

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 17, 2020
5:30 PM

The Nov. 17, 2020 council meeting was called to order by Council President Mike Rothmeier at 5:30 PM. Those present include Rothmeier, John Mueller, Sam Hesse, Theresa Beckman, City Attorney Paul Muske, City Manager Joe Stremcha and Deputy Clerk Donna Woidylla. Others present were Derek Tonn, Shari Koll, Justin Robertson, Tom Goeritz, Greg Roiger, Linda Roiger, Kristopher Morgan, Renee Meine, John Nicholson, Mia Thibodeau, John Ryan, Paula Thomas, and Nick Klisch. Absent was Mayor Lowell Helget. The Pledge of Allegiance was conducted.

Motion by Muller, second by Beckman to adopt the agenda. All ayes.

The Public Hearing to discuss nuisance properties was opened at 5:42PM by Beckman, second by Mueller. All Ayes. There were 3 properties 216 W. Sanborn, 102 E Rock St. and 510 N Van Buren that were discussed. Motion by Mueller, second by Beckman to declare these 3 properties as nuisances. All ayes. Officer Robertson was on hand to let council know that these properties have begun to comply with the cleanup. There were also neighbors on hand to discuss 512 N Cass which was previously declared a nuisance. They would like the property condemned, that it looks like a hoarder house and that it makes the neighborhood look bad and brings the value of their properties in the neighborhood down. They would possibly be interested in buying the property, but they are afraid it would cost too much to have it cleaned up and tore down. Attorney Muske feels this property would fall under our Hazardous Building Ordinance and will check further into it and get back to the council. Council thought it might fall under our minimum housing standard ordinance if they roof leaks even if no one is living there. Further discussion was this property has been on the nuisance property list year in and year out and the owner has done minimal work to get it cleaned up and it goes right back to looking like it did when declared a nuisance. Council instructed the Police to follow up with Matt Ibberson on the 512 N Cass property. Motion by Hesse, second by Mueller to close the nuisance hearing at 5:47PM. All ayes.

Motion by Beckman, second by Mueller to approve Consent Agenda. All ayes.

Tom Goeritz from St. John Lutheran Home was on hand to discuss the purchase of some of the surplus property at the Medical Center. He knows the council was concerned in the correct and fair way to dispose of the surplus property and stated that they would be different then others in the community. They have worked with the City for over 60 years, employee 150 staff members, are a non-profit, their bed count and funding is down right now and to purchase the property at a discount would really help them out financially. Motion by Mueller, second by Hesse to approve the sale of the listed surplus properties to St John Lutheran Home for 20% of the listed value. All ayes.

Goreitz was also on hand along with Mia Thibodeau from Fryberger Law to discuss the refinancing of a loan for St. John Lutheran Home/The Maples. Goreitz stated that they have 6 years left to pay on this loan which monthly payments are \$24,000.00, if they refinanced they

would reduce their payments to \$12,000 monthly for 15 years at an interest rate of 3% to 3.1% which would help them out right now. Thibodeau explained that it would be a conduit bond that the City would issue in the form of a loan to St. John Lutheran Home. Motion by Mueller, second by Beckman to approve Res. #201117-01 to schedule a Public Hearing for refinancing for St. John Lutheran home. All ayes.

Motion by Beckman, second by Mueller to open the Public Hearing for Special Assessments for Tax Forfeited Properties at 6:05PM. Discussion was had on the term and interest for these properties. Motion by Mueller, second by Beckman to set the term of payment for 7yrs at 5% for the purchasers of tax forfeited properties. All ayes. Motion by Hesse, second by Muller to close the Public hearing at 6:10PM. All ayes.

Discussion was had on the application for our Ambulance service to become Advanced Life Support (ALS). Paula Thomas was on hand to present information to the Council on many different aspects of being an ALS or Basic Life Support (BLS). Thomas stated that the cost of the application is \$150.00 to become part-time ALS and maybe some additional cost which she was not sure on. Council questioned how much Medicare pays towards as ambulance run and how many of our calls are Medicare calls. Thomas stated the Medicare typically pays 30% to 35% and about 72% of all our calls fall under Medicare/Medicaid. Council asked Stremcha what the Townships decided to contribute towards the Ambulance service. He stated that they would contribute \$5.00 per capita and that we would bill them in 2022 for 2021. Thomas explained we need a good BLS staff to have a good ALS staff, we have enough base staff for daytime coverage, but need more base staff for night-time coverage. All around we need more staff. The question was asked as to our charges for ambulance runs. Thomas explained we are at the higher end in the area for the size of our community BLS & ALS. Beckman asked if Allina was going to be helping at all with some of the costs to do this? Thomas explained that she talked with Toby Fryer and that they are looking at covering the costs of supplies for starting up with ALS at a cost of \$6,600.00. Once the application which is submitted by the City for \$150.00 is submitted it will take about 3 to 4 months to find out if we are approved to become part-time ALS. Thomas/Stremcha are working on getting letters of support from our service area and there needs to be inspections on our ambulances. Beckman questioned if the City wanted to pull the plug on this when they could. Thomas state anytime, it would be up to them. John Ryan stated that the Legion maybe able to help with some fund as well. Motion by Beckman, second by Hesse to moved forward with the ALS application process. All ayes.

