

A regular meeting of the City Council was held on Monday, September 11, 2023, at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers with Mayor Kirby presiding. Council Members present: Huntington, Schlueter, Swanberg, Sullivan, Touhey, and Williams. Also participating: City Administrator, Joe Roby; Finance Director, Ryan Graff; City Engineer, Cory Bienfang

1. Call to Order

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of the Agenda: Motion by Council Member Sullivan seconded by Council Member Touhey to approve agenda as presented. Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, Touhey, and Williams. Voting no: None. Motion passed 7-0.

4. Consent Agenda: Motion by Council Member Huntington seconded by Council Member Williams to approve the consent agenda as presented:

4A. City Council Minutes 08/28/2023

4B. Disbursements Through September 11, 2023 Meeting

1. Purchases over \$25,000

- i. MMPA c/o Avant Energy – August 2023 Purchased Power - \$864,307.67
- ii. MN Department of Revenue – August 2023 City Sales Tax - \$59,492.00
- iii. Neo Water Treatment – FX300 WWTF Material - \$41,189.20
- iv. GEA Westfalia Separator – Centrifuge Equipment & Maintenance - \$32,093.31
- v. So Minne Properties – Small Cities Development Program - \$25,000.00

4C. Liquor License – Luke’s (Consumption & Display License)

4D. Parade Permit – LS-H Homecoming Parade

4E. Payment Application #19 – Well 8 Project

4F. Main Street Closure Application – The Bar & Grill – Car Show

4G. Main Street Closure Application - The Bar & Grill – Giants Day Out

4H. Main Street Closure Application - The Bar & Grill – Retirement Party

Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, Touhey, and Williams. Voting no: None. Motion passed 7-0.

5. Public Comment: None.

6. City Administrator Update:

There was an RPAC meeting and Joel Schmidt was introduced. Discussed camping and campsites at River Park. Public Services Director process is continuing with interviews scheduled to be held before the next City Council meeting. Lots of budget work in the past couple weeks along with Police Chief interviews. Reminder that the Future of City Forum is being held October 14th, from 10am to noon at the MS/HS. Wellness Committee held it’s annual Wellness Committee Picnic for staff on August 31st, the weather was perfect and it was a good time, so well done to the Wellness Committee. Personnel & Budget Committee met on September 6th. Planning Commission is meeting next week to discuss the apartment project proposed at Ferry and 2nd. Airport Commission meeting was held and a special meeting will be held the beginning of October. Will be meeting with a group to design a walking tour. Christmas in the Valley is being planned for December 1st. Administrator Roby provided an update on the ROW acquisition on Highway 93.

Senator Klobuchar will be visiting the City of Le Sueur to discuss public safety. Administrator Roby provided City Council with an update on the library summer reading program.

7. Regular Agenda:

7A. Personnel Action – Police Chief Hiring

Administrator Roby presented to City Council that the hiring process began for a new Police Chief after the resignation of Chief Thieke was received in July. The City received 17 applications, with seven interviews being held. The interview panel included Administrator Roby, HR Director Lawrence, and two fellow Police Chiefs from surrounding jurisdictions. The interview panel recommended extending an offer to Ms. Stier, which was accepted. Ms. Stier has served over 20 years in the MN State Patrol and has held various leadership roles. Ms. Stier has expertise in training, staff development, regulatory compliance, and community engagement. A motion by Council Member Sullivan, seconded by Council Member Williams to approve the recommendation to hire Pilar Stier as the new Police Chief. Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, Touhey, and Williams. Voting no: None. Motion passed 7-0.

7B. Resolution R2023-029 Accepting Work for South Main Street Reconnection Project

City Engineer, Cory Bienfang, presented City Council with resolution R2023-029 to approve the work and final payment in the amount of \$111,279.07 to Pember Companies for the Main Street reconnection. The construction came in under bid and all final paperwork required has been submitted. The project comes with a two-year warranty that becomes effective once the City Council approves the work. A motion by Council Member Swanberg seconded by Council Member Schlueter to approve resolution R2023-029 to accept work and final payment to Pember Companies for the Main Street Reconnection Project. Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, Touhey, and Williams. Voting no: None. Motion passed 7-0.

