

APPROVED MINUTES  
WATKINS CITY COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024

Mayor Rowan called the regular meeting to order at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Chris Rowan, Tootz Tschumperlin, Marc Wirz, Brenda Carlson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sue Unterberger

Others present: Steve Geislinger, Kent Louwagie, Jody Bauer, Shawny Kramer, Duane Peterson, Deputy Sandstrom, Deputy Clerk Sarah Jacobsen-Krone, Clerk Deb Kramer

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Items on the Consent Agenda were January 11<sup>th</sup> regular meeting minutes, January financial report, Resolution 2024-8, Resolution Accepting Donations, delinquent water bills for shut off.

Public Forum – none

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO APPROVE THE AMBULANCE BILLS FOR PAYMENT AS PRESENTED, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ACCEPT THE SHERIFF'S REPORT, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Planning Commission update – Follow up with a resident looking to add a front porch and the need for a variance. The board reviewed the proposed roof for the skating rink facility. The area is zoned R-1 and there are some non-compliance issues. The board will explore a zoning map amendment as the use may fit better in the B-1 District.

EDA update – Glenshire Estates highway frontage property lacks infrastructure for new business.

2024 pool season – At this time there are 4 water safety instructors that have returned applications; one of which has very limited availability. There are 7 lifeguard applications, 2 concession applications, 1 manager application and 2 assistant manager applications.

Council called for a special meeting to be held Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at the Village Hall to kick off the Small Cities Development Program grant the city was awarded.

Mayor Rowan recessed the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Mayor Rowan called the public hearing to order at 7:15 p.m. Purpose of the hearing was to gather information for regulation of small box discount stores.

Council reviewed samples from other cities/counties for regulating small box discount stores. There are dispersal ordinances that limit density of this use by setting distance limits between existing and new

stores, or residential zones. Healthy food/staple foods ordinances would require percentages of floor area to be dedicated to fresh produce, dairy, and meat products. A franchise architecture/formula business ordinance would leverage local culture/built environment to retain 'community' or 'small town' character, charm and protect aesthetic value; restricting formula businesses to single zone and/or limiting size. Other regulations could be done through conditional use or special use permits requiring case-by-case review, economic impact studies, considering potential detrimental impact of other stores, whether similar goods or services are already available, compatibility with the character of area, if within certain distance of existing grocery store.

Mayor Rowan noted the 'community and small town' character and charm language were applicable to Watkins. Carlson noted a small box discount store would have a detrimental impact on existing businesses in the city. Rowan will contact Bird Island for more information on what they did. Jacobsen-Krone noted studies have been done and there is a lot of information available on this matter.

Mayor Rowan opened the floor for public comment. Being there was no public comment, Mayor Rowan closed the public comment period.

MOTION BY TSCHUMPERLIN TO ADJOURN THE HEARING, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Hearing adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Mayor Rowan reconvened the regular meeting at 7:25 p.m.

City engineer Kent Louwagie reviewed the proposed skating rink roof project. The proposed structure is a 120' x 180' steel framed structure with a fabric roof. There are no walls to the structure. Water runoff was a concern and rain gutters could be added. The runoff would be piped into the storm sewer. This property is zoned R-1 and there are some zoning compliance issues in that district. The max peak height of the structure would be about 47', which exceeds the peak height in R-1. This type of roof material is also non-compliant in the R-1 district. The planning commission reviewed the plans and discussed rezoning to B-1, as the use might be a better fit in that district and there are commercial properties nearby. If the height were shortened, there would likely be a redesign fee charged from Legacy Building Solutions. There could be possible cost savings on the steel. There were some issues with the sewer in the past at the skating rink building but since heat tape and a cleanout were installed it's been working well. A grinder pump was also installed in the building. The Lions Club plans to raise money through fundraisers and apply for grants to pay for the project. There would be no cost to the taxpayers. The planning commission will discuss rezoning further at its next meeting.

Council reviewed sewer rates. It was decided not to raise at this time and to monitor to be sure rates are covering expenses.

Lot 4 in the mobile home park had a water leak. The property is vacant. No water went down the sewer. The meter has been removed but there was 25,000 gallons of usage since the January reading. City policy is that if it is verified by staff that the water didn't go down the sewer, an adjustment could be considered.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADJUST THE SEWER CHARGE AT LOT 4 TO AVERAGE FOR FEBRUARY, SECONDED BY CARLSON. MOTION CARRIED.

Lot 20 in the mobile home park found the outside hose had been turned on somehow. The metered usage was 108,000 gallons. The owner has removed the faucet handle so this cannot happen again. He requested an adjustment to the sewer charges as staff verified none of the water went down the sewer.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO ADJUST THE SEWER CHARGE AT LOT 20 TO AVERAGE FOR JANUARY, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Margee Theis requested a meeting with the city council to discuss water intrusion on her property. Wirz noted he met with Mike Lease and David Tysk last year to view the area and hasn't really seen it be an issue since watching this. Wirz noted he never promised or implied the city would do anything or pay anything. There was fabric over the catch basin initially which was removed after grass was established. Two rings were removed from the manhole also. Neither Wirz or the city received any estimate from a landscaping company after meeting there last year. The water goes down the chute, to the catch basin and sediment pond and where it needs to go. There haven't really been any big rain events since the meeting last year except around Christmas. The city would like to see any videos Margee may have taken during the Christmas rain event. Margee will be asked to attend the March 14<sup>th</sup> council meeting to discuss the matter.

Council approved for Forest Prairie Township to use City Hall for its township election and annual meeting March 12<sup>th</sup>.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO APPROVE STAFF PTO REQUEST, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Annual Fire Protection meeting will be Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at the Fire Hall.

Kramer noted the pickleball court project the VFW would like to pursue would be a city project and all bidding statutes, etc. would need to be followed. The VFW has been donating to a fund with the city for purposes of improving the VFW Park. Council felt it would be a good idea to have an informational meeting on the proposed project to make sure all the neighbors are aware of the plan. A VFW representative will be asked to attend the March meeting and notices will be sent to property owners in the area.

Any improvements to city parks would be covered under the city's insurance.

Council called for another public hearing to continue discussion on small box discount store regulations. The hearing will be held Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:15 p.m. at City Hall.

Public Works Director Steve Geislinger noted they were able to get parts and repair the stove at the Village Hall. The hot water mixer for the shower/eyewash station will be checked into further.

Tschumperlin asked if there was a policy for solicitors. Solicitors are required to register with City Hall.

Kramer noted there was an error in the bill list for Scenic Sign for the digital sign repair. The amount should be \$1,346.13, not \$122.38.

MOTION BY WIRZ TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS AS PRESENTED WITH THE CORRECTION, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION BY CARLSON TO ADJOURN THE MEETING, SECONDED BY TSCHUMPERLIN. MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Submitted by

Deb Kramer  
Clerk

ATTEST:

Chris Rowan  
Mayor