

GOOD THUNDER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting

January 9, 2023

Mayor Robert Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00p at City Hall at 130 S Ewing Street in Good Thunder, MN 56037. Councilors Ron Kaul, Tom Froehlich, Scott Stoltzman, & Jon Brude were present. Raece Johnson, City Maintenance, and Ashney Helleksen, City Clerk-Treasurer, were also present.

The pledge was recited, immediately followed by a moment of silence.

The first item on the agenda was swearing in of the newly elected officials. City Attorney Chris Kennedy was on hand to issue the oath, starting with Mayor Robert Anderson.

The oath reads, " I, (name) do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, and that I will discharge faithfully the duties of the office of (position) in the County of Blue Earth, in the State of Minnesota, to the best of my judgment and ability."

Followed by Scott Stoltzman and Jon Brude our newly elected City Council members.

Mayor Anderson addressed the room, "Before we get down to the agenda, I would like to welcome Jon and Scott; I would also like to Thank Sarah and Jim for their years of service, Sarah I believe 16 years, and Jim 8, so Thank them for their service. And with the newly elected guys, the city of Good Thunder will march on."

Mayor Anderson also added to the Agenda that after the regular meeting, there will be a closed meeting to discuss information that is attorney-client on litigation, and additional information from City Attorney Chris Kennedy.

Councilor Brude made a motion to approve the agenda with that addition, Councilor Kaul seconded and the motion carried.

The Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office reported 57 hours of patrol for December. Calls included theft, welfare check, ambulance assistance, and suspicious circumstance.

The Good Thunder Fire Department reported 10 calls for December. Calls included 1 gas leak and 9 medicals.

City Maintenance Raece Johnson gave an update, "a lot of snow. We should have some nice weather coming up, so hopefully, I will get to do something other than that for a bit."

Mayor Anderson inquired if everything was working well.

Raece stated that "RDO was just here to replace the seat on the tractor, when I started the suspension the seat was tilted and the frame was all bent. It was under warranty, so it was cheaper to do it now than to wait until it was out of warranty."

Councilor Froehlich stated, "I just wanted to say, you got a baptism by fire. Keep at it, you are doing well. Stay at it."

Mayor Anderson inquired, “chances are you are going to be hauling snow out, are you going to take that down to the lagoons then?”

Raece said, “yes, hoping to get someone with more trucks to help out because if I do that alone, it will take weeks.”

Mayor Anderson, “oh I know it, yeah.”

Councilor Stoltzman inquired if he needs to get it approved by the council or just get it done.

Mayor Anderson stated that “there is enough snow that it just needs to go away. It just needs to happen, as far as cost, we don’t have any choice in that, we are just going to have to pay the bill. You can’t search out anybody, they are all going to be busy. You will be lucky to find anybody in the next week or two. See what you can do Raece and go from there.”

Councilor Froehlich directed his question to Raece, “are you going to work with Ron then to find somebody or have you found someone already?”

Raece, “I was told to give Pete Forrey a call, so I was going to try that, and maybe Boenings.”

Councilor Kaul, “Proteins. Protein Source still has a dump truck don’t they?”

Mayor Anderson, “oh that’s right they do. So probably if we haul out there pile there, that would work.”

Councilor Kaul, “yep. We could trade there.”

There was no water update from Water Supervisor Brian Severns.

Council moved on to Community Comment;

Resident Vickie Hollerich inquired, “did the easement ever get put in place between the City and protein Sources and the Red Iron? Did that ever get signed?”

Clerk Helleksen responded that it was signed and taken to Blue earth county.

Mrs. Hollerich continued, “the snow blower that you donated, did you ever receive a tax credit for that? That was back in 2021.”

Mayor Anderson stated, “I think it was this past year.”

Mrs. Hollerich, “I’ve got the minutes right here.”

Clerk Helleksen, “it was brought up last year when Jake was here.”

Mayor Anderson agreed, “yeah.”

Mrs. Hollerich, “he never received a tax, a paper stating he donated \$1500 to the city. Then back, I would like to see the check, from the minutes of March 17, 2021, where we divided the cement up and Mariano said that the city owed Robert, because he paid for the big load, \$5,500.00 and the city owed him \$4,004.72. I look through all our bank accounts and no check was ever deposited for that amount. There would have been a check from, \$682, my scratch.”

Mayor Anderson, "Probably won't want to issue any checks until this pending situation is over. That is all I can say right now."

