

City Council Meeting
February 5, 2024

The Fergus Falls City Council held a regular meeting on Monday February 5, 2024 at 5:30 pm in the City Council Chambers. Pastor Jim Johnson gave the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Mayor Schierer called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm and the following council members were in attendance: Rachels, Hicks, Fish, Job, Kvamme, Rufer, Kremerier and Thompson.

Approval of Agenda

A motion and second were made by Fish and Rufer approving the agenda with the removal of two items from the consent agenda and the motion carried.

Retirement: Bob Wallington

Fish offered **Resolution #29-2024** acknowledging the retirement and 29 years of service from Bob Wallington, which was seconded by Kvamme and was adopted.

Proclamation: Giving Hearts Day

Mayor Schierer read a proclamation declaring February 8, 2024 as Giving Hearts Day.

Investment Portfolio Review

Mike Hoeschen, of Advanced Capital Group presented the 2023 investment portfolio review. 2023 was a year of recovery with investments earning \$1.4 million last year. The investment yield is 4.6%, which is up from 1.1% from two years ago. Finance Director Bill Sonmor reviewed the year-end cash balances for each fund and allowed uses. The total of all funds as of December 31, 2023, was \$44,002,213.69.

Open Forum

Bob Noah spoke on decorum at council meetings and public input opportunities. Duane Cookman asked for updates on the Glacial Edge Trail and franchise fees.

Consent Agenda

The following items were approved under **Resolution #30-2024** by Hicks: A motion approving the following licenses: Minnesota Lawful Gambling Permit for the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association raffle on March 23, 2024 at the VFW; Mechanical Jerry's Heating & A/C; Fireworks Sales Fleet Farm. **Resolution #31-2024** certifying election judges for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Nominating Primary Election; **Resolution #32-2024** agreeing to maintain the bicycle and pedestrian facility portion of the trail sections of Public Improvement 5367, MnDOT's TH 210W bridge replacement project; Motion appointing Lois Josefson to the Heritage Preservation Commission; **Resolution #33-2024** accepting donations from the Fergus Falls Public Library Foundation/West Central Initiative for materials and conference travel and approve corresponding budget adjustments. **Resolution #34-2024** establishing a Fergus Falls Community Fund with West Central Initiative. **Resolution #35-2024** approving an increase in service benefits for retiring paid on call fire fighters. A motion adding a \$100 per application fee for grazing for vegetative management permits to the 2024 fee schedule. **Resolution #36-2024** approving a final plat for a two-lot subdivision of Timber Cove Addition at 1151 and 1161 N Friberg Avenue as requested by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Fergus Falls. The resolution was seconded by Thompson and was adopted.

Amendment to the Minutes

Hicks referenced the January 16, 2024, council minutes reiterating the city has the authority to revoke the encroachment agreement for the medical clinic at 1205 W Lincoln Avenue and the project must adhere to all city codes and standards. Kremeier asked for an amendment to attribute Mayor Schierer's quote "he felt council members were talking out of both sides of the mouth" be directed at him, not council members. He also requested the open forum be amended to clarify Mark Leighton's information source was the State Auditor's office. Finance Director Bill Sonmor said Mr. Leighton did use the State Auditor's Report on 2023 city budgets, but his information was inaccurately based on the wrong population base. A motion and second were made by Rufer and Rachels approving the amendments to the January 16, 2024, minutes and the motion carried.

Donations to Fire Department

After clarification on the amount of funding, Hicks offered **Resolution #37-2024** accepting donations from Lake Region Electric Cooperative Operation Roundup and the Fraternal Order of Eagles 2339 towards the purchase of an inflatable ice/cold water rescue boat for the fire department and approve the corresponding budget adjustments which was seconded by Rufer and was adopted.

Ordinance 52, Temporary Grazing

Ordinance 52, Eighth Series, Adding City Code Section 91.53, Temporary Grazing for Vegetative Management was introduced by Kvamme and was declared to have its first reading. Hicks asked for several clerical amendments which will be incorporated into the second reading.

Pebble Lake Golf Course Management Lease Agreement

The lease agreement for the management of the course was extended through December 31, 2024, and the golf board is responsible for the first \$5,000 of capital maintenance each year. Hicks offered **Resolution #38-2024** approving a one-year extension to the Pebble Lake Golf Course management lease agreement which was seconded by Kvamme and was adopted with Rachels voting in opposition.

Grant for Union Avenue Bridge

As a coal impacted community, the city has an opportunity for federal funding for the rehabilitation of the Union Avenue bridge. The estimated cost of rehabbing the historic structure is \$3.6 million and 50-80% of the costs could be covered with a Federal Economic Development Administration Grant. Staff are looking for funding potential funding sources to cover the required matching funds. Rachels offered **Resolution #39-2024** directing staff to prepare and submit an EDA grant application for the Union Avenue Bridge rehabilitation project, which was seconded by Fish and was adopted.

TIF Consultant for Workforce Housing Project

Staff anticipate a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) request for the proposed workforce housing project at 801 W Stanton Avenue. They recommend retaining Baker Tilly's TIF consultant services for a match of funds for the MHFA grant. The developer would be responsible for the cost of the services and the city is not obligated to grant TIF funds. Hicks offered **Resolution #40-2024** engaging Baker Tilly for a Tax Increment Financing analysis for a possible workforce housing project, which was seconded by Rufer and was adopted with Kremeier voting in opposition.

Resolution of Accounts

Fish offered a resolution authorizing the payments and claims in the amount of \$1,205,421.76, which was seconded by Kvamme and was adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm
Lynne Olson