

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 18, 2020
5:30 PM

The Aug 18, 2020 council meeting was called to order by Mayor Lowell Helget at 5:30 PM. Those present include Helget, John Mueller, Sam Hesse, Theresa Beckman, Mike Rothmeier, City Attorney Paul Muske, City Manager Joe Stremcha and City Clerk Amy Vogel. Others present were Bill Helget, Wendy Krier, Linda Roiger, Donna Woidylla, George Tauer, Dale Lindmeier, Joe Micka, John Nicholson and Karen Moritz.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion by Mueller, second by Rothmeier to adopt the agenda with the addition of the ambulance July report to the consent agenda. All ayes.

The nuisance hearing was opened. It was noted that the 14 S Spring Ave property owner has made progress but is still working on it. There is a vehicle with expired registration. Motion by Beckman, second by Mueller to continue this hearing to Sept 15. All ayes.

It was noted that 315 N Van Buren Ave is tax-forfeited so Stremcha will contact Brown Co about the necessary clean-up requirement. There are tires laying around and overgrown brush on the property. The paint on the house doesn't meet the minimum housing standards. Motion by Beckman, second by Hesse to authorize Stremcha to contact Brown Co. All ayes.

There was no effort to clean the 512 N Cass property. There are 2 unlicensed vehicles on the property along with other miscellaneous items to be disposed of. Motion by Rothmeier, second by Mueller to declare this a nuisance and order abatement of the nuisance with the costs charged to the property taxes. All ayes.

The property owner at 104 S O'Connell has made about 40-50% progress with this nuisance. Motion by Rothmeier, second by Mueller to continue this hearing to Sept 15. All ayes.

The property at 524 E Lincoln St has 2 vehicles with expired registration along with 3 other vehicles, pallets and other items. The council agreed to give them another chance. Motion by Rothmeier, second by Hesse to continue this hearing to Sept 15 and issue citations for unlicensed vehicles and explain the necessary abatement. All ayes.

Motion by Rothmeier, second by Mueller to close the hearing at 5:54 PM. All ayes.

Motion by Rothmeier, second by Mueller to approve the consent agenda. All ayes.

Moritz addressed the council about the upcoming State Baseball tournament. It was deemed outdoor entertainment since the people can move around. Brown Co and MDH were involved in drafting the COVID-19 protocol for the tournament. She believes it is a good plan but still worries about the spread of the virus. As long as they follow and enforce the rules and

guidelines, they have done what they can to stop the spread. The cases are still under 10, which affects how schools will operate.

Bill Helget spoke with Randy Baier about a quote but he hasn't had time to put a quote together yet. They will meet soon to put numbers together.

Stremcha stated that Brown Co would sponsor the Kern Bridge relocation after Springfield commits to the local share. Their resolution will be approved after the commitment. This bridge would work the best as it is the longest. Bill Helget is drafting a letter of intent and will share it with Stremcha when it is completed. The final draft is due by Aug 31, 2020.

Mueller stated that he had a conversation with another county's engineer who advised the city to proceed with caution as these historic pieces are expensive to maintain. Rothmeier is not in favor of spending this much to bring a bridge to the community. Bill is still collecting data for the letter of intent. It was noted that there are 24 bridges in Minnesota with historical significance.

Muske stated that if the city is selected then they could work on getting donations for the city's share. Mueller also stated that he is not willing to spend community funds. The letter of intent doesn't commit the city to anything other than some engineering funds so it was suggested to send in the letter of intent.

The council conducted the second reading of the cable franchise ordinance with Mediacom. It was noted that no changes were made from the first reading. The ordinance has an effective date of October 1, 2020 and a term of ten years. Motion by Mueller, second by Hesse to adopt Ordinance 434 establishing a cable franchise ordinance with Mediacom and approved publishing in summary. All ayes.

The final pay estimate for \$3,443.60 was presented to the council. It was noted that a toilet was not secured in the family bathroom and there is a potential gas leak. Stremcha was directed to contact the architect on these issues and to check if there are other items that need to be completed. He was also instructed to get information on the materials used and keep them at city hall. Motion by Beckman, second by Hesse to approve payment of the final estimate contingent of clearing up these issues. All ayes.