Mrs. Hollerich, "what now?"

Mayor Anderson, "we should not be issuing any checks to myself until the pending situation is over."

Mrs. Hollerich, "okay, the motion was made and carried on all of these, and the other date was August 18, 2021. So the city owes him \$4600.00."

Mayor Anderson, "Chris would you want to look that over, to see if that is all, in the minutes."

City Attorney Chris Kennedy stated, "we can take a look at it. What would be appropriate is, if she wants the information, she needs to submit a data request and then we would provide the data to her. Generally speaking, in a council meeting, we cant request the production of documents, there is a form we have them fill out. But all the information is public, so we could provide it."

Mayor Anderson, "fill that form out during business hours?"

Mr. Kennedy, "then you can request all the documents that you are looking for. In regards to the taxes, you can talk to your accountant, but a copy of the minutes should suffice for the IRS because there is not going to be a donation form that is going to be provided from the city."

Mrs. Hollerich, "well according to the minutes of the meeting, it states that uh, a tax thing will be given to him."

Mayor Anderson, "it's just a paper as a donation right?"

Mr. Kennedy, "it's basically just a receipt for the donation. But if your accountant is looking for something more specific, certainly the city can take a look into that."

Mayor Anderson, "alright. Anybody else?"

Resident Jason Anderson inquired, "Wonder if I can maybe work with Scott since he's been on a gambling and stuff like that, to get that license taken care of, would that be possible?"

Councilor Stoltzman, "where? Down at your Red Iron? I can help you with that."

Jason Anderson, "because a lot of, some of the information I got has nothing to do with what I am looking for and it has some sensitive information of my own on here. Every, between the three of us, we can get it taken care of."

Councilor Stoltzman, "I can help him out."

Mayor Anderson, "yep. Does that sound fine?" directed at Mr. Kennedy.

Mr.Kennedy said, "I'm not sure what they are talking about, but if they want to work on something that seems fine."

Jason Anderson, "Getting a 3.2 license and cigarette license. Because I don't need a license to manufacture gambling machines for 1500 bucks, that won't do me any good"

Mr.Kennedy, "like I said, from what you are describing I don't see any problem with that, but I mean, in a council meeting, I don't know if they would be dealing with stuff of that nature."

Jason Anderson, "I just would like to have more people involved."

Mayor Anderson, "anything else?"

Resident Maureen Spear inquired, "have you heard anything about the school?"

Councilor Kaul, "nope."

Mayor Anderson, "I haven't heard, has anything happened there at all?"

Clerk Helleksen stated, "No, they are waiting to close on Minnesota Lake before they move forward with Good Thunder, they haven't stated either way if they are going to accept the offer or not."

Mayor Anderson, "is that offer still good with Mike Drummer?"

Clerk Helleksen, "last I knew, but I haven't talked to Mike since I submitted our offer to the school I think."

Mayor Anderson, "alright, I suppose it will take a while to figure this all out, Maureen. I thought Minnesota Lake was said and done, but, obviously, the paperwork wasn't done. Does anybody know?"

Councilor Froehlich, "we had a rumor. It wasn't as all as easy as they thought."

Moving on from the Community comment to unfinished business, Meeting with the Sheriff's Department, Clerk Helleksen stated that the "sheriff reached out to me, and said if the council would like to meet he is available 8 to 4 pm or if you would like this in an evening, Monday or Wednesday evenings would be free, so to just shoot him some dates and times"

Mayor Anderson, "would we have to go through, what did you say Tom, codes?"

Councilor Froehlich, "well I was just thinking since we've got a committee, I don't know if everybody is here tonight or not, they volunteered to go through the codes you should probably let them do that first, and then, so the sheriff's department would have an enforceable code, hopefully. They can go through clean it up, send it to Chris, Chris can make whatever changes are necessary."

Attorney Kennedy, "I think you can do both, you can talk to the sheriff on what he would feel comfortable with, and what he's willing to do for his department, at the same time, get public input regarding the code, and then obviously the council will want to take a look at that and make revisions. I think a committee would be wonderful."

Councilor Froehlich, "okay, we can do that too then."

Clerk Helleksen, "our contract with them now says they will not enforce city code."

Attorney Kennedy, "the contract with them says that the code will not be enforced, but that is something we can change. One of the things you'd be looking at is whether or not you want to require in the code that it has to be enforced by a law enforcement agency, whoever that may be. You may give other provisions you know, other personnel in the city more ability to enforce the code."