Motion by Mueller, second by Beckman to open the Public Hearing for unpaid charges at 6:46PM. Discussion was had and a motion by Rothmeier, second by Beckman to send unpaid charges to the County to put on the property taxes. All ayes. Motion by Mueller, second by Beckman to close the Public Hearing at 6:47PM. All ayes.

Council reviewed the Rental Ordinance and talked about the 3strike rule, Stremcha explained that it is not 3 strikes in a 12month period, it is just 3 strikes and licenses would be revoked. Council questioned if letters got sent out certified mail and they had not so directed Stremcha to have the ones that have not responded to resends certified mail.

No news on the Franchise Ordinance.

Shari Koll and Derek Tonn were on hand along with Stremcha, to ask the Council to establish an Ordinance for a Welcoming Community Board which has already been meeting for 1 to 1 ½ years. They have no set meeting date or time and meet when needed. They informed the Council on some of the various issues they have found in the Community such as disparities of low income, lack of food, not welcoming people of different ethnicities/racial backgrounds, or sexual preferences. They stated that they would work with Region 9 and other forms of grant writing for any funding needed. The council questioned City Attorney Muske as to what if any obligations the City would have if some type of violation would happen that the board would be involved in and Muske state they would have none. Motion by Beckman, second by Hesse to approve the Ordinance Establishing a Welcoming Community Board with the wording changed to say, “5 members who are residents of the City”. All ayes

Looking at the 2021 budget Beckman stated that she would like to reinstate in the budget for the Library the \$8,200.00 for a new copy machine per board recommendation. Stremcha stated he will meet with the board on this issue.

DSI Small Cities Grant. No Action taken.

Motion by Beckman, second by Mueller to accept the Rural Entrepreneurial Venture (REV) Memo of Understanding. All ayes.

Motion by Beckman, second by Rothmeier to Accept the REV-SMIF Grant with the coordinator being someone on the 7member board (yet to be determined) and not a City employee as there would be over lapping activities. Coordinators wages would be \$7500.00 for the Grant period with any unused money being returned. All ayes.

COVID-19 info sheet on Community Spread. No action.

Stremcha informed the Council that he approached an individual in the community about serving on the New Ulm Medical Center Board and was turned down. Beckman stated that she would be willing to serve at this time. Motion by Rothmeier, second by Mueller to accept Beckman’s offer to serve on the board. All ayes.

After discussion on revising the Variance Ordinance and feeling that it there was too much left open to interpretation, there was a motion by Rothmeier, second by Mueller to table it until the January 2021 meeting and have Muske do some more research on this. All ayes.

The first reading of the Fee Ordinance for 2021 and beyond was conducted. No action.

Discussion was had on the 2020-2022 street project. Stremcha shared the Bond Interest Rate history with council. Rothmeier asked if there were any plastics bought yet for the project and Stremcha stated not yet. No action.

Mayor/City Council/Staff Reports: Stremcha explained to the Council that he has spoken with Traverse des Sioux (TDS) and we do have a copier that would wok at the Library and it has

wireless capabilities. Beckman said she would pull her request off the table to not add the money back into the 2021 budget for a new printer. This could be added back in the budget in few years.

Rothmeier asked about Allina and the CT Scanner we have up at the clinic. Stremcha stated that it would be liquidated at a cost of \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00. Our scanner is a 2D 16 slice and they run in New Ulm a 3D 64 slice scanner. Ours could be gifted to Allina to use in our community, but at this time they are not renting the CT Scanner space. Expanding the lease to include the CT Scanner space & the Physical Therapy space would increase our revenue and benefit the community. At this time, they pay \$5,000.00 per month for leasing the Clinic space and there is a 60/40 split on all utilities, with Allina's portion being the 60%. Also questioned was the equipment that we sent to Allina back in April when Covid started, of we ever received payment for that or not? Stremcha stated we have not. Council would like to see a fair market value price of what it was worth back in April when it left our facility and present that to Allina for payment and not to wait for them to come with an offer for the equipment.

Rothmeier asked if we are using them same architect for the storm shelter as was used for the concession stand? Stremcha explained that we were not we are using a subsidiary of Bolten & Menk, 292 Design Group. Questions were asked if we should get more proposals and it was decided that Bolten & Menk being the City's Engineering firm would have our best interest in hand.

Mueller would like Stremcha to get clear answers from the PUC Superintendent and not the person who did the rate study/rate increase as to why the PUC budget is over what was projected for the next meeting.

Motion by Mueller, second by Hesse to adjourn at 8:20PM. All ayes.

Lowell Helget, Mayor

Donna M. Woidylla, Deputy Clerk