

City Council Minutes  
June 7, 2021

The Fergus Falls City Council held a regular meeting on Monday June 7, 2021 at 5:30 pm in the City Council Chambers. Pastor Eric Uggerud of Cornerstone Church gave the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Mayor Schierer called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm. Council members in attendance were Gustafson, Hicks, Fish, Hagberg, Kvamme, Rufer, Thompson and Arneson.

**Approval of the Agenda**

A motion and second were made by Fish and Thompson to approve tonight's agenda as presented and the motion carried.

**Housing Tax Rebates**

Three requests for the housing tax abatement have been submitted. All three homes meet the program outcomes, broke ground in 2020 and are now substantially completed. Two of the requests are for Habitat for Humanity and the third is a new single family home that had issues with permitting that have now been resolved. The county has approved these requests and recommends the city approve them as well. A public hearing was opened for the properties located at 1337 Lenore Way, 1353 Lenore Way, 608 Ann Street at 5:36 pm. As no one appeared, the hearing was closed.

Fish offered **Resolution #102-2021** approving a housing tax rebate for 1337 Lenore Way as requested by Fergus Falls Habitat for Humanity, which was seconded by Arneson and was adopted with Hicks voting in opposition.

Gustafson offered **Resolution #103-2021** approving a housing tax rebate for 1353 Lenore Way as requested by Fergus Falls Habitat for Humanity, which was seconded by Hagberg and was adopted with Hicks voting in opposition.

Fish offered **Resolution #104-2021** approving a housing tax rebate for 608 Ann Street as requested by Brad and Paula Christenson (NCS Homes), which was seconded by Rufer and was adopted with Hicks voting in opposition.

**NP Park Presentation**

Sarah Duffy and Tami Vigessa represented the Noon Kiwanis service club about a project that was put on hold with the pandemic. Their club has adopted NP Park and is raising funds for the park's renovations. Their project has three main objectives to meet unmet community needs: 1. Build a playground that is accessible for children with disabilities. 2. Construct a larger scale playground that will provide opportunities for tweens. 3. Modernize a park with aging equipment in an ideal central location for families to access. The project budget is \$403,395.24 to install the equipment and surface. The club's goal is to raise \$500,000 so earthwork, landscaping, shade structures and a contingency fund can be established. The city was asked to partner by contributing \$200,000 towards the project. They plan to continue fundraising efforts and will pursue grant opportunities.

The City Engineer commented on the water study the city conducted as the park also acts as a storm water retention basin. The park would continue to collect the stormwater, but it would be at a lower capacity. Additional drainage improvements and an accessible bathroom facility will need to be reviewed as well. There are also plans to raise the playground area to street level to allow access to

those with disabilities. An overview of the types of equipment and features being considered, the opportunities to add future phases to the project and the fundraising activities to date were discussed. The Finance Director said the city has been planning for contributions for this project from the liquor store revenues and there are adequate funds to contribute to this project. Rufer shared his support for the project as it shows the city is providing additional offerings for families with young children. Mayor Schierer was in favor of the project and the opportunities for play it offers to children with disabilities. Kvamme asked questions about the city's park budget and the value the community would see with this long-term city asset. The current equipment could be redistributed to other city parks or sold on the auction site. The project would begin after the funds have been secured. Rufer offered **Resolution #105-2021** approving the city's contribution to the NP Park improvement project in the amount of \$200,000, which was seconded by Fish and was adopted.

### **Proclamation: School Nurse Day**

Mayor Schierer read a proclamation provided by the Noon Rotary Club declaring June 9 as School Nurse Day.

### **Introduction of City Planner**

Karin Flom was introduced as the new City Planner who started employment with the city on June 1. Karin provided a brief history on her background and experience and was welcomed by the council.

