

Minutes of the July 6, 2015 Good Thunder City Council Meeting

The July 6, 2015 meeting of the Good Thunder city council was called to order, at 7:00 p.m., by Mayor Robert Anderson. The meeting convened in council chambers located at 130 Ewing Street, Good Thunder, Minnesota. Council members in attendance were: Kenton Giese, Sarah Karels, Kim Hernandez, Jim Prom. Staff in attendance were: Hunter Chaffee, City Maintenance; Phil Klammer, Fire Chief. Staff absent were Cheryl Barnard, Clerk-Treasurer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Council member Ken Giese, made a motion to approve the agenda as distributed with the addition of Zoning Permit, GT-11-15. Council Member Kim Hernandez, seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Council member, Kim Hernandez made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2015, city council minutes. Council member Ken Giese seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

City Maintenance, Hunter Chaffee, addressed the council on recent and upcoming projects. Mr. Chaffee has had to spend multiple hours cleaning up vandalism at the parks. Someone had attempted to break into the restrooms at the City ball field. Another act of vandalism occurred when someone filled the restroom sinks at a park with mud. Garbage was placed at the dump site, someone had dumped cinder blocks and tried to cover it up with brush. Mr. Chaffee removed the cinder blocks and had them recycled. Mr. Chaffee reported a dead tree in one of the parks, Mayor Anderson offered to pay for a company to drop the tree and he would clean it up.

Lee Hiller has requested that the city remove a dead tree, which is in the city's easement, from their property. Mr. Chaffee reported that equipment at a city park in unsafe and should either be removed or replaced. The city has been allowed to spray in the parks and Mr. Chaffee is working on a time to spray the ball parks so they can sit for 24 hours, this may prove to be difficult as the ball parks have lots of activity this time of year. Mr. Chaffee found the missing shelf and returned it to the ball park. Mr. Chaffee reported that the Native American glass in the bell tower is in tough condition. Mr. Chaffee reported that George Spear repaired the leak in the concession stand and will have him look into the water fountain at the ball park which lacks appropriate water pressure. Mr. Chaffee took another load of Iron to Beauford. Mr. Chaffee also noted that there are multiple pieces of equipment that the city is not using and does not foresee them being needed in the future. The items include: two (2) extra chainsaws, a snow blower, a John Deere mower, a push lawn mower, mobile air compressor, and a four-candy vending machine. There is also a pallet of shingles that are currently not being used being stored in the city garage. Mr. Chaffee asked permission to sell these items.

The council discussed and there was general agreement to allow Mr. Chaffee to sell the equipment. Further discussion occurred relating to the pallet of shingles whether the city would use them at a later date or if the city should try to sell them. In the end it was agreed upon that the city should move forward to sell the shingles. Council member, Jim Prom, made the motion to allow Mr. Chaffee to sell the equipment at his digression. Sarah Karels seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Chaffee received quotes on wood chips for the playground. Council member Karels asked if any of the quotes were local. Mr. Chaffee replied that they were not since the company selling the wood chips had to have special certification to sell wood chips for playgrounds.

Mr. Chaffee then addressed the issue that a citizen requested that the city reduce the speed on [street name here] from 30 miles per hour to 15 miles per hour. Clerk-Treasurer, Cheryl Barnard, had contact the League of Minnesota Cities and Chris Kennedy, regarding speed limit requirements within cities. Documentation was presented a letter from the city attorney that the city could pass a resolution and have the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) conduct a traffic study but that MnDOT would change the speed on the road not the city. MnDOT has authority on the speed on most roads and cities have limited power over changing the speed, except in certain situations.

Council member Prom commented on the cost of air filters for the vehicles. Mr. Chaffee responded that he bought a year's supply of air filters to cover the year and not have to make multiple trips every time one of the vehicles needed an air filter. Mr. Chaffee also noted that some of the air filters on a few of the vehicles had not been changed for a long period of time.

Council Member, Jim Prom, made a motion approving the following Zoning Permits:

GT-08-15, 731 Willard St., concrete slab driveway.

GT-09-16, 710 Sherman St., one larger window installed, and sidewalk replacement (requesting reimbursement for cement from the city.) The council advised Mr. Chaffee to check on the sidewalk replacement to make sure that the reimbursement is only for sidewalk and no part of the driveway.

GT-10-15, 334 S Halladay St., outside basement door.

GT-11-15, 532 Main Street, replace window.

