

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKERS PRAIRIE CITY COUNCIL

MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2023 – 7:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Council Members in Attendance: Mayor Kevin Birkholz, Council Members Linda Martinson Bates, Tony Woodworth, Glenn Cornish, and Cody Mathues.

City Staff Members and Other Representatives in Attendance: City Administrator Beth Wussow, Police Chief Joey Rud, Public Works Supervisor John Potratz, Jeremy Anderson of Design Tree Engineering, City Attorney Tom Jacobson (via interactive technology) Parkers Prairie Independent Editor Jen Marquardt (via interactive technology), and new owners of the Dog House Bar & Grill Brent & Norah Looker.

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

Meeting Agenda. Motion was made by Cornish to approve the meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Bates and carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda. Items on the Consent Agenda were:

- Meeting Minutes from February 21, 2023 – Regular Council Meeting
- Meeting Minutes from February 27, 2023 – Special Council Meeting
- Hire Joe Johnson, Aquatic Center Lifeguard, Pay Grade 4 Step Minimum
- Hire Anna Helling, Aquatic Center Lifeguard, Pay Grade 4 Step Minimum
- Hire Johanna McKeown, Aquatic Center Lifeguard, Pay Grade 4 Step Minimum
- Hire Micaela Doble, Aquatic Center Lifeguard, Pay Grade 4 Step Minimum
- Hire Shane Hanson, Aquatic Center Lifeguard, Pay Grade 4 Step Minimum

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

Public Hearing: Mayor Birkholz called a recess of the regular meeting and opened the Public Hearing at 7:02 pm. A request for a new intoxicating liquor license had been made by the Lookers, who planned to be operating the business by April 1, 2023. The Lookers had paid the liquor license fees, which were pro-rated an accordance with City Code §110.06(c)3. No comments from the public were made, either in favor or against, the issuance of the liquor license, so Mayor Birkholz declared the Public Hearing closed. The hearing closed at 7:04 pm and the regular meeting resumed.

New Liquor License Request by Brent & Norah Looker, new owners of the Dog House Bar & Grill. **Motion was made by Cornish** to approve the Combo on/off sale and Sunday liquor licenses for the Lookers. The motion was seconded by Mathues and carried with unanimous consent.

Public Works Department. Public Works Supervisor John Potratz and City Engineer Jeremy Anderson reviewed priorities for upcoming projects and sources for funding. While increases in water and sewer utility rates were helping the City edge closer to the threshold required to qualify for a federally funded USDA Rural Development loan, the City would still need to make further increases in upcoming years. The City would need to charge its utility customers 1.4% of the median household income of Parkers Prairie *per utility*. With the latest census report showing a median household income of \$53,000 per year, the average household could pay \$120-\$160 per month for water and sewer. The application process to obtain federal funding from Rural Development could take several years. Wussow stated that, based on feedback she had received, it may be beneficial to move forward with a smaller project (for instance pairing Lake Street improvements with the new sanitary sewer lift station near Lake Adley) while still working through the application process. It was decided that Anderson, Wussow, the public works staff, and possibly 1-2 Council members would meet with Jason Murray (Davis Drown Associates) to determine what the best approach may be from a financial perspective. The topic would be revisited at the regular April Council meeting.

Parking on McCornell Avenue. Vehicles continually parked on McCornell Avenue, especially during winter parking restriction hours, often limited the ability to adequately remove snow. On the block between Soo and Jackson, vehicle parking on both sides of McCornell during truck deliveries to the nursing home often caused a situation where traffic was unable to pass through the street. It was noted that Tim Kelly, the Administrator of St. Williams, had been very cooperative with the City and Police Department in looking for solutions to the parking dilemma. St. Williams had even built a separate parking lot for staff members, which was often underutilized. Rud reported that Kelly made efforts to communicate with nursing home staff to encourage parking in the parking lot, especially during parking restriction hours. Chief Rud stated he had spoken with some of the vehicle owners, and even placed warnings on vehicles of habitual offenders. One recommended solution to the parking issue was to declare one side of the block a “no parking any time” zone. **Motion was made by Woodworth** to make the east side of McCornell Avenue, between Soo and Jackson streets, a “no parking at any time” zone. The motion was seconded by Cornish and carried unanimously.