### **Consent Agenda**

The following items were approved under **Resolution #106-2021** by Rufer: Motion approving the minutes from the May 17, 2021 City Council meeting and the June 2, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting. Motion approving the following licenses: Firework Sales TNT Fireworks/3302 W Hwy 210; Fireworks Display Summerfest fireworks show June 11 at Kirkbride Park; Chicken Permit Andrew Nelson 1402 S Vine St., Kisha Bailey 918 N Vine St; Minnesota Lawful Gambling Permit Church of Our Lady of Victory for BINGO at 207 N Vine St on September 19. **Resolution #107-2021** approving a variance for an accessory structure in the front yard, not meeting front setbacks for the property located at 640 W Birch Street as requested by Leroy Thompson. **Resolution #108-2021** approving a variance for an accessory structure in the side yard, not meeting side setbacks for the property located at 720 E Mt Faith Avenue as requested by Sherri Easterday. **Resolution #109-2021** accepting the project plans and specifications and authorizing the advertising of bids for PI 5337, the 2021 mill and overlay projects. **Resolution #110-2021** accepting the project plans and specifications and authorizing the advertising of bids for PI 5338, the 2021 seal coat project. **Resolution #111-2021** accepting the professional services agreement from Bolton & Menk Inc. in the amount of \$640,000 for construction administration and observation. **Resolution #112-2021** authorizing the renewal of the Joint Cooperative Agreement for the use of emergency operations personnel and equipment with the City of Moorhead. **Resolution #113-2021** authorizing the purchase of a street sweeper and declaring Unit #259 as surplus equipment. **Resolution #114-2021** accepting a donation from Partnership 4 Health for a bicycle fix it station and bike rack. **Resolution #115-2021** authorizing the Mayor and City Administrator to execute the appropriate documents related to a \$25,000 façade loan for Danner Holdings LLC. Motion directing the City Attorney to draft ordinance changes to the Industrial and Business Zones and Accessory Buildings and Fences as requested by the Planning Commission. The resolution was seconded by Thompson and was adopted.

### **Ordinance 14, Eighth Series, Code of Ethics**

The city's Code of Ethics ordinance has been amended and the definitions of conflicts have been expanded to avoid any situation that might give rise to a conflict of interest. This ordinance language would cover all elected officials, volunteers on the city's boards and commissions, the Port Authority and employees. Ordinance 14, Eighth Series, Code of Ethics was introduced by Hicks and was declared to have its first reading.

### **Agreement with Greater Fergus Falls**

The city has been working with representatives from Greater Fergus Falls on an amended agreement. The contract clarifies the city's contribution is an appropriation of funds dedicated to Greater Fergus Falls to provide economic development services to the city. A separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining roles and responsibilities would be provided at a later date. Hicks felt this conversation has been going on too long without a definitive solution. Arneson agreed this process could be simplified as the city is a small portion of their overall budget and it is not the city's role to micromanage their efforts. The contract would be renewed annually and if the obligations are not being met, the city could take action at that time. Mayor Schierer felt the MOU can be simple and still convey the city's trust and willingness to work together. Hicks offered **Resolution #116-2021** accepting the amended agreement with Greater Fergus Falls with the condition a Memorandum of Understanding must be established by June 21, 2021. The resolution was seconded by Arneson and was adopted.

### **Land Sale Finalized Southview Drive**

On May 3, the city introduced a land sale on Southview Drive as requested by Lonnie and Danielle Ballweg. The neighbors expressed concerns about the sale last meeting and asked for more information. After meeting with Ward 2 council members, the neighbors have consented to the sale. Rufer suggested the city establish a formal process to follow if similar requests to purchase city land are received. Rufer offered **Resolution #117-2021** approving a land sale and entering into a Purchase Agreement with Lonnie and Danielle Ballweg for a parcel of land on Southview Drive, which was seconded by Kvamme and was adopted.

### **Resolution of Accounts**

Fish offered a resolution authorizing the payments and claims in the amount of \$2,963,402.53, which was seconded by Hagberg and was adopted.

After a number of miscellaneous announcements about the numerous community events taking place over the next week, the meeting adjourned at 6:23 pm.

*Lynne Olson*