Council member, Sarah Karels, seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

The council discussed the Native American glass further. The council agreed that to repair the glass would come with a high cost. The council discussed other ways to display the glass or if there is a simple way to repair it. The council agreed that the next action should be an attempt to contact the artist and ask what would be the best way to repair it. The council agreed that the glass is getting to the point where it is unsafe.

Mr. Chaffee said the American Legion will consider donating flag poles to the city. This would replace the current flag poles and all the flag poles, owned by the city, would match. The council was appreciated the donation and is pleased that the flag poles, throughout the city, will now match.

Fire Chief, Phil Klammer, informed the council that the Good Thunder Volunteer Fire Department responded to 18 calls during the month of June 2015. There were nine (9) medicals, one (1) fire, six (6) motor vehicles, one (1) downed tree. Klammer also said the Blue Earth County would be updating the radio programming for the Fire Department. This will cost the city \$20 per portable radio and \$25 per stationary radio. The county has stated that they will not pay for the updates, as they have paid for other upgrades recently.

Clerk-Treasurer, Cheryl Barnard, had developed, and is seeking council consideration of a new Ordinance: Chapter 15-Designated Predatory Offender Residency Restrictions to the city council. Alex Jermeland, Minnesota Valley Council of Governments, stated that other towns in the area have adopted ordinances similar to this. Ms. Barnard is requesting council consideration as in approving such an Ordinance cities have a form of control in preventing predatory offenders from living certain distances to schools, licensed child care centers, public parks/playground and other designated predatory offender residence that predatory offenders may not reside. Council member, Ken Giese, motioned to approve the new ordinance. Council member, Jim Prom, seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Lorraine Truebenbach approached the council to ask about the gravel that washes out with heavy rains leading to her property. This creates a dip while exiting her driveway. Mayor Anderson and Mr. Chaffee will check out the state of the wash out and repair as necessary.

George Spear said that he has about an hour of work left on the drinking fountain at the concession stand. He said that he would be able to cap the line if it was dug up. The council also instructed George to stop by the ball field and check on the water pressure on the west drinking fountain. There have been issues with the water pressure.

A citizen (I believe it was George Fear and his wife? They are working on the apartments on the old bank building) said the work on the 400 Main St. apartments is progressing. They asked if the city would allow them to turn the basement of the old bank building into an apartment and the council responded that as long as it was up-to-code, they had no issues. They also asked about an update on the rental license process. The council asked Judd Schultz, Minnesota Valley Action Council, to respond to this inquiry. He is currently starting on inspections. The property owners need to pass the inspection prior to receiving a rental license from the city. No properties were grandfathered in so all property owners that choose to rent a living space within city limits will need a rental license.

Judd Schultz, MVAC], brought a subordination request before the council. The revolving fund can pay for it as this is what the revolving fund was set up to do. The council advised Judd to move forward on the subordination. Judd also asked the council if they would be interested in creating a policy that would allow Judd or city staff to approve subordination requests without full council approval. He recommended the policy only cover standard situations, such as rate refinancing and home improvements. The lender would need to provide proof of improvement, such as itemized lists for requested improvements. All other subordinations would need to come before the council. Council advised Judd to put together verbiage for a new policy on subordination that would allow the city to do this.

Council member, Jim Prom, asked Mr. Chaffee if he had been keeping a daily log of his activities. Mr. Chaffee presented his daily logs to the council. Council member, Jim Prom, also brought up the issue of swimming pools in town. Some of the pools are not following State and City codes, relating to pools that have a depth of two feet or more. Pool permits, for temporary pools, are

required by the City and any pool over two feet in depth need to have a fence of five feet or higher surrounding it.

Council member, Kim Hernandez, said that she has been locking up the restrooms in the concession stand at night as well as opening and locking it on the weekends. Due to recent vandalism at the parks, which happens both during the day and at night, the need to secure the concession stand restrooms is very important. The city council agreed that it would be nice to leave the restrooms open but if vandalism continues, they may be forced to close the restrooms during certain periods of the day. The council discussed having the police department lock it by a certain time of night but it would be a problem if the police department forgot to lock the bathrooms. Another scenario would include Mr. Chaffee locking the restrooms at the end of his shift, concessions would open them for games and the parks committee would be responsible to open and lock the restrooms for events. The council advised Mr. Chaffee to look into quotes for security for the concession stands and other sites. There was a general consensus that the city should get security cameras with a high resolution that allows them to actually see the vandals clearly. Council member, Kim Hernandez, also mentioned, Council member Sarah Karels and Mayor Anderson concurred, that she has received multiple comments on how nice the concession stand is and how residents from other cities wish their ball park had a similar concession stand.

