purchase is complete and final aspects are being worked on. City staff and Preston are working with Matt at PFM to work on financing options of LOST funds, debt service, speed camera funds, and the pre-application for USDA loan for Fire/EMS building due to estimated \$2.3 million project cost and meeting scheduled with Dorsey & Whitney, our bond counsel, to discuss financing options and legal authority to borrow and enter into debt. Townsend asked about funds with the Fire & Rescue Association and transparency. Carl stated that has been discussed previously that those funds are used primarily for equipment needs. Ingle asked what was left unallocated in speed camera funds and Busby stated \$1.1 million. Phase 1 and 2 design application has been sent out. Nuisance abatement letters sent out and will be working with residents in violation. Will be working to get bids for replacing carpet and window in City Hall and door at rec complex. Going through formal process to get quotes for street repairs.

e) Discussion and Consideration of Request from Mound Prairie Ventures to withdraw the Downtown Housing Grant 22-ARPDH-047: Townsend mentioned she reached out to Nick Sorenson from Downtown Resource Center and felt it was in city's best interest to table it. Reach out to them and Scott to review other options and developers for this project. No action taken.

f) Resolution 9-13-23-3 Discussion and Action on Awarding Contract for CDBG Writing Services for the Phase 2 & 3 Water Main Project: Only bid was Simmering-Cory for \$1000. Townsend motioned to approve. Seconded by Holland. Motion carried.

g) Resolution 9-13-23-4 Setting a Public Hearing for 10-11-23 on Proposal to Enter into a SRF Water Revenue Loan and Disbursement Agreement and to Borrow Money in an Amount not to Exceed \$374,000 for Planning and Design Services for Phase 2 & 3 Water Main Project: Ingle motioned to set hearing for 10/11/23. Seconded by Simmons. Motion carried.

h) Resolution 9-13-23-5 Discussion and Consideration of Approving the Revised City Employee Manual: Jerry reached out to city attorney office, and they provided additional recommendations that city staff approves as shown in revised copy. Townsend asked about their comment on page 14 regarding background checks and Moore stated he believed that if something comes back on a check to inquire with the city attorney. Ingle stated on page 31 typo in "personnel". The council commended everyone involved in getting this handbook to this point. Simmons motioned to approve the employee handbook with the suggested revisions. Seconded by Disney. Motion carried.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a) Discussion and Action on Setting Day and Time for Beggers Night: Moore stated Monroe approved October 29th. EMS would like to do their Trunk or Treat on Monday October 30th. Mayor recommended approving Monday October 30th. Holland motioned to approve. Seconded by Ingle. Motion carried.

b) Discussion and Consideration of quote from CIT for City Sanitary Sewer Repair Services: CIT did thorough report in 2022 on repairs needed. Total cost is \$119,911.45. Simmons asked about requiring additional quotes and Carl stated that would require every company to re-televise lines at additional costs. Townsend motioned to approved quote. Seconded by Ingle. Motion carried.

c) Resolution 9-13-23-6 Discussion and Consideration of Revised City Purchasing Policy: The purchasing policy was required for grant application and city was operating on a 2009 version, so Moore worked on updating the

policy to reflect current thresholds. Simmons commented purchase order process is helpful for tracking. Mayor stated the \$2,500 limit should be changed to \$5,000 due to inflation. Ingle would like consistency in the “if possible” language and it was clarified that we can send out to three companies, but they don’t have to bid. Simmons motioned to approve with suggestions. Seconded by Ingle. Motion carried.

- d) Discussion and Consideration of Establishing City Policy for Rental Fees of City Facilities for Nonprofit Organizations: Moore would like consistency and direction for nonprofit (NP) organizations since in the past it has not been and we receive resistance from them in filling out the form and paying the fee. Holland recommended not charging locals. Townsend questioned if we should be charging NP at all. Discussion on what qualified as nonprofit. Citizen Zimmerman asked to speak, how Jasper Co Veterans Affairs would be charged. As part of the fee schedule, this can be revisited yearly. Simmons motioned to not charge local nonprofits and charge half price to non-local nonprofit organizations. Disney seconded. Motion carried.
- e) Discussion and Consideration of Special Event for American Legion Post #275 for City Flag Burning Ceremony: Townsend motioned to approve special event ceremony. Simmons seconded. Motion carried.
- f) Resolution 9-13-23-7 Discussion and Consideration to Hire New Public Works Employees: Townsend asked if either candidates had a CDL. Moore stated both do. Moore stated Wardyn has two years experience and Cornelison has military experience and currently enrolled in W.E.T. All references checked out. Simmons asked about certifications and Wardyn has Grade 2’s. Cornelison is just getting started in the program. Simmons motioned to approve to hire Wardyn at \$25.50 an hour and Cornelison at \$24.00 an hour. Ingle seconded. Motion carried.
- g) Resolution 9-13-23-8 Discussion and Consideration of 604 W South Street Utility Bill Reduction Request: Moore clarified that tenant request and explained that toilet overflowed and most of the water went out through the sump pump and not through the sewer lines. Bill was \$608 and recommendation is to forgive sewer costs leaving \$210.88 left on bill to pay. Simmons motioned to grant bill reduction request. Ingle seconded. Motion carried.
- h) Discussion and Consideration of Special Event for Prairie Days 7-26-24 through 7-28-24: Amy and Sam present and Mayor state they are fully staffed with appointed members for the next year. List of business owners and streets around square to be closed for the event and extend out. Monroe is typically 1st weekend of August which will be dead weak. Celebration monthly meetings will be held 3rd Wednesday of the months at 6pm. Holland motioned to set Prairie Days for 7-26-24 through 7-28-24. Ingle seconded. Motion carried.
- i) Resolution 9-13-23-9 Setting Public Hearing for 10-11-23 to Amend the FY24 Budget: Simmons motioned to approve. Townsend seconded. Motion carried.

Simmons motioned to enter closed session at 7:26pm. Townsend seconded. Motion carried.
Motion to enter open session at 7:46pm. Townsend seconded. Motion carried.

- j) Closed Session Under Code of Iowa 21.9 to Discuss Strategy Related to Matters in Employment Conditions of Employees. Simmons motioned to enter closed session at 7:26pm. Townsend seconded. Motion carried.
Motion to enter open session at 7:46 pm. Townsend seconded. Motion carried. No action taken on closed session.

Moore made recommendation that with the handbook approval the city follow the current holiday calendar through the remainder of the year and move to the list in the newly adopted handbook as of January. Ingle motioned to approve Moore’s recommendation and Disney seconded. Motion carried.

8. ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Simmons at 7:48pm. Townsend seconded. Motion carried.