

City Council Minutes  
January 2, 2024

The Fergus Falls City Council held a regular meeting on January 2, 2024, at 5:30 pm in the City Council Chambers. Pastor Kate Bruns gave the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Council members in attendance were Kremeier, Thompson, Rachels, Hicks, Fish, Job, Kvamme and Rufer.

**Approval of Agenda**

A motion and second were made by Thompson and Fish approving tonight's agenda with a request to remove two items from the consent agenda and the motion carried.

**Housing Tax Rebate 1395 Lenore Way**

A 2021 submission for a housing tax rebate was inadvertently missed. The Habitat for Humanity Home at 1395 Lenore Way fits the criteria for the program and was recommended for approval by staff. The public hearing opened at 5:35 pm. As no one appeared the hearing was closed. Fish offered **Resolution #1-2024** approving a property tax rebate for 1395 Lenore Way, which was seconded by Kvamme and was adopted.

**Retirement Jeff Walvatne**

Fish offered **Resolution #2-2024** acknowledging the retirement and 27 years of service from Jeff Walvatne, which was seconded by Rufer and was adopted.

**Open Forum**

Mark Leighton asked for an accounting of staff time and materials spent last year on franchise fees.

**Consent Agenda**

The following items were approved under **Resolution #3-2024** by Thompson: Motion approving the minutes from the December 18, 2023, City Council meeting. Motion approving the following licenses: Excavator Triple E Water and Sewer, Leitch Excavating, Comstock Construction; Paving/Sidewalk Comstock Construction; Mechanical Metropolitan Mechanical Contractors, CR Plumbing, McDowall Company, Plumber's Inc; Minnesota Lawful Gambling Permit Ducks Unlimited Maidens of the Marshes Chapter 168 for raffle at Eagles Aerie 2339 on March 23, 2024. **Resolution #4-2024** designating the Daily Journal as the 2024 legal publication. **Resolution #5-2024** delegating the City Administrator, Finance Director, Assistant Finance Director, Payroll Officer and Human Resources Director to make electronic fund transfers on behalf of the city. **Resolution #6-2024** adopting the 2024 elected officials out of state travel policy. **Resolution #7-2024** declaring Summerfest, Over the River and Shop, Move and Groove as 2024 community festivals. **Resolution #8-2024** approving budget adjustments. **Resolution #9-2024** approving the updated Gifts & Appraisal, Internet Acceptable Use and Privacy & Confidentiality Policies for the Fergus Falls Public Library. **Resolution #10-2024** setting the 2024 Tax Rebate Program public hearing dates. **Resolution #11-2024** accepting a \$200 donation from Fergus Falls Home and Hardware and a \$418 donation from the Kiwanis Otter Risers Club for the Fire Department Youth Explorer Program. **Resolution #12-2024** declaring surplus equipment and authorizing its disposal. The resolution was seconded by Rachels and was adopted.

## **Depositories**

Kremeier asked why the city does not use local financial institutions as approved depositories. Finance Director Bill Sonmor explained Galliard Capital Management is the city's money manager and Principal is linked to the long-term portfolio. For the city's more liquid accounts, the League of Minnesota Cities 4M Fund is used and that is tied into US Bank. The city utilizes their services as they do not impose bank fees. Fish offered **Resolution #13-2024** designating the official depositories for the city which was seconded by Rufer and was adopted.

## **Code of Conduct**

Kremeier felt the Code of Conduct for Elected Officials was unnecessary as City Code 33.02 and 33.13 already address a Code of Ethics. He did not believe the city is not following their code, said adopting this policy will hinder discussion and referenced an incident he did not feel was addressed. Kvamme offered **Resolution #14-2024** adopting the Code of Conduct for Elected Officials with an edit suggestion to replace the word "implies" with "may imply" on page 6, bullet point 7, which was seconded by Rufer. Hicks felt the document was too wordy and Kvamme said the committee already condensed the policy in half. Rufer spoke in favor of adopting the policy. City Administrator Andrew Bremseth reminded the council they adopted the policy on October 2, 2023, and at that time they expressed the same concerns and asked staff to bring it forward annually to reaffirm the policy. If additional editing was desired, the council could take action to form another committee to do so. The resolution was called to a vote and was adopted with Kremeier voting in opposition.

## **Resolution of Accounts**

Fish offered a resolution authorizing the payments and claims in the amount of \$462,742.39, which was seconded by Hicks and was adopted after a few clarifying questions.

## **2024 Acting Mayor**

A motion and second were made by Job and Kremeier nominating Anthony Hicks to serve as the 2024 Acting Mayor and the motion carried.

## **2024 Council Appointments**

Mayor Schierer read the list of council appointments for 2024. A motion and second were made by Job and Fish approving the appointments and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 pm

*Lynne Olson*