

**CITY OF PARKERS PRAIRIE
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020 7:00 PM**

MEETING MINUTES

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

City Staff and other Representatives Present: City Administrator Beth Wussow and City Attorney Tom Jacobson.

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

Opening Statement by Mayor Birkholz:

*By state law, most meetings of a city council must be open to the public. However, there are exceptions. Tonight we need to address a situation that is covered by two of those exceptions. Specifically, we need to discuss the investigative report regarding Police Chief Chris Barton. This report contains internal affairs data relating to allegations of law enforcement personnel misconduct collected with regard to Chief Barton. Under Minnesota Statutes, § 13D.05, Subd. 2(a)(2), city council meetings held for such discussions **must** be closed. We also need to have a confidential discussion with our City Attorney about litigation that has been threatened in connection with those allegations. Given the relationship between that attorney-client discussion and the internal affairs discussion, the purposes served by the attorney-client privilege outweigh the need for an open meeting, and they dictate the need for absolute confidentiality. Under Minnesota Statutes, § 13D.05, Subd. 3(b), city councils may close meetings held to discuss matters that are protected by the attorney-client privilege. Based on these authorities, I would entertain a motion to close this City Council meeting for the purposes of: discussing internal affairs data relating to allegations of law enforcement personnel misconduct collected with regard to Police Chief Chris Barton; and to have a confidential attorney-client discussion with our City Attorney about the litigation that has been threatened in connection with those allegations. The motion should also include that pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, § 13D.05, Subd. 1(d), this closed session will not be recorded.*

Motion was made by Larson to close the meeting under said Statutes (as stated in the above statement). The motion was seconded by Woodworth, and carried unanimously. The meeting was closed to the public at 7:02 pm.

The meeting was reopened at 8:00 pm. Motion was made by Birkholz to authorize the City Attorney to present a separation agreement to Chris Barton and his attorney, to include a severance payment of \$4,500, and the offer is to be accepted before 7:00 pm on Monday, August 17, 2020. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried with unanimous consent.

Address City Maintenance Staffing. With the pending resignation of maintenance worker Aaron Asleson from full-time employment, Council considered the steps needed to address the staffing shortage, which may include taking another look at the job description, and advertising for the position. Council directed Wussow to begin advertising for the position, so applications could be reviewed at the September regular Council meeting.

Adjourn. Motion was made by Woodworth to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,


Beth Wussow
City Administrator

Attest:


Kevin Birkholz
Mayor

**CITY OF PARKERS PRAIRIE
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020 7:00 PM**

MEETING MINUTES

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

City Staff and other Representatives Present: City Administrator Beth Wussow, City Attorney Tom Jacobson, Police Officer Joey Rud, West Central Initiative representative Rebecca Peterson (via teleconference), and Parkers Prairie Independent Editor Jen Marquardt (via teleconference).

7:00 Pledge of Allegiance and Call to Order.

Additions or Corrections to the Meeting Agenda. *Motion was made by Bates* to accept the meeting agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda. Items on the Consent Agenda were:

- Approval of City Council Meeting Minutes from July 20, 2020
- Approval of Resolution #2020-13 – Accepting a Donation to the City
- Notice of Award for Paving of Oak Street (Ferguson Asphalt Paving)
- Approval of COVID Preparedness Plan
- Approval of Fire Relief Payment of \$13,000 to PERA (as budgeted for 2020)
- Request to Hire Mary Cornish, Part-Time PEC Event Lead, at Pay Grade 5 Step 4
- Approval of Resignation (from Full-Time employment) of Aaron Asleson
- Approval of Iverson Reuvers Condon Invoice #14749 for Investigative Work (\$11,952.00)

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

Parking Near Elementary School. Council discussed the parking situation on McCornell, Elm, and Oak Street near the Elementary school. Limited parking areas with the current school addition project underway created concerns over traffic congestion and pedestrian safety. Council suggested gathering more information from the school superintendent regarding student pick-up and drop-off areas before enforcing “no parking” areas near the school.

Police Department Staffing. Following Police Chief Chris Barton’s paid administrative leave, which began June 26, Barton signed a separation agreement with the City. *Motion was made by Bates* to accept the separation agreement signed by Chris Barton and to authorize the Mayor and City Administrator to sign the agreement on behalf of the City. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried unanimously. Addressing the Police Chief vacancy, *motion was made by Woodworth* to offer the position of Acting Police Chief to Joey Rud, and to direct City Administrator Wussow to make a recommendation to Council regarding compensation for the Acting Chief position. The motion was seconded by Froemming, and carried unanimously. To address further department staffing needs, *motion was made by Larson* to appoint Birkholz, Froemming, and Wussow to an ad-hoc Police Succession Committee. The motion was seconded by Woodworth, and carried unanimously.

Agenda Request: West Central Initiative representative Rebecca Peterson addressed the Council to show appreciation for the City’s past support, and to discuss some of the ways West Central Initiative may be able to help the City of Parkers Prairie in economic growth through funding and county-wide programs.

