

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKERS PRAIRIE CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2020 7:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Council Members in Attendance: Mayor Kevin Birkholz, Council Members Sandy Froemming, Linda Martinson Bates, Tony Woodworth, and Greg Larson.

City Staff and other Representatives Present: Clerk-Treasurer Beth Wussow, City Engineer Jeremy Anderson, Fire Chief David Lahman, Police Chief Chris Barton, Parkers Prairie Independent Editor Jen Marquardt, ISD#547 Superintendent Dean Yocum, City Attorney Tom Jacobson (by phone), and Otter Tail County Community Development Director Amy Baldwin (by phone).

7:00 pm Pledge of Allegiance and Call to Order.

Meeting Agenda. Motion was made by Larson to approve the meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Froemming, and carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda. Items on the Consent Agenda were:

- Meeting Minutes from Regular Meeting on February 18, 2020
- Resolution #2020-08, a Resolution Accepting Donations to the City (donation to be deposited in Fire Department Equipment Savings Account)
- Recommendation to hire Laura Meininger, PEC Event Lead, Part-Time at Pay Grade 5 Step 4

Motion was made by Bates to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried unanimously.

Public Hearing of the Parkers Prairie Planning Commission: Two Variance Requests by ISD#547. **Motion was made by Woodworth** to recess the regular Council meeting and open the Public Hearing of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Froemming, and carried with unanimous consent. The meeting was recessed at 7:04 pm. The Public Hearing began with Superintendent Yocum providing an overview of the proposed plans to construct additions to the High School and Elementary School. One member of the public inquired whether the proposed addition would narrow the streets adjacent to the Elementary School, to which Jeremy Anderson clarified that the proposed project would not. Hearing no further comments from the public, **motion was made by Froemming** to close the Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried unanimously. **Motion was made by Bates** for the Planning Commission to recommend to the City Council approval of the variance requests. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried unanimously. **Motion was made by Woodworth** to close the meeting of the Planning Commission and reopen the regular Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried with unanimous consent. The Planning Commission meeting was closed at 7:14 pm.

Council Consideration of ISD#547 Variance Requests. Motion was made by Bates to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to approve the two Variance requests. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried unanimously.

City Street Signs. Council considered estimates from M&R Sign for new street name signs and H&R Construction for installation of posts and signs. Wussow shared several comments from business owners and ambulance personnel regarding the lack of street signs on City streets, especially on Otter and Soo streets. **Motion was made by Larson** to direct Maintenance Supervisor Potratz to look into the purchase and installation of signage on Soo and Otter streets, to develop a 3-5 year plan for the installation of signs on the remaining intersections within the City, to contact MNDOT regarding any specific requirements or permitting, and to obtain three quotes for signs and installation. The motion was seconded by Froemming, and carried unanimously.

Installation of Additional Street Light by Thousand Lakes Brewery. A request had been made to add a street light on West Lake Street near the Brewery parking lot. Wussow reported that a new agreement would need to be signed, and the monthly cost would be approximately \$9.00 per month. **Motion was made by Birkholz** to direct staff to sign the Otter Tail Power agreement for the street light by Thousand Lakes Brewery. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried unanimously.

Fire Department Updates. Chief Lahman reported the Fire Department had responded to only one call thus far in 2020. The annual meeting with the townships was successful, and the new desk and cabinetry had been installed. Lahman requested approval to sell a couple small equipment items. **Motion was made by Birkholz** to allow the Fire Department to sell a gas fan and an electric fan on Craig's List. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried unanimously.

Parkers Veterinary Clinic Owner Connie Tarasek. Dr. Tarasek informed the Council that as of June 1, 2020 she would no longer be able to accommodate the housing of strays at the clinic. Tarasek suggested looking into using the Fergus Falls Humane Society.

Parkers Prairie Hotel Committee. Rodney Peterson expressed interest in trying new approaches to encourage increased bookings at the Event Center and Hotel. Suggestions included direct mailing advertising, added incentives for employees who secure new event reservations, and using a 24-hour phone service to answer calls outside of regular office hours. Peterson also requested Council consideration to have the City assume responsibility for the snow removal. **Motion was made by Larson** to split the cost of the direct mailing advertising with the Hotel, with the maximum expense to the City set at \$850. The motion was seconded by Froemming, and carried unanimously.

