

## GOOD THUNDER REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

### Minutes of the Meeting

January 11, 2021

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, Sarah Karels, Jim Prom & Tom Froehlich were present. Brian Beckel, City Maintenance, and Ashney Helleksen, City Clerk-Treasurer were also present. Mayor Robert Anderson presided. The pledge was recited, immediately followed by a moment of silence.

Councilor Prom made a motion to approve the agenda, Councilor Kaul seconded and the motion was carried. Councilor Prom made a motion to approve the minutes & bills, Councilor Kaul seconded and the motion was carried.

Deputy Gerke was present via Zoom to give the Sheriff's report. December had 83 hours of service. Calls ranged from Parties to Stolen Property. Over all there was 808 hours in total for 2020. There are no complaints from Council or Residents on the coverage & service that we are receiving from the department.

City Maintenance Brian Beckel reported that we are "short one light pole"; It was damaged and needed to be removed for safety reason as it was bending. He has started a claim with the League. Mr. Beckel also spoke with the property owner for the sewer easement we are working on with no progress. Council would like to know "what other options the city may have." City Attorney Chris Kennedy has reached out to the property owners attorney as well, with no luck, he has not even heard back from him. Councilor Froehlich stated he would make it a motion to have "Mr. Kennedy call the property owners attorney every day until something is signed."

Mr. Beckel stated that the property owner has verbally agreed to it, but for legal the company and the city need the paper signed before we can get in there. The property owner is putting the land in to CRP and the crop must be planted by May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. CRP Company has approved the work that needs to be done, just need to have property owner sign. Mr. Beckel and Mrs. Helleksen will work on getting it signed daily and hopefully be somewhere before the next meeting.

Resolution 2021-01 was presented to the council establishing an address for R13.18.10.151.014, this is the property that was moved in to town on Sherman st. The address is to be established as 421 Sherman St. Councilor Kaul made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-01, Councilor Froehlich seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Water superintendent Brian Severns informed up that he is needing a new meter. Levels in the fall were good. The flow reports will be emailed to Mrs. Helleksen and put in for next month's packets. Filtration plant was also discussed, "When are we going to make a plan and stick to it?" If we are going to grow at all as a city our water plant will have to grow as well too. WENK gave an estimate years ago, Mr. Beckel will see if he can find it. Councilor Froehlich made a motion to approve Mr. Severns getting the probes/meters that he needs to do the job. Councilor Kaul seconded and the motion carried.

Good Thunder Fire Department submitted their report via email, they had 9 calls in December, 6 Medical, 1 Gas Leak, 1 Grass Fire and 1 Mutual Aid fire to Vernon Center. Chief Klammer will work with Mrs. Helleksen to get final 2020 bills out to the townships.

Mrs. Helleksen informed council that the bands for the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration have been booked. Friday July 16<sup>th</sup> Fat City All-Stars will be playing and Saturday July 17<sup>th</sup> Red Dirt Road will be playing. The band shelter from the City of North Mankato has also been rented for the weekend and Parade & Donation letters are starting to go out too. January 18<sup>th</sup> Burkhardt will be gathering items for the annual audit.

#### Community Comment

Maureen Spear stated that she had an issue accessing the meeting for the first half of the meeting, she also stated that she thinks people should be using names and not “encrypted names” and have their cameras on when speaking.

Mrs. Helleksen address that we are still working on our tech issues and that the meeting had totally disconnected mid meeting and she had to use her cellphone hotspot to stream the rest of the meeting. “hopefully February meeting will go better.”

*No other community comment was made.*

Under New business, the 2021 Tobacco license were presented for The Thunder Bar & Restaurant and for the Dakota Mart, LLC. Both businesses filled out their applications and paid the \$100.00 fee. Councilor Froehlich made a motion to approve both licenses, Councilor Kaul seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Karels stated that we had personally views today for the employees. “Starting with Ashney, with the different hats she wears, the money she has saved us and the cost we would be paying to hiring out cleaning if she wasn’t doing it (as some cities do), I would like to see her closer to \$22.50. Which is where we hired the last clerk at, and Ashney has been here almost 2 years. Mayor Anderson stated that at \$1.50/hour raise is only about \$2700 year, its not a lot. The city has removed the C.o.G which has save us \$7,000 a year and is actually giving Ashney more thing to handle.