Agenda Request: Tony Woodworth expressed interest in the Otter Tail County Community Growth Partnership Grant, which could potentially assist him with improvements to the commercial building at 107 North Otter Avenue (the “old City Hall building”). As the City Council would play a part in the grant application process, Woodworth stated he wanted to avoid any conflicts of interest. As advised by the City Attorney, Woodworth stated he would abstain from any part of the decision making process regarding the grant application.

Parkers Prairie Aquatic Center. The Aquatic Center attendance for July was 3,005 people, and 728 people from August 1-10. Wussow stated that she was planning to keep the pool open until September 6 (Sunday of Labor Day weekend) provided there was adequate staffing to do so.

COVID Cares Act Funding. Wussow confirmed that the City had received \$77,148.00 in Federal COVID Cares Act funding, but explained that stipulations for using the funds included *a*) that the expenditures must be due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and *b*) the expenditures must not be for items that were accounted for in the most recently adopted budget. CARES Act funds not used in 2020 must be returned. Qualifying expenditures included supplies used for cleaning and sanitizing, glass/plexi-glass barriers, health and safety items such as digital thermometers, masks, face shields, and gloves, signage supplies, and necessary technology that allow City staff and Council members attend meetings and trainings remotely and to work from home as necessary. Wussow identified necessary items included IPADS and laptops, teleconferencing equipment, portable scanners/printers, and office computers/police squad laptops with video-conferencing capabilities. The Council acknowledged the necessity of these items.

Support of the Parkers Prairie Community Ambulance. As the City would begin looking for a new full-time maintenance worker and EMT, Council pondered whether the practice of providing a daytime EMT out of the City's maintenance staff was the best way to support the Ambulance service. Council opined that a meeting with the Ambulance Joint Powers group may generate ideas for other ways the City and surrounding townships could encourage the sustainability and growth of the Ambulance service.

Disbursements. The following disbursements were presented for Council consideration:

July 2020

- ACH checks #2712e through #2717e (General Checking Account)
- Written Checks #35186 through #35251 (General Checking Account)

August 2020

- Written Checks # 35252 through # 35296 (General Checking Account)

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

Adjourn. Motion was made by Woodworth to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Larson, and carried with unanimous consent. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Attest:



Beth Wussow
City Administrator



Kevin Birkholz
Mayor

**CITY OF PARKERS PRAIRIE
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2020 3:00 PM**

MEETING MINUTES

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

City Staff and other Representatives Present: City Administrator Beth Wussow, and City Engineer Jeremy Anderson.

3:00 pm Pledge of Allegiance and Call to Order.

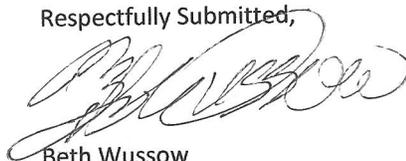
Utility Rate Discussion. Jeremy Anderson discussed the increases in the water and sewer funds over last year, and reminded the Council that the base rates should cover the debt service, and usage rates should cover the operating and maintenance costs. Anderson recommended an increase in water and sewer *base rates* to \$30.00 each, and to increase the *usage rate* to \$3.00 per 1,000 gallons. Rate 1 and Rate 2 would be combined, so there would only be one usage rate. The utility rates would be voted on at the regular Council meeting in September.

2021 Budget Discussion. Wussow stated that Local Government Aid had increased by \$8,493. More notable changes to the budget included a 3.0% increase in both wages and employer-paid insurance. The actual insurance coverage expense was an item to be addressed at a later time in Union negotiation, but a 3.0% increase was used for budgeting purposes. As previously discussed, the Firefighter's Relief (PERA) was raised to \$15,000, and the contracted service for trees was increased by \$2,000. The police department budgeted \$2,000 for two new AED's for the squad cars, as the older ones were unusable. Labor costs between the Prairie Event Center and the City Administrative staff were reallocated to portray a more realistic picture of where labor dollars were actually spent. Woodworth presented two estimates for re-roofing the four City park picnic shelters with either asphalt shingles or steel roofing. The estimates were \$9,795.91 and \$10,264.44, respectively. Jeremy Anderson presented his opinion of probable cost for water and sewer improvements on portions of Colfax and Douglas streets. Sewer improvements were estimated at \$24,050.00, and water improvements were estimated at \$45,660.00.

The levy increase projected by Wussow was \$613,365.00, which was a 2.5% increase. Council recommended setting the *preliminary* levy at \$616,357.00, which is \$17,952.00 over 2020, or a 3.0% increase. Council also stated that they would prefer the *final* levy amount to be lower, and requested that each department to work to lower their budgets wherever possible. The vote to officially set the *preliminary* levy would take place at the regular Council meeting in September.

Adjourn. *Motion was made by Larson* to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Woodworth, and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beth Wussow
City Administrator

Attest:



Kevin Birkholz
Mayor