

City of Gilbert
Minutes of Regular City Council Meeting
Tuesday, January 9, 2024
Council Chambers

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:08 P.M.

Quorum determined.

Present: Councilors Pontinen, Pulles, Skenzich, Mayor Smith, Clerk Treasurer Zallar, Police Chief Ty Techar, City Engineer John Jamnick and Public Works Director Sam Lautigar

Absent with notice: Councilor Heitzman

Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to add under Old Business (MCU):

- Resolution 2024-04 – Ridge Inn Inc.
- Vacation Ordinance
- Campground Designation

Approve Consent Agenda:

City Council Minutes

- December 12, 2023 City Council Working Session Minutes
- December 12, 2023 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes
- December 12, 2023 City Council Special Meeting Minutes

Boards and Commissions Minutes

- December 3, 2023 Cemetery Board Meeting Minutes
- December 6, 2023 Library Board Meeting Minutes

Invoices from Previously Approved Projects

- DN Tanks – Retainage \$17,245.00
- JPJ – Sherwood Forest #4 (final pay estimate): 12/19/23 #21-843 \$5,576.40 to 2EZ; Change order #2 increase \$2,593.00.

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

- Check register 12/9/2024 – 1/5/2024

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

Public Participation:

Kari Zeiher, representing the local Girl Scouts requested to once again use the downstairs of the Community Center to store and distribute Girl Scout cookies during the week of February 5th-9th, free of charge.

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to allow the Girl Scouts to use the space free of charge for their 2024 cookie distribution. MCU

Councilor Pontinen requested contact information for Rock and Pines from Kari for the Water & Light Board.

Water & Light Board meetings have changed. They will now be held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6pm at City Hall. The next meeting is on January 17th.

Reports – Mayor & Council

Mayor Smith: Wished everyone a Happy New Year. The Christmas light competition turned out great! Thank you to all the donors! Pictures of the winners are on the Facebook page. Congrats to all the winners! Reminder to all residents that calendar parking is in effect. There will be flyers

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at City Hall if anyone needs to be reminded of how calendar parking works. If you have a fire hydrant in your yard, please help keep it clear.

Councilor Pontinen: Letting the community know there will be many trucks going through the City and it has started already. They are hauling from the old city dump. Cleveland Cliffs has them hauling to Keewatin and this will be going on for 3 months. If there are any complaints, they can be directed to Ty Techar, Gilbert Police Chief and City Hall. Techar stated that they are estimating 3800 truckloads that will be going thru Gilbert. He has had some issues with speeding already and has reached out to Cleveland Cliffs. They are receptive and Techar let them know that after their drivers meeting tomorrow, citations will now be issued for speeding and any “leaky” loads. Techar also stated the school demolition will be starting next week as well, so there will be even more trucks for a while. Those trucks will be accessing Summit from Iowa to New Jersey, so that road may be possibly blocked for a while. The school demo could take a couple of months.

Councilor Heitzman:

Absent with notice.

Councilor Pulles: Happy New Year to all! Don’t forget about calendar parking. Please be patient with City work crews as they are doing snow removal. Please help keep fire hydrants clear and if you see anyone in need, please help.

Councilor Skenzich: The Gazebo looked nice and all the houses around town that were lit up for Christmas. Please watch out for all the big trucks hauling through town for the next few months.

Reports – Staff, Boards & Commissions

Fire Chief Kwiakowski:

No formal report.

City Attorney Bryan Lindsay:

Not present.

Police Chief Ty Techar:

Reiterated everything he said earlier about the trucks hauling, please be careful and please direct all complaints to him via City Hall.

City Engineer John Jamnick:

Correction/clarification to the consent agenda discussion on the final pay estimate to 2EZ; the City did not pay for seeding. It’s recommended for the City to seed at the Campground.

Public Works Operations Director Sam Lautigar:

Discussion took place regarding solar power. Lautigar has been doing some research and recommended the council look at drafting solar ordinances. He will look at what other towns have and suggested maybe the Water & Light board may have some information. It was also discussed that 2 permits should be filled out; electrical permit and building permit. Counselor Skenzich stated it should include wind generators. Clerk Treasurer Zallar mentioned a lot of grants are out there to get people green by 2025. Water & Light board member Leo Skrbec voiced his concerns that an ordinance will need to be done and what will happen when solar panels generate more power than the customer is using, stating Water & Light does not have the capacity to credit in those scenarios. Zallar said Minnesota Power will not touch it and has told the City they are on their own. Lautigar will get copies of Virginia’s ordinances and bring it to the Water & Light Board.