Councilor Kaul stated about the perception to the community on a raise like that, “I’ve called around and no one is getting 4%.” Councilor Karels said “I am worried about the perception that we don’t care about our employees and don’t value them. I have no problem explaining why I think they are worth it.”

Further discussion took place about Mrs. Helleksen wages, savings, past clerk and not setting a cap on wages or ‘tying future councils’ hands. Councilor Karels stated, “we hiring Ashney on at a lower rate because she was just supposed to be a filler and answer phones until we had someone in full time, she took that on and hit the ground running.” Councilor Kaul made the motion to approve 4%. Councilor Karels corrected and said “4% for the Brian’s and \$1.50 for Ashney, and relook at it next year.” Councilor Kaul made that a motion to approve a 4% raise for Mr. Beckel, Mr. Severns and a \$1.50/hour raise for Mrs. Helleksen. Councilor Froehlich seconded the motion and the motion carried, Councilor Prom abstained from the vote. Mayor Anderson also wanted to remind the Council members and anyone listening that “City employees have a 30-minute lunch and two 15-Minute breaks during the

day. Mrs. Helleksen uses one of her breaks to pick up her children for the school, so if you see here there around that time, that would be why.”

Under unfinished business, the Small City Development loan for St. John daycare had submitted their payment for the second half of the year on December 15<sup>th</sup>. The Small City Development loan for the Dakota Mart is 5 months past due, the last payment that was submitted to the city was returned by our bank because there was a ‘stop payment’ on the check after it had been submitted for deposit. City Attorney Kennedy sent the business owner a letter and those letters have went unanswered.

Mayor Anderson stated that this laps in payment could affect businesses in the future with applying as there could be less ‘funds in the pot’ if the city has to take the hit and pay for this loan. It was decided to continue on with the collections process and calling of the note.

Councilmembers will be sworn in before the next council meeting by City Attorney Chris Kennedy.

Councilor Kaul made a motion to keep City Committees will stay the same for 2021. Councilor Froehlich seconded and the motion was carried.

A Copy of the Conflict-of-Interest letter was submitted to councilmembers from City Auditor Greg Burkhardt and another from City Attorney Chris Kennedy.

There was an application for home improvement grant for Kristen Kaul submitted for approval, Councilor Froehlich made a motion to approve the application, Councilor Karels seconded and the motion carried. Councilor Kaul abstained.

The city needs to have an easement established for the water line that will be on the properties of Protein Sources and Red Iron Mercantile. Bolten and Menk will have to draw up the legal description and then Kennedy will draft the easement for the property owners to sign. Kristen Kaul is also still waiting on the easement agreement for the waterline that was put in on her property. Mr. Beckel will call Bolten and Menk to get it surveyed and hopefully have an easement to be signed by the next meeting.

Mayor Anderson, Mrs. Helleksen and Councilor Prom met with an inspection company to have the school inspected for possible future purchase and use. At the school, Mayor Anderson, Mrs. Helleksen Corey Brunton from Brunton Architects & Engineer’s & Dan Meyer the school janitor went and over the whole school inside and out. The roof was replaced on the older half of the school 5-7 years ago, they gym doesn’t have a/c; he suggested having it removed and replacing it with a unit that does heat and a/c. Mr. Brunton stated, “The school is in beautiful shape.”

There is a lot of options for the school if the city take it on, such as, moving city hall there, community center, and renting out office space. The city of Pemberton rents out their kitchen for & hosts a lot of wedding events and moved their city hall, post office and a day care into their old school building. The City will need to hold a special meeting and town hall to get input from the community on what they would like to see the city do. We would need to establish an EDA and we could use money from investments to get it up and going. But we would like to see how our community members feel.

Councilor Kaul made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Councilor Karels seconded and the motion approved with the January council meeting ending at 9:22pm.