

**City of Mountain Lake  
Regular City Council Meeting  
Mountain Lake City Hall – 930 Third Ave  
Monday, November 20, 2023  
5:45 p.m.**

Members Present: Andrew Ysker, Dean Janzen, Darla Kruser, Bryan Bargen, Mike Nelson

Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: Michael Mueller City Administrator; Maryellen Suhrhoff City Attorney;  
Ben McHenry Police Officer

Others Present: Doug Regehr, Rachel Yoder

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nelson at 5:45 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda & Consent Agenda**

Motion by Kruser, seconded by Janzen to add hiring Kaden Haberman, EMT, to the consent agenda. Motion carried 5 – 0. Motion by Janzen, seconded by Bargen to approve the agenda and consent agenda as amended. Motion carried 5 – 0.

Bills: Checks #27759 – 27791, 982E-986E

Payroll: Checks #67686 – 67743

Approve September 11 Lake Commission Minutes

Approve October 10 Library Board Minutes, Report, & Expenditures

Approve October 16 & November 8 EDA Minutes

Approve October 26 Utilities Commission Minutes

Approve November 6 City Council Minutes

Approve 2024 Tobacco and Liquor Licenses

Hire Sally Ewert, Librarian Assistant, effective November 6, 2023

Approve Stan Bennet, Lake Commission, effective November 13, 2023

Approve Lake Commission Memorial Bench Application

Hire Kaden Haberman, EMT, effective November 20, 2023

**Public**

Rachel Yoder spoke during the public comment section of the meeting.

**Unpaid Charges**

A public hearing was held regarding the matter to object to certification of unpaid charges from the city and utilities. There were no comments.

## **Fire & Ambulance Hall**

The city administrator has been waiting to hear back from Andy Welp for an update on estimated costs and specs for the Fire & Ambulance Hall. The council requested additional information on the differences with constructing the building with EPS or steel, especially a cost analysis. The city administrator will continue to research building materials, costs and financing options.

## **Utilities**

The 2024 budget and rates were presented. The Northland Securities study in mid-2019, recommended to continue to raise water and sewer rates by 2% for the next 5 years from the time of the study. Missouri River Energy Resources conducted an electric rate study in September 2023, which recommended 5% rate increases for the next three years, to cover the capital costs for the new power plant. Motion by Janzen, seconded by Bargaen to approve the 2024 Utilities budget. Motion carried 5 – 0. Motion by Janzen, seconded by Ysker to approve Resolution #30-23 Electric, Water, and Wastewater Rates as presented. Motion carried 5 – 0.

## **City Attorney**

An update was given regarding civil processes on various properties, public nuisances, current processes, court procedures, agreements, and plans.

City Council reviewed Cottonwood County Cannabis Oriented Business and Use Ordinance, which was adopted pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 342.

There was another reading for Ordinance #3-23 Cannabis Use in Public. The item was tabled, the attorney would like to conduct further research before the City Council acts on the ordinance.

Per Resolution #29-23 Finding a Public Nuisance. Paul Christianson was ordered to bring the property into compliance with the city code by November 20, 2023. If he fails to do so, the City Attorney is directed to pursue a court order authorizing the city to abate the nuisances and assess the cost against the property to be collected along with taxes.

## **City Administrator**

A reminder was given for the Truth-In-Taxation meeting at 6:30pm on December 5, 2023. There will be more discussion and information regarding the 2024 budget and levy, providing dollar amounts, and potential scenarios.

## **Roundtable**

An update was given to the council regarding board and commission meetings.

A list of expiring and vacancies for the various city boards and commissions were briefly discussed. Mayor Nelson is still working on the list and contacting those whose term expires at the end of this year and finding vacancies.

**Annual Performance Evaluation of the City Administrator**

The administrator requested that the evaluation be in a closed meeting. An evaluation of the city administrator was completed.

Motion by Bargaen, seconded by Ysker to open the meeting. Motion carried 5– 0.

Motion by Bargaen, seconded by Janzen to approve a \$20 cell phone stipend per month (paid 50/50 City & Utilities), to reimburse or purchase a new cell phone for the city administrator if his phone is ever taken due to a public data request, and the city administrator will not have a limit of maximum accumulation of his vacation leave throughout the year, but can only carry over the maximum accumulation limit, depending on years of service, listed in the personnel policy, at the end of the fiscal year. Motion carried 5– 0.

The City Council will continue to review and have further discussions regarding these benefits for other city employees.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Michael Mueller, Administrator/Clerk