

Committee of the Whole Meeting
June 28, 2023

The Fergus Falls City Council met as a Committee of the Whole on Wednesday June 28, 2023, at 7:00 am in the City Council Chambers. Mayor Schierer called the meeting to order, and the following council members were in attendance: Hicks, Fish, Job, Kvamme, Rufer, Kremeier, Thompson and Rachels.

City Project 5959 Parking

Local jurisdictions have the authority to establish diagonal parking if state aid designated street width and traffic volumes meet the standards of State Aid Rules 8820.9961 and the speed limit is 30 mph or less. Staff are proposing diagonal parking along the south side of Stanton Avenue from Vine Street to Union Avenue in conjunction with City Project 5959. Parking would be restricted on the north side of the street and a net of four additional parking spots will be realized with this modification. A motion and second were made by Hicks and Rachels to recommend the council to restrict parking on the north side of Stanton Avenue from Vine Street to Union and Avenue and designate diagonal parking on the south side of Stanton Avenue from Vine Street to Union Avenue and the motion carried.

Aquatics Center Project

Adam Barnett of JLG Architect shared schematics and images of PI 9504, the aquatics center. The project will feature a zero-depth entry pool, water slide, play structures, four lane lap swimming pool and climbing wall if the bids are favorable. The estimated construction cost of the base bid is \$8,278,000. The bid alternates are estimated at \$830,000 for a combined construction cost of \$9,108,000. \$430,000 is budgeted for fixtures, furnishings, and equipment for the concessions area and staff expect to open bids in July. The local option sales will finance the project bonds and the city has the legislative authority for a \$10.8 million aquatic center improvement project. A motion and second were offered by Fish and Kvamme to recommend the council accept the project plans and specifications and authorize the advertising of bids and the motion carried.

Flour Mill Project and Agreements

Kevin Bartram received TIF funding approval from the city in 2021 to redevelop the former flour mill facility into a boutique hotel. Mr. Bartram had a \$300,000 financing gap and was given a \$200,000 business assistance loan. The city has been working on an agreement to purchase the 20,200 square feet of unimproved parking lot adjacent to the mill building for public parking in the downtown area for \$160,000. The lot will remain unpaved until it can be coordinated with other paving projects in the area. Abatement work has started on the site and the council needs to approve a development agreement for the TIF documentation. The city would pay for the project out of the General Fund and repay the levy over five years. A motion and second were made by Thompson and Hicks to recommend the council approve a development agreement and approving a purchase agreement related to the redevelopment of the mill building and the motion carried.

Sound System Rental Fee

The city purchased a portable sound system that includes sound boards, speakers, subs, microphones, mic stands and stage lights in conjunction with the purchase of the mobile stage. The city is receiving requests to rent the equipment and staff are recommending the 2023 fee schedule be amended to include this \$300.00 rental fee. The equipment would only be rented to those on a list of qualified

users. A motion and second were made by Hicks and Fish to recommend the council amend the 2023 fee schedule to include the \$300.00 rental fee for the sound system equipment and the motion carried.

Refuse Truck Purchase

Unit 226, a refuse truck is scheduled for replacement. Staff are recommending the purchase of a 2024 Freightliner M2 106 dual steer truck equipped with a Neway 24 yard ASL body (packer body and arm lift). The purchase price after trade-in of the old unit would be \$287,112.80 and would be funded by the Equipment Enterprise Fund. Rachels asked if the city should consider keeping the current unit as a back-up. Len Taylor explained staff are expecting the delivery of the 2023 truck purchase later this year and the vehicle being replaced will be kept for back-up purposes. There is no need or storage for a second backup vehicle and the \$55,000 trade-in value is planned for other equipment purchases. A motion and second were made by Rachels and Rufer to recommend the council authorize the purchase of a new refuse truck and the motion carried.

Chicken Permit Amendment

A request has been made to amend the chicken ordinance to also permit the keeping of quail. The permit requirements would mirror the chicken licenses. A motion and second were made by Hicks and Fish to recommend the council direct the City Attorney to draft amendments to City Code 91.52 to include quail as fowl allowed under the city's chicken license and the motion carried.

City Code 154.08 Amendments

The council asked for additional discussion on the Conditional Use Permits allowed in the downtown area to manufacture hemp derived THC products. Hicks would be amenable to allowing manufacturing in the business district if it is not in a shared kitchen space and the space is restricted to those under the age of 21. Rachels had concerns with the noise generated by the machinery. Schierer felt restricting access to the products being manufactured needs to be considered. Kvamme expressed concerns with the city's responsibility regarding enforcement. Rufer felt the same considerations should be given to THC as to alcohol and distillery manufacturing. Thompson would like to see manufacturing in their own facility or in an industrial zone without a shared kitchen. The council asked staff to hold a work session to consider this issue and continue the discussion.

BCA Joint Powers Agreement

A motion and second were made by Kvamme and Job to recommend the council approve and sign the Minnesota BCA Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Joint Powers Agreement and the motion carried.

Mental Health Social Worker

Police Chief Kile Bergren stated one of the biggest social needs in the community is dealing with those in a state of mental crisis. Since the closure of state hospitals, this task has fallen on the shoulders of law enforcement and while they can assist in these situations, a better approach is needed. The department has been working with Otter Tail County to establish a mental health social worker position to provide a team approach in intervention strategies to those in crisis and providing follow-up care and referrals to additional mental health resources. A motion and second were made by Rachels and Thompson to recommend the council adopt a resolution of support for Otter Tail County to establish a mental health social worker position and the motion carried.

Other Business

Hicks asked staff to provide information on the Farmer's Market signage concerns. The Planning Commission is reviewing the sign ordinance for consistency and uniformity. He also asked staff if no smoking signs can be placed at the downtown pavilion. Kremeier asked staff to replace faded or worn-out signage in city parks.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 am

Lynne Olson