

City of Gilbert
Minutes of Regular City Council Meeting
Tuesday, January 23, 2024
Council Chambers

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:12 P.M.

Quorum determined.

Present: Councilors Pontinen, Heitzman, Pulles, Skenzich, Mayor Smith, Clerk Treasurer Zallar, Attorney Bryan Lindsay, Police Chief Ty Techar, and Public Works Director Sam Lautigar

Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance

Approve Consent Agenda:

City Council Minutes

- January 9, 2024 City Council Working Session Minutes
- January 9, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Boards and Commissions Minutes

- January 17, 2024 Water & Light Meeting Minutes

Invoices from Previously Approved Projects

- JPJ – Approve Plumbing Pay #2 – 01/12/24 – Project 23-187 \$51,319.00 to 2EZ.

Payment of Bills and Payroll upon proper audit of Clerk and Mayor

- Check register 01/06/2024 - 01/19/2024

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to approve Consent Agenda as listed above. MCU

Public Participation:

Paul Skerbic, from the Campground board via Zoom, suggested all council members, etc. use the microphones so it would be easier to hear them when people are on ZOOM.

Reports – Mayor & Council

Mayor Smith:

Calendar parking reminder-please follow, it is still in effect.

Councilor Pontinen:

Asked for patience as they continue working on Solar Panel guidelines, etc.

Councilor Heitzman:

No formal report.

Councilor Pulles:

Please help keep the fire hydrants in town clear. Sam has a map of the hydrants in town.

Councilor Skenzich:

Be aware trucks will be hauling for the school demo now too. They will be going up Iowa and down New Jersey. Be cautious, have patience and watch for no parking signs.

Reports – Staff, Boards & Commissions

Fire Chief Kwiakowski:

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to approve submitting the annual \$3,500 PERA contribution. MCU

Chief Kwiakowski would like to have another ISO audit done; looking at getting a better rating this time around. A better rating would help the public to get better rates on their insurance. There is no cost to the city to have the audit done.

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Heitzman to approve the Fire Department request to have a new ISO audit done. MCU

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Chief Kwiakowski requested to the council to have the Fire Department be included with the Solar Panel planning for safety reasoning. If there was a fire, it would have to be approached differently. The Fire Department is sitting at 19 members right now, with 1 retirement. Councilor Skenzich just retired from the Fire Department with 21 ½ years of service. Chief Kwiakowski and the council thanked him for his years of service.

Calls for 2023 included: 46 paged calls; 24 structure fires; 2 vehicle fires, 20 miscellaneous. Recognition was given to Firefighter/EMR Mike Thelen for all the work he did for Fire Prevention week. Thelen took vacation time from work to put in 56 hours towards working with kids in the area regarding Fire Prevention. Bravo to Thelen for all his hard work and dedication.

The council also thanked Chief Kwiakowski for his work and deciding not to retire from his position yet.

City Attorney Bryan Lindsay:

No formal report.

Police Chief Ty Techar:

KGM is running about 100 trucks through town plus the school is coming down, so there will be more trucks. There is a plan and no parking tickets will be given on Iowa Ave. right now. Techar is trying to limit civilian traffic near the school. This seems to be the best route for now with these side dump trucks. These trucks cannot make certain turns. Parking will be on the NORTH side of Iowa Ave. only. If snow should fall, the City will plow towards South side. There will possibly be two months of hauling.

As for the concerns with speeding trucks, 2 drivers were removed. Their speeds weren't very fast, but too fast to go through town while hauling rock. All loads are required to have their tag wheels down and their loads covered (as they are hauling smaller material now).

Public Works Operations Director Sam Lautigar:

Some hydrant flags were bent down, some more will need to be made. There are 135 hydrants. City Christmas décor was taken down. Dylon Horne will leave the lights on the gazebo at this time, at the request of the City Council. Everyone agreed it looks great to have it lit up right now. Maybe take them down in the spring when everything is melted.

Campground Host Wendy Flannigan:

The new system is working good. There were 107 reservations on the 15th; 25 on the 16th and 55 on the 17th. We booked quick. Councilor Skenzich asked if the increases stopped anyone from coming and Wendy responded with, "No."

Library Director Su Dabbas:

Not available on Zoom.

Campground Board Director Paul Skrbec:

403 reservations have been booked so far. The majority came through the new portal. Looking at a possible revenue of \$98, 136. Total occupancy is at 31.3% The new system is doing great. The mayor thanked Paul and Wendy for all their work for the campground.

Clerk Treasurer Zallar: Gave a financial update.

Motion was made by Pulles, seconded by Heitzman to allow the Warrior Kids group to use the community center. They are doing well, getting a little busier and running out of room. Sam will show them where the mop etc. is just in case of any messes.

