

City Council Minutes
October 7, 2024

The Fergus Falls City Council held a regular meeting on Monday October 7, 2024, at 5:30 pm in the City Council Chambers. Pastor Dale Hexum gave the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Anthony Hicks served as the Acting Mayor and called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm. The following council members were in attendance: Hicks, Fish, Job, Kvamme, Rufer, Kremeier, and Rachels. Mayor Schierer was absent.

Open Forum

John Strauch, 519 W Vasa Ave inquired about the city's plans for the former Checkers and encouraged the city to ensure election signs are not placed in the right-of-way. Staff clarified they are removing signs that are reported on a complaint basis.

Debbie Smith said a council candidate recently sent a text message that was refuted by a council member and the candidate then sent a follow-up text with the correct information. She felt the council member calling out this error was unethical.

Duane Cookman, 543 W Stanton asked for an update on the property located at 801 W Stanton. Andrew Bremseth said the developer's grant application to Minnesota Housing was not funded. The city will continue working with the landowner to complete demolition and site cleanup and is exploring additional housing options. Hicks asked for a project update at the next meeting.

Approval to the Agenda

A motion and second were made by Rufer and Kremeier to approve tonight's agenda with the addition of a donation (consent) and a discussion on the council's code of conduct and ethics policy (new business) and the motion carried.

Retirement: Jeff Hohrman

Fish offered **Resolution #178-2024** acknowledging the retirement and 27 years of service from Jeff Hohrman, which was seconded by Job and was adopted.

Consent Agenda

The following items were approved under **Resolution #179-2024** by Fish: A motion approving the open and closed minutes from the September 16, 2024, City Council meeting and the October 2, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting. A motion approving the following licenses: Mechanical Valley Service Mechanical, LLC; Mobile Food Vendor Permit (Short-term) Reign Irrigation dba The Chuckwagon; 3.2% Malt Liquor with Strong Beer Authorization (2025) Northern Aire Lanes; 3.2% Malt Liquor (2025) Lakeway Express; Tobacco (2025) Lakeway Express, Olson Oil Company, Casey's Store #1820, Casey's Store #2161. **Resolution #180-2024** certifying election judges for the November 5 General Election. **Resolution #181-2024** declaring various equipment from the Public Works Department as surplus equipment and authorizing its disposal. **Resolution #182-2024** A motion directing the City Attorney to draft an ordinance not allowing planting or landscaping in the city right-of-way. **Resolution #183-2024** accepting Interstate Engineering's professional services proposal for final design in the not to exceed amount of \$49,800 for City Project 7744, the Lake Alice grit chambers stormwater improvement project. **Resolution #184-2024** initiating Public Improvement 5352, Friberg Avenue: Lincoln Avenue to Fir Avenue; Pebble Lake Road: Arlington

Street to TH210 resurfacing project and accepting Moore Engineering's professional services agreement through final design, in the amount of \$342,940. Motion directing the City Attorney to draft amendments to City Code Chapter 154.70 through 154.177, Sign Ordinance. **Resolution #185-2024** accepting a \$2,500 donation from Summerfest for electrical upgrades at Kirkbride Park and approve a related budget adjustment. The resolution was seconded by Job and was approved.

Resolution of Accounts

Fish offered a resolution authorizing the payments and claims in the amount of \$3,863,471.15, which was seconded by Kvamme and was adopted.

New Business

Kremeier felt Kvamme breached the council's code of ethics and code of conduct at the chamber's candidate forum on September 24 when he called Hicks "half a package", questioned his secular beliefs and stated he does not trust Hicks or another candidate running for office. Kremeier cited numerous sections of the council's code of conduct policy he felt Kvamme violated at this event as well as negative comments made about cannabis users earlier this year. Kremeier recommended Kvamme step down from his council seat due to his habitual unethical conduct. Rufer asked Kremeier if the code of conduct he is referring to is the same document that he (Kremeier) refuses to sign. Kremeier stated he refuses to sign the council's code of conduct policy because the city refuses to enforce it. Rachels asked the city attorney for his opinion if the conduct policy applies only to council meetings or other public events. Job said the code of conduct states private encounters should be included in the standards for conduct (page 5). Nycklemoe will review the policy and provide his opinion.

The meeting adjourned to open and closed Port Authority meetings at 5:53 pm.

Lynne Olson