

City of Battle Lake

City Council Minutes

The Battle Lake City Council met in regular session Tuesday, September 10, 2013 at 7 pm at City Hall. Present were Mayor Chuck Reeve and Council members Bob Wasson, Marjorie Quammen, Janet Ruhland and Ryan Christensen. Also present was city attorney JJ Cline.

The meeting was called to order and the agenda approved as amended. M-Ruhland, S-Wasson, M/C.

Chad Schaefer from the West Battle Lake Lakeshore Association presented a proposal regarding aquatic invasive species monitoring at the public access on Lake Shore Drive. A stenciled message on the launch area and a motion activated monitoring device are the two components of the plan with the Lakeshore Association to bear all costs for installation and maintenance. Following discussion, the Council approved the request and directed Schaefer to coordinate the work with Public Works Director Steve Seufert. M-Ruhland, S-Quammen, M/C.

Board members of the BL Area Fire & Rescue Association along with architect Tony Stoll appeared before the Council to discuss a proposed new Fire/Rescue facility site. Areas of concern were the potential purchase of additional property adjacent to the current skating rink site, need for a zoning variance relative to impervious surface requirements, comparative costs of purchasing property and site preparation due to the condition of sub-grade materials, versus the cost of providing water/sewer services in another location and lack of a viable backup plan if the current site proves to be inadequate. Other items debated were presumed impact on insurance rates and response time with a change of location, lack of adequate off-street parking, traffic safety and the need for a site analysis or feasibility study by an architect or engineer before proceeding. Following a lengthy discussion with no consensus, it was noted building plan options will be presented by architect Tony Stoll at the next BLAFRA Board meeting 9/19.

Larry Doss from First National Bank presented a sign permit request for First Lakes Agency signage on the North side of the bank building. Following a lengthy discussion and review of the City's sign ordinance, the Council approved the request with the condition that the sign be at least 11 feet off the ground and not extend over the Main Street curb. M-Christensen, S-Quammen, M/C.

The 8/27 minutes were approved. M-Ruhland, S-Wasson, M/C.

Treasurer's report was reviewed and approved. M-Ruhland, S-Reeve, M/C.

The Extra Hour Report was reviewed and discussed briefly.

Liquor Store report was reviewed and manager Cody Munsell reported good sales on Labor Day weekend.

Police Chief Kent Kortlever reported on August activities and training noting that MIR3 implementation is in progress and that detours through town appear to be working reasonably well at this point. He also presented a letter of resignation from Officer Warren Johnson effective October 15, although Johnson is willing to stay on after that date if the hiring process in St Louis County is delayed for any reason. The Council accepted the resignation and authorized Kortlever to begin advertising for 2 part-time officers to fill the vacancy. M-Ruhland, S-Wasson, M/C. The staffing change is intended to increase coverage and provide more scheduling flexibility without increasing expenditures.

Ruhland and Quammen volunteered to serve on the Selection Committee with Kortlever.

Rescue Squad Captain Joyelle Hill presented a report indicating 19 runs for the month of August; she also reported on some upcoming training opportunities as well as a successful Turkey Feed fundraiser that served 368 people with net proceeds of \$3,276.77.

Fire Chief John Salvold gave a verbal report, indicating no fire calls in the past month and he attended a Chief's meeting in Pelican Rapids.

Public Works Director Steve Seufert reported on the Hwy 78 project noting that informational meetings are being held each Wednesday at City Hall at 10am, sidewalks will begin to be installed later in the week and the project completion date is October 10. Cost estimates for various colors of concrete in the amenity zone were discussed and the Council agreed by consensus that due to a substantial cost differential it would be better to proceed with plain concrete. Seufert presented purchase agreements related to a property trade with Otter Tail Power in which the City would transfer ownership of its lot to Otter Tail Power this year so that construction of a new sub-station can begin. In 2014 after the old sub-station has been demolished and removed, that property would be transferred to the City. Following discussion and review of the agreements by city attorney JJ Cline, the Council approved the purchase agreements as presented. M-Quammen, S-Ruhland, M/C. Seufert also asked the Council for direction in dealing with various parties currently storing equipment at the City farm site. Although waivers of liability were signed, no rental fees have been charged due to the impact on the property's tax exempt status. Following discussion it was decided the best course of action would be to have all parties involved, vacate the area by 06/01/2014. M-Ruhland, S-Quammen, M/C.