Discussion of the COVID-19 Virus. Council asked for the City Staff's input on the emergency plans for dealing with the COVID-19 Virus (Coronavirus). Police Chief Barton stated that for law enforcement and ambulance, calls are answered by dispatch as they come in, then routed to the appropriate department. It was recommended that police officers allow ambulance alone to respond to medical calls in order to minimize police-patient contact. Ambulance and police alike should use extra precautions when responding to all calls. To dedicate more time to City planning for response to the COVID-19 Virus, Council set an emergency meeting for Tuesday, March 17 at 3:45 pm.

Otter Tail County "Build 5,000 by 2025" Tax Rebate Incentive. Amy Baldwin provided a brief overview of the new incentive, which offered a rebate of County property tax for qualifying newly constructed homes. The rebate would be up to \$5,000 or 5 years of Otter Tail County tax, whichever came first. Baldwin encouraged the City Council to consider matching the incentive on the City level, which would provide the homeowner with a total of up to \$10,000 in tax rebates over the 5 years. The offer was open to primary residences only, and there was a three year window to apply. Council reacted favorably to the idea of participating in the incentive, and requested that Attorney Jacobson review the plan. The item would again be placed on the meeting agenda for the regular meeting in April.

City Administration. Councilmember Bates revisited the idea of changing the Clerk-Treasurer's job description to that of "City Administrator," and inquired of Attorney Jacobson the procedure to move ahead with the change. Jacobson stated that the Council would first need to pass an Ordinance to establish the City Administrator position. Council directed Attorney Jacobson to draft the required Ordinance to be presented at the regular Council meeting in April.

Holiday Street Lighting. Froemming revisited the topic of purchasing additional lighted "snowflake" holiday decorations. Council opined that it would be prudent to wait one more month, and directed Wussow to place the item on the April meeting agenda.

Prairie Event Center Updates. Wussow provided the Council with a brief update of Event Center business, reporting that some events had been postponed or cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Discussing event billing, Wussow stated that her staff had found numerous past events that had not been properly billed for, and her staff was working to correct that. Wussow questioned the Council on the billing policy for "Civic Clubs," a couple of which had not made annual payments for several years. As the minimum charge for "Civic Club" meetings was \$25 per month, the minimum annual charge for Club rental was \$300. Council stated that, to qualify for the discounted rate of \$25 per meeting, Clubs were required to clean the meeting room after each use, and return all furniture to its original position. If supervision or cleaning by Event Center staff was required, the rental cost per meeting would be \$200. Council directed Wussow to draft a letter to each Civic Club, which Mayor Birkholz would sign, that would address these issues.

Parkers Prairie Aquatic Center Fee Schedule for 2020. Wussow reported that two sessions for swimming lessons had been arranged, and the Aquatic Center projected opening date for the 2020 season would be Monday, June 1, unless complications of the COVID-19 outbreak interfered with the pool opening. Council established the following fees for 2020:

- Daily Admission for all ages = \$5.00, Non-Swimmers = \$1.00
- Single Season Passes = \$65.00, Family Season Passes = \$155.00
- Swimming Lessons = \$45.00, Pre-School Swimming Lessons = \$40.00

Two City-Owned Lots in Oakwood Estates. Council discussed the option of selling the newly-acquired lots adjacent to the Dollar General store. Council decided to table the item until the regular Council meeting in April.

Disbursements. The following disbursements were presented for Council consideration:

Disbursements in February 2020

- ACH Checks # 2672e through #2680e (General Checking Account)
- Written Checks #34936 through #34995 (General Checking Account)
- Check #7e from DARE Checking Account
- Voided Check #34281 to North Area Electric in the amount of \$391.88 (discussed this item during the Audit)
- Voided Check #34824 to David Iverson (EMS Training) in the amount of \$140.00
- Voided Check #34897 to Driver & Vehicle Services in the amount of \$157.75

Disbursements in March 2020

- Written Checks #34996 through #35035

Motion was made by Froemming to approve the disbursements. The motion was seconded by Bates, and carried unanimously.

Adjourn. **Motion was made by Larson** to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Woodworth, and carried with unanimous consent. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Attest:



Beth Wussow
Clerk-Treasurer



Kevin Birkholz
Mayor

EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE PARKERS PRAIRIE CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020 3:45 PM

MEETING MINUTES

*Note: this meeting was called, pursuant to MN Statute 13D.04, Subdivision 3, to address the City's preparedness and response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak. The date, time, and purpose of this meeting was set by the City Council at the regular meeting held on March 16, 2020.

