

City Council Minutes  
August 19, 2024

The Fergus Falls City Council held a regular meeting on Monday August 19, 2024, at 5:33 pm in the City Council Chambers. Chaplain Kevin Patch gave the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. In the absence of the Mayor and Acting Mayor, a motion and second were made by Rufer and Rachels to appoint Scott Kvamme as the temporary chairperson to run tonight's meeting and the motion carried. The following council members were in attendance: Rufer, Kremeier, Rachels, Fish, Job and Kvamme. Mayor Schierer and Council Member Hicks were absent.

### **Open Forum**

Kirby Anderson, representing the School Board, requested the city prioritize the street paving work on Laurel Avenue as school will begin in two weeks. He described the area as "a war zone" that will cause hardship for staff, students, busses and parents at McKinley School if it is not paved soon. He felt the city's communication with the district has been poor and urged this safety issue to be resolved as quickly as possible.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

A motion and second were made by Fish and Rufer approving the agenda, and the motion carried.

### **Consent Agenda**

The following items were approved under **Resolution #156-2024** by Rachels: Motion approving the minutes from the August 5, 2024, City Council meeting and the August 14, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting. Motion approving the following licenses: Paving/Sidewalk Blake Meland Concrete, Mechanical Apex Heating and Air. **Resolution #157-2024** approving budget adjustments. **Resolution #158-2024** accepting State Grants 1057675 and 1057628 for the Airport Masterplan and Airport Layout Plan. **Resolution #159-2024** accepting State Grant 0157675 for the Airport Rescue Grant Program. **Resolution #160-2024** approving the use of state public safety funds to replace and upgrade emergency medical and rescue equipment. **Resolution #161-2024** setting a Charter Communications cable services franchise public hearing on September 3, 2024, at 5:30 pm in the City Council Chambers. The resolution was seconded by Job and was adopted.

### **Ordinance 61, Eighth Series**

Ordinance 61, Eighth Series, Charter Communications Franchise was introduced by Fish and was declared to have its first reading.

### **Ordinance 59, Eighth Series**

An edit to Ordinance 59, Section 121.11 was proposed. "The City shall issue at least one registration for a cannabis retail businesses and may issue up to two." The next sentence "The City may further limit the number of cannabis retail businesses per zone" was stricken from the final ordinance language. Jacob Buettner voiced his opinion the city should not restrict the number of licenses as this new market will create opportunities for the community. Ordinance 59, Eighth Series, Cannabis Registration was adopted by a roll call vote.

### **HRA Levy**

HRA Director Mikel Olson followed up on questions asked at last week's Committee of the Whole meeting. If their levy request is granted, it would amount to approximately 7.5% of their total revenue.

He shared a few home values and what portion of taxes are the result of the HRA. Olson commented on the number of low-income people and families within Fergus Falls affected by the HRA's programming and housing vouchers. Kremeier said last year the HRA requested the ability to levy a tax which included a full-time staff member, who still has not been hired. He stated his opposition to the levy request as the HRA did not fulfill their obligation. Job asked about the number of people assisted by the HRA programs. Olson said in August their Housing Assistance Payments totaled \$102,494, which assisted 191 families. He spoke about the stability, mainstream and housing choice vouchers and their waiting list for rental assistance exceeds 300 people. Rachels said the HRA's request last year was \$243,376 and the proposed employee was a small portion of the request. The Garitz Grove Apartments only has 14 of the 24 available units filled thus far and he felt the HRA was not spending money on a position for a building that wasn't yet at capacity. Olson concurred their previous request included a housing navigator position which has not yet been filled. Kvamme felt the HRA request is fair, consistent with past years and a good return on investment for the city. Rufer offered **Resolution #162-2024** approving a levy of \$255,989 for the Fergus Falls HRA, which was seconded by Rachels and was adopted with Kremeier voting in opposition.

### **Resolution of Accounts**

Fish offered a resolution authorizing the payments and claims in the amount of \$3,463,666.32, which was seconded by Rufer and was adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 pm

*Lynne Olson*