Council member, Kim Hernandez, made the motion to give Mr. Chaffee an operating budget of \$2,000 for purchasing security cameras and other security equipment for park restrooms and dump site. Council member, Jim Prom, seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Council member, Kim Hernandez, said there have been quite a few residents in town that are blowing grass clippings into the street. These clippings clog up the storm gutters. Mr. Chaffee said he has had to vacuum a few different storm gutters after rain falls due to the grass clippings. Further discussion on this topic brought up the situation of unkept properties in town. Other cities charge a large fee to mow for residents. There was general consent that the city should look into raising the fee to mow residents' lawns as a deterrent. These discussions lead to a discussion on creating a fee for repeat offenders who blow grass onto the street. The City Clerk and Maintenance Worker will work together to draft and deliver letters to offenders of both offenses. Advised Mr. Chaffee to approach property owners and give them five days to mow their lawn before the city would mow it for the property owner and charge the standard fee.

Council member, Kim Hernandez, mentioned that Mr. Chaffee should be reimbursed, by the City, for using his personal cell phone for city business. The prior maintenance worker received this reimbursement as well. Mayor Anderson informed the council that Ms. Barnard has informed him that Mr. Chaffee would be receiving this reimbursement.

Mayor, Robert Anderson, and Council Member, Kim Hernandez, met with a school board official and the superintendent about the school referendum this upcoming November. From the meeting, Mayor Anderson gathered, from the conversation, that either the Minnesota Lake or Good Thunder school will close in a few years. It would most likely be the Good Thunder school building because it does not house as many students as the Minnesota Lake school building even though the Good Thunder school building is in better physical condition. The school has five separate scenarios that they have in front of them. They are placing the highest priced scenario, \$65 million for a new

school in Mapleton, on the ballot. From the meeting with the superintendent, Anderson and Hernandez said the average assessment for Good Thunder residents would be \$285/year for twenty (20) years. There was concern that building a new school would lead to the closing of the Good Thunder school building. Hernandez asked the superintendent if the Good Thunder school would be the one to close but the superintendent would not give an answer to that question. There was general consensus that the school would be devastating to the community as it would affect property values and businesses in town. The council would prefer a referendum that would keep the Good Thunder school building in use. Anderson stated that the superintendent said that if the referendum passes in November, construction would start in May. Both Anderson and Hernandez stated that the school has diminishing class sizes. The council was concerned about viability of building a new school to attract more students. It was stated that Lake Crystal recently built a new school and has not seen an increase in class sizes. Anderson was also concerned that the county has talked about reassessing property values in the county to match the current market which would increase the assessment to each business owner and property owner in town. There was general consensus that the council will not support any referendum that closes the Good Thunder school building.

Council Member, Kim Hernandez, said that Busters Bar and Grill has agreed to host the location for the Beer Garden for Good Thunder Days on August 22, 2015.

Council Member, Sarah Karels, made a motion to approve a temporary liquor license for Busters Bar and Grill, August 22, 2015 at Thunder Valley

Council Member, Ken Giese, gave an update on the archery range. He also gave an update on the restroom solar panel project. He is current looking for specific parts to finish the project. They will be motion sensed. He is still looking for a way to mount the solar panels.

Mayor, Robert Anderson, stated that the Tri-City Police Department has sent the bill back to the City of Good Thunder for the holding of dangerous animals in the Mapleton Veterinarian Clinic in January. Anderson read from a letter, from City Attorney Chris Kennedy sent in March, that according to the agreement, a bill of this matter is the responsibility of all members and not just one member city. The city council advised staff to send the bill back to the property owner. Anderson will talk with Ms. Barnard on how to draft a letter to the property owner. The council also suggested that they approach the city attorney on how to get the bill paid. A few council members recommended that the city set a precedent for this type of situation by taking the property owner to court over the matter.

Council Member, Sarah Karels, stated that a member of the Softball Association had concerns over sharing the ball park shed to store equipment. The member did not have any concerns about sharing the shed but wanted to make sure that the city was okay with continuing to share the shed. There was a general consensus from the city council that they have no problems with sharing the shed with the Softball Association.

Council member, Ken Giese, drew the name of Georgine Anderson, 805 Main Street, as being selected for July's Yard of the Month. Council member, Kim Hernandez, seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Council member, Ken Giese, motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:26 p.m. Council member, Kim Hernandez, seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Alex Jermeland
Minnesota Valley Council of Governments