Council Members in Attendance: Mayor Kevin Birkholz, Council members Linda Martinson Bates, Tony Woodworth, Greg Larson, and Sandy Froemming.

Others in Attendance: Clerk-Treasurer Beth Wussow, and City Attorney Tom Jacobson (by phone).

Mayor Birkholz signed the City of Parkers Prairie Mayoral Declaration of a Local Emergency.

Social Distancing Between City Staff and the General Public. In an effort to limit contact with the general public, Council decided that, effective March 18th and until *at least* March 27th the City government buildings would be closed to foot traffic. Per the Governor's order, this included the Prairie Event Center. Council requested that staff place signs on the doors that convey the message that City business would still be conducted by phone and email.

Other General Preparations. Council requested that staff limit overall contact with others, and ^{to} remain at home, taking extra time if necessary, in the event of illness. A list of phone numbers for the City's main providers of outside services and products would be compiled and available in case a City staff member fell ill. The City staff would continue to provide essential services to the community. Council and staff would continue to explore alternative ways to participate in meetings in the event that face-to-face meetings were no longer appropriate.

Emergency Ordinance #2020-01: Council Consent to Mayoral Declaration of a Local Emergency.
Motion was made by Larson to approve Emergency Ordinance #2020-01. The motion was seconded by Froemming, and carried with unanimous consent.

Adjourn. Motion was made by Larson to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Froemming, and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:43 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beth Wussow
Clerk-Treasurer

Attest:



Kevin Birkholz
Mayor

**CITY OF PARKERS PRAIRIE
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2020 4:00 PM**

MEETING MINUTES

City Council Members in Attendance: Mayor Kevin Birkholz, Council Members Greg Larson, Tony Woodworth, and Linda Martinson Bates. Sandy Froemming participated by phone (as a non-voting attendee).

City Staff and Other Representatives Present: Clerk-Treasurer Beth Wussow, Maintenance Supervisor John Potratz, City Maintenance worker Aaron Asleson, and Parkers Prairie Independent Editor Jen Marquardt. Ambulance Director Michelle Moske participated by phone.

Pledge of Allegiance and Call to Order.

Discussion of Safety Procedures for Council, Staff, and Emergency Response Personnel. John Potratz discussed emergency services available through Minnesota Rural Water in the event the City's maintenance personnel were unable to report to work. Potratz stated that Rural Water has a list of volunteers that could help out in an emergency situation, but he felt that the Maintenance department was adequately prepared for such an event.

Council considered options for minimizing employees' contact with each other by either limiting staff work days, or working from home whenever possible, however there were instances where two maintenance workers at a time were needed to perform certain tasks.

Council directed Wussow to prepare signage for the playground equipment at the parks to encourage social distancing, and to alert individuals that the equipment had not been sanitized.

Michelle Moske discussed Ambulance procedures for sanitation before, during, and following calls with suspected COVID-19 patients. Council suggested utilizing one City employee, Aaron Asleson, to respond to ambulance calls, thus minimizing the other maintenance workers' contact with patients. Both the City and the Ambulance personnel would need to commit to regular communication and cooperation to ensure adequate shift coverage.

Beth Wussow reported on measures that were being taking to prepare for the meetings in April by using Teleconferencing equipment. These included both the regular meeting on April 20, as well as the Local Board of Appeal & Equalization meeting on April 21. Wussow reported that the representatives from the Assessor's office would not be attending the meeting in person, and therefore procedures needed to be in place to allow for teleconferencing during the meeting. Council opined that it did not want to lose the ability to participate in the Local Board of Appeal & Equalization meeting, so efforts would be made to utilize the new technology.

Suspension of Utility Late Payment Fee. *Motion was made by Larson* to waive the late fee for the months of April and May due to the executive order of emergency declaration. The motion was seconded by Bates, and the motion carried unanimously, with Froemming abstaining from vote.

Event Center Availability to the High School. As a gesture of good will to the school and the community as a whole, and due to the effects the executive order had on the high school (in particular the Senior class), Council considered offering the Event Center to the school for Prom at a discounted rate. *Motion made by Larson* to offer the Prom event to the high school at the drastically reduced price, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, of \$1.00, for a date that was not already booked for a different event. Motion seconded by Bates, and carried with unanimous consent, with Froemming once again abstaining from vote.

Adjourn: *Motion was made by Woodworth* to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried with unanimous consent (Froemming abstaining). The meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beth Wussow
Clerk-Treasurer

Attest:



Kevin Birkholz
Mayor