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Old Business:

WWTP Update & WTP Update:

Hoist cranes will be in this week and next week. EPA is doing a grant program and are coming up on the 31st to tour the facilities. Sam is hoping they have some recommendations/ideas to pass along. Water plant meeting on the 17th with SEH – they have preliminary design plans.

2024 City Engineering Services

During discussion on which Engineering firm the City will go with this year, the Mayor expressed his choice is to go with SEH, stating it was a strategic decision given the expertise SEH has in the water plant field. Mayor Smith thanked JPJ and expressed appreciation for all the years they have put in for the City of Gilbert.

Councilor Heitzman expressed his reluctance to part ways with JPJ. City Engineer John Jannick was doing the Planning and Zoning pro bono. Jannick will continue to finish the projects he has been working on; five are almost done.

Motion was made by Pulles, seconded by Pontinen to choose SEH as the City’s new engineering firm. The motion passed 4 to 1 with Heitzman as a nay.

2024 Planning and Zoning Administrator

The Planning and Zoning position John was doing pro bono, was previously a paid position. Clerk-Treasurer Zallar is willing to do the position until it can be filled.

Motion was made by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to appoint Clerk Jill Zallar as temporary planning & Zoning Administrator. Compensation, etc. for that position will take place at the next meeting.

Animal Control Contact

Police Chief Ty Teacher stated there were 58 animal calls last year; with approximately 40 picked up. Mesabi Humane Society ran with about a \$20k deficit. We have had a \$5k contract since 2016. Contented Critters has moved to Ely and are still doing animal things in the area.

Mesabi Humane Society is looking at a little over \$6 contract this year. So it would go from an average of \$86 per animal to \$115 an animal. Our police department usually takes the animal to their facility. Techar will look into how many animals get picked back up.

Motion made by Pulles, seconded by Heitzman to approve the contract with the Mesabi Humane Society. MCU

New Business:

Charitable Gambling Request – Frankies Fund

Matt Hiti gave a short presentation on a scholarship offer his family started after the death of his brother, he liked to call him Frankie. They started this non-profit for this \$5k scholarship, for Rock Ridge Seniors, focusing on people going into the trades field. This is a raffle and it goes in conjunction with the Labor Day run they also do in remembrance to his brother. Tickets are available as soon as they have city and state approval.

Motion by Heitzman, seconded by Pulles, to approve the licensing for Frankie’s fund. MCU
Matt Hiti thanked Ty Techar for traffic control in years passed. The Mayor commended Matt on this fantastic opportunity. Hiti also suggested to let him know of any suggestion of students that might be interested in the scholarship.

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1st Reading – Ordinance – Approve Plumbing project – vacation of property to be platted correctly. Once property is platted correctly, then vacated, it will go to Approve Plumbing.

Introduction – Ordinance Sherwood Forest Recreation Are §91.12 (B)(11) Current ordinance would make seasonal campers move every 14 days. This ordinance would eliminate that.

Motion by Skenzich , seconded by Pulles for the appointment of Ballot Board and Election Judges. MCU

Declaration of Surplus property Resolution 2024-03 There are approximately 182 boxes, 4 used meters per box. These are single phase electric household meters. We will be hanging on to the three phase meters, as those are hard to come by if we needed one. Water meters do not have the no lead sticker so those will need to be scraped out.

Motion by Heitzman, seconded by Skenzich to declare surplus property (meters and filters) and put it out for bid. MCU

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to approve of Eveleth Fee Office License Easement Annual Renewal - \$130. MCU

Motion by Heitzman, seconded by Pulles to approve annual MMUA Dues \$2,349.00 MCU

Motion by Skenzich, seconded by Heitzman to accept the 2024 Rebate Program with Minnesota Power. We usually get 5 to 8 people per year that submit an app through Minnesota Power, the City then pays the customer for the rebate. MCU

2024 Application and Accept fund if approved IRRRB Resolution 2024-06

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Heitzman to allow Clerk-Treasurer Zallar to apply for 2024 Application and Accept fund if approved IRRRB Resolution 2024-06. Zallar would like to add some green space across the street once the new building is in, also some permanent electricity at the Gazebo. MCU

Miscellaneous: Lautigar stated there have been some inquiries regarding bricks from the school being torn down. Bricks will be available at a later date on a first come, first serve basis.

Leo Skrbek from the Water & Light board recommended the City make an ordinance sooner then later regarding solar panels. He would also like to see an EDA – Economic Development Authority established in Gilbert. Leo suggested business owners, not council members become part of that committee.

Motion by Heitzman, seconded by Pulles to adjourn meeting at 7:46PM. MCU

**These minutes are paraphrased and are not written word for word.*

ATTEST:

Jill Zallar, Clerk Treasurer

Thomas Smith, Mayor