The Project List was reviewed briefly and the following meetings scheduled: the Natural Gas Committee will meeting Monday, September 30 at 4 pm to review updated cost information from Project Manager Jeremy Anderson; the Wellhead Protection Committee will meet Wednesday, September 18 at 3:30 pm to review Plan implementation, funding, grant status and a draft Wellhead Protection Ordinance.

Committee Reports: BL Motor Patrol-minutes and financial reports from the 8/12 meeting were reviewed; Quammen commented on the 9/9 meeting at which an employee review was completed satisfactorily, an alternative building site was inspected and found not suitable and an update given on equipment repair. **BL Area Fire & Rescue**-minutes and financial reports from the 8/15 meeting were not available. **LADA**- Board Member Abby Johnson reported an account balance of \$17,834.31 and their annual meeting will be 10/8 at 5pm at City Hall. **LACC**-minutes from 8/12 meeting were reviewed; Ruhland noted Turtle Races were successful and planned to be continued next year and the Sharing of Abundance will be held later this month. Claims were approved for payment in the amount of \$179,395.08. M-Ruhland, S-Christensen, M/C.

A one-year lease agreement with Otter Tail County for use of the City's storage building adjacent to the airport was reviewed and approved effective 10/01/13. M-Ruhland, S-Quammen, M/C.

The 2014 preliminary budget was reviewed and discussed, noting potential savings of approximately \$7,500 in coming years due to a new sales tax exemption for cities effective 01/01/14. The estimate is based on 2012 sales tax paid for City departments other than the Liquor Store which is not affected by the new legislation. Following discussion the Council passed Resolution #09-10-13 adopting the preliminary budget and a proposed levy for 2014 of \$524,602. M-Ruhland, S-Wasson, M/C on a unanimous roll-call vote. It was noted the preliminary levy is the same as last year.

The Snow Removal Policy was reviewed and discussed. Public Works Director Steve Seufert said he received positive feedback on snow removal downtown last season and would like to include the sidewalk on West Summit from Hwy 78 to the school. It was decided to continue the practice with the suggested addition. An advertisement for bids for snow removal services for the 2013-14 season was also approved M-Ruhland, S-Wasson, M/C with Quammen and Christensen opposed.

The following transfers of funds were approved: \$16,000 from Water Debt Service to water equipment & infrastructure replacement designated investment account; \$18,000 from Sewer Debt Service to sewer equipment & infrastructure replacement designated investment account; \$17,500 from water equipment & infrastructure replacement designated investment account to water operating fund to reimburse for capital costs of water tower controls and electronic meter reader; \$20,250 from sewer equipment & infrastructure replacement designated investment account to sewer operating fund to reimburse for capital cost of lift station pumps and mower. M-Wasson, S-Quammen, M/C. There was a discussion on cash flow issues related to the 2009 Glenhaven Improvement project and the Clerk-Treasurer was authorized to establish an inter-fund loan on an as-needed basis, to address the shortage in this fund due to delinquent special assessments of two of the participating properties. M-Ruhland, S-Quammen, M/C.

City attorney JJ Cline gave the Council preliminary information on some title issues regarding Good Samaritan's purchase of the Nagasaki property; a correction will be needed on the Halverson Park boundary and an old sewer easement needs to be vacated. No action was taken.

A commercial zoning permit was approved for Rich Hawkinson/Open Door Youth Center to construct a handicap ramp off a small deck on the south side of the building. M-Ruhland, S-Quammen, M/C.

A letter from Lori Edlund was reviewed regarding a snow removal issue related to her property at 202 Lake Avenue. Public Works Director Steve Seufert said he talked to her prior to the meeting and would take care of the problem.

The League of MN Cities Regional Meeting in Wadena October 9 was noted; pre-registration is required. The next City Council meeting will be Tuesday, October 8 at 7pm. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Wanda Berg-Vorgert
Clerk-Treasurer