Stremcha stated that the windsock at the airport was damaged in a storm. Bryan Page suggested using Neo Electrical Solutions for the repair, which is estimated at \$11,527. An insurance claim was turned in and the city collected \$9,027 on it already. Motion by Mueller, second by Beckman to approve the repair. All ayes.

The council reviewed the tax abatement resolution to complete the elevator demolition. It was recently inspected for asbestos and a quote of about \$35,000 was received. Stremcha is trying to get another quote. There may be a chance to partner with MPCA as the elevator is over 100 ft tall. If it is not removed now, it may be there for a long time. EDA asked if the grant should be let go and apply at a later date to get complete funding. DEED has asked for the project to keep moving forward and to apply for gap financing in February 2021. The demolition could not be

executed until after the gap financing award. A hearing is required first before moving forward with the project. Motion by Mueller, second by Beckman to set the public hearing for the abatement on Sept 15, 2020 at 5:30 PM. All ayes.

Roiger asked the council to consider the change of hours for the library. Other libraries already have less hours of operation and are looking to reduce them more. They have tracked foot traffic in October and November last fall. Traffic was actually less than believed. Different programs were implemented to try to increase library usage. With the reduction of one staff member earlier in the year, it was recommended to reduce hours by 7 each week. These new hours can be covered by the current employees without filling the vacancy. The new hours are proposed as Monday to Thursday 9-6 and Friday 9-5 with no Saturday hours. Motion by Mueller, second by Rothmeier to approve the new hours beginning Sept 8, 2020. All ayes. Staff will contact the council if this is not working.

Stremcha reviewed different advertising methods with TwinCities.com and a real estate site called loopnet.com for the medical center and housing program. There are currently 3 different parties looking to rent an area at the medical center but there is still lots of area not rented. He recommended advertising hard for a month or two because he doesn't see it being used for COVID-19 patients as was thought it might earlier on. The EDA was hesitant on advertising for the housing as they believe it more beneficial to advertise the medical center.

It was questioned whether Springfield has a member on the Allina board yet and if Allina needs more space. Stremcha stated that once a seat becomes vacant, Springfield would fill it. Allina has space rented for their specialty doctors that come to Springfield. October 8 is the 6-month meeting with Allina to see how it is going.

Motion by Mueller, second by Hesse to approve \$5,000 for advertising the medical center and using the operating funds for this purpose. All ayes.

The council reviewed the trail improvement by the new concession stand. A 77-ft portion was not repaired since the 2019 flood amount to about \$2,772 due to construction. Additional sections were damaged during construction. The total to repair it is \$10,647. The trail would go around the utility pole by the south end of the grandstand and continue east along the new fence to the tennis courts. It was suggested to share the balance of the repair between the trails and Rec Complex. MR Paving plans to complete the project tomorrow. Motion by Beckman, second by Mueller to reconstruct the trail using the FEMA funds and splitting the balance between the trails and Rec Complex. All ayes.

It was noted that health insurance will realize a 4.8% increase for 2021 if the same plan is approved.

There was further discussion regarding the upcoming baseball tournament as some have received concerns about it. It was noted that as long as the guidelines are in place and enforced, they have done all that they can.

Rothmeier stated that he believes the traffic sign has slowed traffic. It was suggested to add other ones on Co Rd 3 and on Range Rd. It was mentioned to try adjusting it to point out the speed earlier and that the signs do collect data. The sign can also be moved around, especially when the new Hwy 14 intersection with Central will slow traffic automatically.

Council asked about checking on the bond markets trends.

Stremcha stated that Marty Seifert will be at the Sept 3 budget workshop because the monthly meeting doesn't work for him.

Motion by Rothmeier, second by Beckman to adjourn at 7:22 PM. All ayes.

Lowell Helget, Mayor

Amy A. Vogel, City Clerk