7C. Resolution R2023-030 Accepting Work for CSAH 22 Improvement Project

City Engineer, Cory Bienfang, presented to City Council with resolution R2023-030 to approve the final work completed on CSAH 22 (TH 112 Turnback) Improvement Project. The improvement project was completed in five stages over a couple of years and the work is complete along with all paperwork submitted. Council Member Sullivan asked about the condition of the grass along the project route. Mr. Bienfang replied that the residential corridor had sod laid for the restoration portion but weather really just wasn't in our favor but the contractors fulfilled their requirement for sod care in the contract and it was seeded as well. It wasn't the result anyone was hoping for but any more restoration work is outside the contract. A motion by Council Member Huntington seconded by Council Member Swanberg to approve resolution R2023-030 to accept work for the CSAH 22 Improvement Project. Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, Touhey, and Williams. Voting no: None. Motion passed 7-0.

7D. Resolution R2023-031 – Adoption of 2024 Preliminary Levy & General Fund Budget

Finance Director, Ryan Graff, presented to City Council the 2024 preliminary levy and general fund budget. Staff took direction from City Council after the Work Session to try to lower the original proposed levy increase of 9% and was able to decrease that to a 5.68% increase. The preliminary budget is recommended to be set at \$3,710,044, which is an increase of \$199,437 from 2023. Director Graff presented City Council with the revenue and expenses, debt levy, and expenses from the 2024 general fund CEP/CIP. Council Member Touhey commented that he wasn't in favor

of this type of increase and wanted to see the increase around 4% therefore he would not support the proposed budget. Mayor Kirby responded that City Staff and Council Members have worked on this budget for a year and thinks they did really well getting it to where it is. Motion by Council Member Williams and seconded by Council Member Schlueter to approve the 2024 preliminary budget as presented. Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, and Williams. Voting no: Touhey. Motion passed 6-1.

7E. Resolution R2023-032 Accepting Bid & Awarding Contract for WWTF Blower Project

Administrator Roby presented resolution r2023-032 to City Council which would replace the existing blower. Bids were opened on September 5, 2023, and the lowest responsive and responsible bidder was Minnesota Mechanical Solutions, Inc., with a bid of \$194,400. Motion by City Council Member Sullivan seconded by Council Member Touhey to approve resolution R2023-032 as presented. Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, Touhey, and Williams. Voting no: None. Motion passed 7-0.

7F. VOTER Agreement

Administrator Roby presented City Council with a recommendation to allow City Clerk Dhaene to enter into an agreement with Le Sueur County to allow the County to retain the funds that have been allocated for the City in the amount of \$260.40 for election specific costs. Motion by City Council Member Sullivan seconded by Council Member Williams to approve staff recommendation allowing staff to enter into an agreement with Le Sueur County to retain the VOTER funds. Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, Touhey, and Williams. Voting no: None. Motion passed 7-0.

7G. Request for Public Hearing: Delinquent Utility Accounts

Finance Director Graff presented to City Council a recommendation to hold a public hearing on October 9, 2023, to hear public input on any delinquent utility accounts. There is an outstanding balance of \$581,228.80 on delinquent utility accounts and those accounts will be assessed to the property owner's 2024 property taxes if not paid by November 2, 2023. Final certification will take place at the November 13, 2023 City Council Meeting. Motion by City Council Member Sullivan seconded by Council Member Touhey to approve staff recommendation to call a public hearing regarding delinquent utility accounts. Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, Touhey, and Williams. Voting no: None. Motion passed 7-0.

8. Comments/Reports/Items of Appreciation:

- Huntington: Nothing
- Schlueter: Attended a LMC Housing Webinar. Attended Le Sueur County Commission Meeting. Planning Commission Meeting on Thursday.
- Sullivan: Transit meeting tomorrow. Thanks to Joe, Ryan, and other staff working on the budget.
- Swanberg: Remembering the date, wanted to say thanks to all the firefighters, ems personnel, and police officers and we are very fortunate to have you in our community.
- Touhey: None
- Williams: Thanks to staff for their work on the budget. Enjoyed the Lions Breakfast and Music and a Meal on Sunday. Was impressed with the football team and they shouldn't hang their heads they did a great job!

- Kirby: Wanted to reflect on 9/11 and asked everyone where they were on this day 22 years ago when they heard the news.

Motion Huntington to adjourn meeting at 7:46pm. Voting in favor: Huntington, Kirby, Schlueter, Sullivan, Swanberg, Touhey, and Williams. Voting no: None. Motion passed 7-0.

Lindsey Dhaene
City Clerk