

**MINUTES of the ST. CHARLES CITY COUNCIL
For Tuesday, February 11, 2014 held at 7:00 p.m. at
830 Whitewater Avenue
St. Charles, Minnesota**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilmen:

John Schaber

Dave Braun

Orv Dahl

Wayne Getz

Mayor Bill Spitzer (entered 7:02 p.m.)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Ken Frank (Chief of Police), Kyle Karger (Public Works Supt.), Rick Schaber (Park and Rec Director), Lyle Peterson (Fire Chief), Jeff Hardtke (Ambulance Director), and Randy Geisler (Public Works Dept.).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jessi Geisler, Timothy Hunter, Cathy Groebner, Bob Bambenek, Brian Todd, Tyrel Clark, and Craig Hilmer (Press).

1. ESTABLISH QUOROM/CALL TO ORDER

Quorum was established with Mayor Pro-Temp John Schaber calling the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL of the AGENDA:

Motion to approve the agenda: **Wayne Getz**

Seconded by: **Dave Braun**

No Discussion.

Motion carried.

4. MEETING MINUTES:

-January 2, 2014

Motion to approve: **Orv Dahl**

No discussion.

Motion carried.

-January 14, 2014

Motion to approve: **Dave Braun**

No discussion.

Motion carried.

5. APPROVAL of the FEBRUARY PAYABLES

Motion to approve payables: **Wayne Getz**

6. Notices and Communications.

7. Reports of Boards and Committees: Various reports were given by Council. Fire Chief Lyle Peterson was present to give an update on the EMS Building Committee. A tour of the Stewartville fire hall was conducted and those present gained valuable insight into potential cost effective modifications that could be implemented in the St. Charles potential project. Township meetings are scheduled and a brief explanation will be made.

- 8. Bob Bambenek—County Recorder.** County Recorder Bob Bambenek provided a brief update with respect to the 2013 real estate season citing several points: Foreclosure properties diminished from 15 (2012) to 3 (2013), spec homes were valued at about \$295,750 and that there were 35 new construction homes in Winona County for 2013. He stressed the point that there is very little inventory to show potential homebuyers, which he stated was a good problem to have.
- 9. Public Works Hire.** Administrator Koverman reviewed a memo provided to Council detailing the Council's past discussion and the action requested at the meeting to replace the vacant Street opening position. He highlighted the tasks and responsibilities left vacant and the recommendation to continue with the level of service provided by the Street Department. In working with department heads, various potential cost savings were identified through items such as a delayed replacement search, the change in salary scale if the Council elects not to train the individual as a replacement lineman as was done with Mr. Bunke and Mr. Geisler. The total potential savings was estimated at approximately \$21,000.00. Clm. Schaber expressed that he appreciated the cost savings of looking at an April 1 start date and agreed with the need for the position. Clm. Dahl expressed that placing the pressure of street maintenance on one employee for the size of town St. Charles is was not effective. Clm. Braun expressed his desire for a part-time seasonal street position. Clm. Getz concurred with the idea. Clm. Dahl replied that much of the equipment that the street personnel operate is a two-person job. Concerns were expressed with respect to training time and costs as well as the type of candidate that would apply for a six month position. Mayor Spitzer expressed concern with respect to only having one member on the street department. He added that there is a safety component with pairing of employees and was also concerned about the lack of work to be performed given the amount of training that may take place with each seasonal employee. More discussion was held. A motion was made to proceed to move forward with the hiring of the street personnel.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion

Aye: John Schaber, Orv Dahl, Bill Spitzer

Nay: Wayne Getz, Dave Braun

Motion approved.

- 10. Resolution #01-2014 Awarding Crack Sealing Project.** The bids were reviewed and tabulated by WHKS Engineering for 20,000 L.F. of crack sealing for 2014. Seykora Asphalt was lowest most responsible bidder at \$23,000.00. A motion to award the bid to Seykora Asphalt Maintenance was made.

Motion to approve: **Orv Dahl**

No further discussion.

Motion approved.

- 11. Resolution #02-2014 Awarding Sanitary Sewer Lining Project.** The resolution was presented whereby the bids had been reviewed and tabulated by WHKS for the sanitary sewer lining project. Visu-Sewer, Inc. with a bid of \$48,760.00 was reviewed as the lowest most responsible bidder. A motion to award Visu-Sewer the bid was made.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion approved.