Mayor Anderson, "does the council have to highlight maybe some specific things like junk cars, junk yards, to put our 50 cents into that committee, you know? Make sure that gets in there."

Councilor Kaul "I think so right!"

Councilor Froehlich, “yeah.”

Kennedy, “But I think you can make notes, for everything you want, if it was me on the council, I would want the citizens to give us all the recommendations and stuff they want, if there's a question that you have, do we need to be more or less stringent regarding these codes, or if the council is looking for specific direction, I think that would be appropriate, but if there are things that the council wants to address I guess I'd probably wait to see if there is public comment and you'd have an opportunity to address everything before it gets passed.”

Mayor Anderson, “they made it clear when we hired them, that they were going to come out for barking dogs?”

Councilor Froehlich, “that’s what I remember.”

Mayor Anderson, “so, that will never be probably part of it, you know. We can't expect them to come from Mankato for a barking dog unless maybe it's a habitual one that is every night, every night, then maybe during the day they can stop in when they are in town, and tell that person we have had numerous complaints, I mean, is that the kind of stuff they are looking for? “

Kennedy, “I think what the code enforcements more looking for, you know, somebody renting a place without a license that they're not going to look in enforcing, I would assume if you have a habitually barking dog, that they would enforce it, even if they said that they didn't, because there is a state statute that would make that a criminal act, that they would be required to enforce.”

Further discussion was held on what codes would be enforceable and which wouldn't and what the council would like to see enforced and modifying the language of who is enforcing the city codes.”

Council Kaul finished by saying, “one of the big problems is a car sitting for weeks, or campers sitting in front of houses forever. We need to get something in writing so we can call the wreck or whatever”

Councilor Froehlich made a motion to establish an advisory committee to review the Good Thunder City code. Councilor Stoltzman seconded and the motion carried.

Under New Business, the Council set the 2023 Council Committees

Water, Sewer, Garbage – Ron Kaul, Robert Anderson

Streets, Sidewalks & Alleys – Ron Kaul, Scott Stoltzman

Recreation & Parks – Tom Froehlich, Jon Brude

Personnel Committee – Full Council

Administration Committee – Tom Froehlich, Jon Brude

Acting Mayor – Tom Froehlich

Fire Chief – Philip Klammer

Official Newspaper: Maple River Messenger

Official Bank: US Bank

Posting Places – City Hall, Good Thunder Post Office, Social Media

Councilor Froehlich made a Motion to Approve the committees for 2023, Councilor Kaul seconded and the motion carried.

Under misc. business, Councilor Brude wanted to discuss Consideration for the proposal of a new City Attorney. “it was in the meeting minutes from the last 2 meetings and a special meeting, so, it's been brought up, and I don't know what kind of contract we have. How long have you been the City Attorney?”

Mr. Kennedy, “I don't know for certain, I think it been a little over 12 years,”

Councilor Brude, “oh my.”

Mr. Kennedy, “so it's been for quite a while, basically, it said at will. There is not a formal contract that we have at any particular time rates have kind of stayed the same. The work has gone up the last few years for various reasons but you obviously have the opportunity if you want to do a request for proposal or whatever the case you may want to do.”

Mayor Anderson, “is that something we want to act on tonight? Take it under consideration. Make a motion to proceed forward?”

Councilor Froehlich, “I was going to ask Jon if he would make the motion.”

Councilor Brude, “well no, I just wanted to bring it up, because you know it has been coming up in the past few meetings I've been attending so or keep it on the table to see if you know, community members want to reach out to council between now and the next meeting. I don't know, it's just.”

Councilor Froehlich, “sounds good.”

Councilor Stoltzman, “maybe Chris can write down his hourly fees or I don't even know how it's billed, is it hourly?”

Mr. Kennedy, “it's hourly, and it's on a bill every single month.”

Councilor Stoltzman, “that way we can compare apples to apples, to see where we are sitting.”

Mayor Anderson, “alrighty, anything else under miscellaneous then anybody? Wow, First meeting of the year and it didn't even take an hour. Thanks for everybody coming tonight”

Councilor Froehlich made a motion to close the regular council meeting, Councilor Brude seconded and the motion carried.

The meeting closed at 6:43 pm

Respectfully,

Ashney Helleksen – Clerk-Treasurer

