

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
June 20, 2023
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Laura Helle, Jason Baskin, Michael Postma, Joyce Poshusta, Geoff Baker and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Human Resources Director Trish Wiechmann, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Park and Rec Director Dave Merrill, City Attorney Craig Byram, Library Director Julie Clinefelter and City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: KAUS Radio

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving the agenda with removing item number 12. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving Council minutes from June 5, 2023. Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Postma, approving the consent agenda as follows:

Licenses:

Liquor Catering: Hoot & Ole's, LLC, 105 11th Street SE
Temporary Liquor: VFW Post 1216 on August 19, 2023

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of bills
- b. Investment & Financial Reports

Carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing was held for a five-year tax abatement application from Bigelow & Lennon Construction for a proposed home at 1307 18th Street NE. City Administrator Craig Clark stated Bigelow & Lennon would construct a single-family home valued at approximately \$314,000. He noted the application is in conformance with the City's tax abatement policy.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution approving a five-year tax abatement for Bigelow & Lennon Construction for the property at 1307 18th Street NE. Carried 7-0.

A public hearing was held for a five-year tax abatement application from Bigelow & Lennon Construction for a proposed home at 1803 12th Avenue NE. City Administrator Craig Clark stated Bigelow & Lennon would construct a single-family home valued at approximately \$355,000. He noted the application is in conformance with the City's tax abatement policy.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution approving a five-year tax abatement for Bigelow & Lennon Construction for the property at 1803 12th Avenue NE. Carried 7-0.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Police Chief David McKichan requested two additional police patrol officers to be added to the force, effective immediately. The Council discussed the matter at their June 5, 2023 Council meeting and unanimously voted to approved the additional positions.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution authorizing the addition of two police patrol officers effective immediately and including the positions in the 2024 budget. Carried.

City Administrator Craig Clark stated the City is looking to partner with Mower County for the construction of a new law enforcement center. He stated SEH submitted a proposal in the amount of \$16,500 which would be allocated with \$5,500 to the City and \$11,000 to the County for a needs assessment. He proposed funding for the project come from 2023 contingency.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution approving a contract with SEH, Inc. in the amount of \$5,500 for a law enforcement center needs assessment with funding coming from 2023 contingency. Carried 7-0.

Police Chief David McKichan requested the Council approve a contract for two school police liaison officers for the 2023-2024 school year.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution approving a contract with Independent School District No. 492 for police liaison officers. Carried 7-0.

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert requested the Council approve an updated agreement for the collection of a local sales and use tax with the Minnesota Department of Revenue. He stated the City currently pays 1.55% as a floating fee to the Department to administer the program. The updated agreement would provide for a flat fee of 1.35% and monthly settlements in one sum. The City would also be required to post and disseminate information to the public regarding the tax.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution approving an updated agreement with the Minnesota Department of Revenue for the collection of local option sales tax. Carried 7-0.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adopting a resolution accepting donations to the City of Austin. Carried 6-0 with Council Member Baskin abstaining.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace reviewed a variance request from Meyer Properties and Holdings, LLC. The business is operating as the Muffler Center and has requested a variance from the code requirement that there be a 20-foot setback in the rear and side yards that abut a residential district. They would like to build up to 2.5 feet from the North property line which abuts two residential properties. Ms. Wallace stated the two property owners appeared at the June 13, 2023 Planning Commission meeting and neither objected to the project. The Planning Commission voted 6-0 to grant the variance.

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a variance request from Meyer Properties and Holdings, LLC. Carried.

City Administrator Craig Clark stated the City solicited proposals for an employee survey as part of the City Council's 24 month plan. Upon review, it was determined that Employee Strategies be selected with a flat fee of \$17,500. An additional debriefing and presentation would be an additional \$8,500 resulting in a total cost of \$26,000. Mr. Clark requested the Council approve the contract with funding from 2023 contingency.

Council Member Postma asked what made Employee Strategies stick out as the firm to choose for the survey.

Council Member Baskin stated two of the proposals stuck out from the five that were reviewed. Those two finalists had processes that were rooted in science and had experience with government entities. Employee Strategies had worked with Minnesota cities.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, approving a contract for an employee survey with Employee Strategies in the amount of \$26,000 with funding from 2023 contingency. Carried 7-0.

Parks and Recreation Director Dave Merrill requested the Council approved a lease with Austin MN Junior Hockey, LLC for Riverside Arena through May 17, 2026.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving a lease with Austin MN Junior Hockey, LLC. Carried 7-0.

HONORARY COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Honorary Council Member Denver Ritz stated he enjoyed the experience and encouraged people to apply that would be considering a political career.

REPORTS

Council Member Poshusta thanked Denver Ritz for his time as the Honorary Council Member. She thanked the Police Department for their recent response to community events.

Council Member Postma thanked those involved in 4th Avenue Fest.

Council Member Helle stated 4th Avenue Fest was the biggest to date. She noted Mower County is providing recycling services for events. She stated the HRA recently put their new build property on the market.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member-at-Large Austin, adjourning the meeting to July 3, 2023. Carried.

Adjourned: 5:52 p.m.

Approved: July 3, 2023

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____