- 12. Frozen Water Line.** Administrator Koverman relayed the current issue with various private water lines that were freezing throughout the city. Private contractors were working with homeowners to re-establish the frozen water lines with the help of city crews throughout the prior week and weekend. He further discussed how staff sends out a letter in November to residents who are known to have a history of freezing to turn on their water and continue until notified by City Hall in the spring. The water is adjusted with no additional cost to the resident. However, over the past week where temperatures have been the lowest on record for 25-30 years, private water lines all over the community began to freeze. He reported that 6 lines had frozen to date. Staff have also been informing residents to monitor their water temperature and should it go below 38 degrees they were informing residents that it would be suggested that they run their water until it warms to above 40 degrees. Koverman then posed two questions to the council with respect to a response or action by the Council. First, he highlighted a 50/50 cost share program that was devised in 2012 to help with water line repairs from the main to the boulevard/city easement. He expressed that if water lines were not rectified early on, the costs to the homeowner and potentially the city could rise as the frozen water line extends to a city water main. Through aiding residents in this initial term

as frost accounts were below 6 feet and dropping, he asked Council whether it would be a prudent use of those funds to correct an issue before it compounds. Council discussed the merits of the plan and Clm. Schaber expressed that he agreed with helping residents until such time that it was agreed that residents had been adequately notified regarding the frozen pipe issue and to use the 38 degrees as a rule of thumb to add residents to the list for adjustments for water consumption. It was agreed that the reimbursement would be a one-time only instance per household and that the program should discontinue once ample notification was made. Koverman reviewed for the Council how other communities and even a larger utility was responding. The amount was also discussed as to the cost of service how much the city would or should contribute and it was agreed that a one time, 50/50 cost share not to exceed \$2,000 would be allowed. In addition, City Hall would purchase a limited supply of thermometers for residents to use temporarily. A motion was made to approve the frost emergency program at a one-time 50/50 cost share not to exceed \$2,000.00 with funds to be used from the water repair fund. Residents who verify their water temperature of 38 degrees will have their consumption adjusted.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion approved.

13. Advertisement for Part-time Police. Chief Frank was present and reviewed a request for advertisement for 2-3 part-time officers dependent on the number of applications and quality. He expressed that after several resignations for various reasons or simply not being able to pick up as many shifts as the department needs in order to cover trainings, sick time, vacation, the current 6 part-time officers cannot fill in given full time jobs, etc. It was questioned where the funds for outfitting the officer would come from and Chief Frank expressed out of the current part-time budget. A motion was made to approve the hiring for up to 3 part-time officers.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

14. Drug Evaluation and Classification School. Chief Frank presented two requests for training opportunities for Robbie Floerke and Jose Pelaez. Officer Floerke is looking to attend tazer training and will be able to return to the department and train fellow officers. In addition, Officer Pelaez has been accepted to attend the Drug Evaluation and Classification School at White Bear Lake training facility February 24th to March 6. Additional training will take place in California. Chief Frank expressed that the expense to the city will be transportation and his wages and possibly meals. The Council concurred that this skill set will be brought back to the department and will an added benefit for the community. They also agreed that they like the fact that officers are specializing in different areas, which expands the skillset of the entire department. A motion to approve the training was requests was made.

Motion to approve: Orv Dahl

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

15. 2014-2015 Building Permits. Administrator Koverman reviewed a memo and recommendation by the Economic Development Authority to waive the building permit and associated building fees for 2014-2015 as a way to increase new housing construction in St. Charles. The Council had previously tabled the decision with questions on spec homes being a viable option. Administrator Koverman highlighted the value and investment that these types of homes bring to the area. He also pointed out county Recorder Bob Bambenek's statement related to not having enough housing stock available for people to look at. Council agreed that it would be a good investment after reviewing figures that showed the proposed taxes generated which demonstrated in most cases a one-year payback of that fee. After reviewing the data, the Council was in agreement that in order to position itself for the Rochester Medical Destination experience, St. Charles would need to find a competitive edge and with 165 available lots, they felt this would be in the best interest of the community. A motion was made to approve the waiving of the 2014-2015 building and related fees with reimbursement to come from the Rochester Sales Tax funds.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

16. 2014 SEMLM Legislative Policies. Administrator Koverman presented the 2014 legislative policies for review and approval. As the secretary for SEMLM and the St. Charles representative, Koverman expressed that the Council has reviewed them in the past and that they are typically approved during the winter meeting. However, due to inclement weather the meeting was cancelled so a vote from each individual member city was requested. A motion to approve the policies was made.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

17. Taste of St. Charles II—February 24th. Administrator Koverman provided a brief update as to the event timeline and the work of the committee. He invited all Council members and the community to attend.

18. Community Public Transportation Project. Eyota Mayor Tyrel Clark was present to discuss a proposed application to MNDOT in partnership with SEMCAC for a local bus service that would provide transportation at a reduced cost and a shared cost to the participating cities. A survey was requested to be conducted and that results be turned in by the end of February. Clm. Schaber expressed that it thought it was a good idea and didn't cost much to conduct the survey. A motion was made to participate in the survey with Eyota and Dover to investigate the possible grant application.

Motion to approve: John Schaber

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

19. 2014 Summer Park and Rec Brochure. A motion was made to approve the 2014 Park and Rec brochure.

Motion to approve: Dave Braun

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

20. Revolving Loan Fund Transfer. An existing business requested to assume a revolving loan through the EDA. The recommendation from the EDA was to continue with the current schedule and simply transfer the loan to the new owner. A motion was made to approve that action.

Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.

Motion approved.

UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES:

None

Motion to adjourn at 8:34 p.m.

Motion to approve: **John Schaber**

Motion declared carried.

William J. Spitzer, Mayor

Attest: _____
Nick Koverman, City Administrator