

Watson City Council Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2020

Present: Mayor: Todd Tongen Council Members: Carter Lokken, Todd Vogel, Cheryl Bjornstad, Jonathan Koenen, City Clerk, Nicole Koenen. Also present were two residents and special guest, David Euerle with Westberg & Eischens.

Mayor Tongen called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Added Firehall Windows and DOT Physical to Maintenance Report, and Meander to City Clerk Report
Motion to approve Agenda with additions by Tongen, 2nd Vogel m/s/p unanimously

Public Hearing Regarding Proposed Vacation of Platted Road was opened. Mayor Tongen asked if anyone had any questions, comments, or objections. Being no one had any the Public Hearing was closed and the following Resolution was passed.

Resolution 3-10-20-1 Vacation of a certain Platted Road

Motion made by Tongen to approve Resolution 3-10-20-1, 2nd Vogel m/s/p unanimously

Maintenance Report

- Front Tires for Dump Truck- In the Maintenance Report John mentioned replacing the tires on the front of the Dump Truck. Quotes for tires were provided. Council decided it was best to wait until it fails DOT inspection or possibly add it to the budget in a year.
- Firehall Windows- A quote for the two windows that need to be replaced was provided totaling \$2400.00. The quote included a \$600 charge because it was under 5 windows. Discussion of other possible windows to update followed. It was also discussed that the city has been budgeting for repairs on the windows the last two years.

Motion made by Tongen to spend \$2400.00 to replace the firehall windows, 2nd Lokken m/s/p unanimously

- DOT Physical- John asked if the City would pay for his DOT Physical to renew his Class B License. Municipal employees are exempt for DOT physicals when operating noncommercial vehicles, but because of its weight the Dump Truck falls under a commercial vehicle. The physical would cost anywhere between \$80-\$150. Discussion followed.

Motion to have the City pay for John to complete his DOT Physical by Bjornstad, 2nd Koenen m/s/p unanimously

Special Guest, David Euerle with Westberg & Eischens

David was present to discuss the City's 2019 Audit. He went over Financial Trends in our General, Water and Sewer Funds. The General Fund has decreased by \$30,000.00 due to large expenses such as purchasing the Dump Truck, and fixing the 03 Ford and Payloader. The Water Fund has been consistently decreasing since 2016. When asked his opinion on what water rates should be to help this fund, he suggested the city consider raising water rates \$1-\$2 as they have been the same the past 6 years. The Sewer Fund also decreased this past year due to expenses to the Montevideo Waste Water Treatment Facility. Another unexpected expense was hauling waste water to Montevideo when the system was flooded. The Council asked a few questions about how other small cities deal with these issues. He said a lot of them are in the same situation, if we continue to see decreases, and raising property taxes isn't reasonable the city should think about cutting some services.

Financial Report

Monthly Claims were passed around for signatures.

Motion to approve monthly claims by Tongen, 2nd Koenen m/s/p unanimously

Old Business:

- USDA Grant- Payloader Options- John went to St. Charles to look at the two payloaders the council asked him to. He was able to start them, put them in gear, and move the bucket up and down. He recommended that the City go with the 2012 Case 621F. After Tongen spoke with the salesman he mentioned they just received another payloader that the city might be interested in. The salesman sent over the details and proposal for that one as well, a 2013 CAT 924K. The council decided that Tongen should go down there again to test drive the 2013 CAT and 2012 Case. Since the application is already started with the amount of \$80,000, if we choose one that is more the city would have to cover the difference. The next step in the application process is for the City to hold a public hearing which will take place during our April 14th meeting.

New Business:

- \$4.00 Short Term Asset Reserve- When Vogel mentioned last meeting that the city is putting away money for replacing generators it was decided that Nicole look into it. Meeting minutes from November 10, 2015 suggest that the \$4.00 Asset Reserve would be added to utility bills to be used to replace pumps, and water meters when necessary. It would also be used to solve the budget shortfall. In 2018 when council decided to remove the \$4.00 charge it was under the impression that it was being used to raise money for the ADA Ramp Project because the money was being transferred to General Savings. Looking at the budgets for both Water and Sewer Funds and knowing the City will have to replace generators within 10 years Nicole suggested that we consider adding this charge back to the utility bills. Discussion Followed. It was recommended that Nicole send a notice to residents explaining the change and council's decision.

Motion made by Tongen to add \$4.00 Short Term Asset Reserve back to Utility Bills starting in April, 2nd Vogel m/s/p unanimously

- Mail in Ballot for Elections- The county will be purchasing new equipment for elections this spring. Because a majority of Townships, Milan and Raymond have decided to change to mail in ballot, the auditor reached out to see if Watson was considering the same. They are not persuading the city to go either way; they need to know before purchasing new equipment. The pros and cons were discussed. The city would save about \$1,200.00, but there are concerns that voter participation would decrease, and mail in ballot instructions are too confusing for some. The council decided to table until next month where they will make a final decision.
- Online Bill Pay- Last month an option for online bill pay was discussed but decided against because of costs. Nicole contacted them to let them know and they offered to set up for free. It is now set up through our website for residents to pay their utility bill online. A service fee will be charged to the customer for utilizing this option and no additional book work will be added on the cities end. The payments will be deposited directly into the City's account along with a report of transactions. This could cut down on Nicole having to make deposits.

City Clerk Report

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- Meander- The City received a letter asking if we would be participating in Meander this year. The council discussed the costs involved and also the attendance the past few years. Although they all agree it is a great event to have throughout the county and our community the costs have outweighed the attendance and the decision has been made to not participate.

Tongen asked if we have heard back from Bryan Bye about our Waste Water totals. He requested the city send over the totals in hopes they could provide some insight on how we can solve the issue. In 2019 3,000,000 more gallons were sent to Montevideo than in 2018. The totals are important because they are used to determine our Waste Water Treatment Fee. Discussion over making sure residents have sump pumps running properly. It was suggested to impose a fee for residents who have been letting extra water from flooded basements and homes down sewer system. Council would like Nicole to send out a reminder to have pumps running and that inspections of their basements will be imposed if totals continue to be high.

Public Comments:

Caryle Clifford asked if the city would be fixing the grass around the sidewalk by her property. The council said there are multiple places around town that will be fixed along with the area next her property.

Michael Knox asked if the city shocked our water system recently as he thought he smelt it at his home. Vogel explained that the chlorine levels are higher as they were trying to level them back off from a low reading. He said it should be back to normal soon as more water flushes through the system.

Mayor Tongen adjourned the meeting at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

City Clerk, Nicole Koenen