Fire Department. Chief Woodworth stated that the Department was still looking for a new pumper/tanker truck.

Police Department. Chief Rud reported that the new police squad vehicle was “in production” and was estimated to be 6-weeks out.

Set Public Hearing for Property Tax Abatement. Brett Maass and Lindsey Klimek, new owners of 1006 South Acorn Lane, planned to construct a new home on the parcel, valued at approximately \$400,000. Maass and Klimek applied to Otter Tail County to take part in the County’s tax abatement incentive, which would provide up to five years (total up to \$5,000) abatement on the County’s portion of the real estate taxes. As a “matching city” participating in the incentive, Maass and Klimek applied for the City’s tax abatement incentive as well. Part of the approval process was for the City to hold a Public Hearing. The Public Hearing for this item was set for **Monday, April 17, 2023 at 7:00 pm** (at the beginning of the regular Council meeting).

Prairie Event Center. Wussow reported that the lease agreement with Nate & Toni Reed had been signed and that the transition smoothly. City staff had met with the Reeds to review booking procedures and event tracking. Deputy-City Clerk Schilling had spent a day with the Reeds at the Event Center reviewing materials, procedures, and other items relating to event management. The City continued to receive inquiries for bookings but were referring those inquiries to the Reeds. All Event Center locks had been changed, access to the security system was being improved, and the Event Center cell phone and main land line had been disconnected (the Reeds had their own number dedicated to the Event Center). Repairs to the bar-area walk-in cooler were ongoing and costly, cutting into the City’s share of the revenue.

Council Member Committee Designations. The lease of the Prairie Event Center meant that the Reeds would assume the majority of event management duties and day-to-day operations. This would allow City staff the ability to shift more time to other duties. Wussow stated she would like to put more focus on economic growth and supporting businesses in the community. It was recommended that Council Member Bates assume the role of liaison to the Police Department, and Councilmember Cornish be moved to Economic Development. **Motion was made by Woodworth** to approve the changes to Council Member committee designations. The motion was seconded by Birkholz and carried unanimously.

Update on Paperless Billing & Online Bill Pay. Wussow reported that the City administrative staff had participated in several meetings with PSN, a company that works with Banyon, the City’s utility software provider. New features would allow customers a variety of ways to access their utility accounts and pay invoices. The City would still accept cash or check payments at the City office.

Administrative Citations. Attorney Jacobson presented Council with a Resolution authorizing administrative citations and revised draft of City Code Chapter 11: Administrative Citations. The Resolution and updated City Code Chapter 11 would be considered at the April 17th regular Council meeting.

Reminder: the City of Parkers Prairie Board of Appeal & Equalization was scheduled for April 18, 2023 at 1:00 pm.

Disbursements. The following disbursements were presented for Council consideration:

Payments in February 2023

- ACH Payments # 2918e through # 2923e (General Checking Account)
- Written Checks # 36852 through # 36899 (General Checking Account)

Payments in March 2023

- Written Checks # 36900 through # 36941 (General Checking Account)

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

Additional Comments by Council, Staff, Attorney.

- Police Chief Rud expressed appreciation for the City's office staff in their support of all other City departments.
- Council Member Woodworth stated he would like the Council to consider adding the "public input" item on the regular meeting agenda. Council Member Mathues agreed with Woodworth. Mayor Birkholz stated he had been researching what other cities do to prevent unruly citizens from making offensive or inappropriate comments. Wussow stated that, in the past, citizens had voiced personal attacks on Council, City staff, or others. Birkholz stated the City of Alexandria had passed a Resolution in January that established rules of decorum for public participation in City Council meetings. Attorney Jacobson agreed to provide the Resolution, which he had drafted for the City of Alexandria. Wussow asked Council if she could place the item on the April 17th meeting agenda. The Council replied in the affirmative.

Adjourn. Motion was made by Mathues to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Woodworth and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Attest:



Beth Wussow
City Administrator



Kevin Birkholz
Mayor