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Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to direct Counselor Pontinen to discuss solar energy with the Water & Light Board. MCU

Campground Host Wendy Flannigan:

Not present.

Library Director Su Dabbas:

Take & Make window clings available. The Library has been painted and looks great! All holes patched. 218 Painting & Log Restoration did a wonderful job. The paint color is the original paint color from 1938. Stop by and take a look!

Campground Board Director Paul Skrbec:

The Campground Board is short of members. There is one applicant so this would bring them back up to a quorum. The new platform looks great and is working good so far. Wendy has been trained. Reservations go live on Monday online and live Tuesday over the phone.

Motion made by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to approve Dylan Horne to the Campground Board, filling the vacancy of a remaining two-year term. MCU

There are still two-3 year terms open.

Mayor Smith thanked Paul Skrbec for all his work with the new system. Volunteers are needed to join Planning & Zoning Board, Water & Light Board and the Campground Board. Applications can be picked up at City Hall. Reminder the Water & Light Board will meet on the 3rd Wednesday for now on, not the 3rd Thursday. Meetings are at 6pm.

Clerk Treasurer Zallar:

Financial update given. Waiting for reimbursements from IRRRB for the Sherwood Forest Improvements and submitting for reimbursement for the Approve Plumbing project.

Zallar attended the recent Planning & Zoning meeting and unfortunately there was not a quorum to hold a meeting. She presented 2 building permits to the council for approval. The first is for making a rental unit on the back half of a recently purchased building, council approved. The second building permit is for installing solar panels on a private residence. Councilor Pontinen suggested not going ahead with that permit until the City sets something in place for solar panels. Audience member Luke Soderling suggested making a resolution that all must come to the city before building, “free standing” or on a building and to have all installations inspected by an electrical inspector.

Motion made by Skenzich, seconded by Pulles to direct Zallar to contact Attorney Lindsay to write a resolution not permitting any installations of solar or wind generating equipment until the city creates an ordinance or process. MCU

Zallar will work on contacting IRRRB regarding the Delta Dental parking lot.

Councilor Skenzich asked where the City is at with the utility clerk position. Zallar will be reaching out to the union.

An update was given on the Police Administrative Assistant’s daughter who sustained serious injuries recently. Techar stated she is making unbelievable progress and defying odds. The council was happy to hear the great news.

Motion made by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to allow the Police Administrative Assistant to work remotely for approximately 2 months – length of time at the discretion of the Police Chief Techar. MCU

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Old Business:

WWTP Update & WTP Update:

Public Works Director Lautigar stated the sewer plant will be having the cranes and hoists installed in the next couple of months. Representative Dave Lislegard toured the facilities recently. Lautigar said they are still having issues with the front and back end of the plant. The City has requested Scantec said someone to come look at it. They recently hired an SEH designer and will look at the plant on the 29th. The backend does not have enough storage for sludge and the City hauling it to Grand Rapids. The front half is clean and hauled once every 2 weeks. Lautigar said the City is spending a lot on this hauling. A study was done in the beginning, it may be time for another one. Hoping for recommendations from the visit on the 29th. There is no cost to the city for the visit.

New Business:

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to accept Resolution 2024-04; Purchase of Ridge Inn Property (backside of storage – 22 acres, purchasing for DNR to help speed the process along, DNR will buy from the City). Mayor Smith read the Resolution and expressed if the City does not purchase this property then there would be zero access to the ATV Park. Stating this is a risk we must take so we don't lose access. We are trying to keep the ATV Park and help the DNR. DNR acquisition will take place in 2 years, with earnest amount of \$10k upfront. MCU

Motion by Pulles, supported by Skenzich to approve the introduction of vacation of property "That part of Pleasant Street, as platted and dedicated in SECOND ADDITION TO GILBERT, according to the recorded plat thereof, St. Louis County, Minnesota, lying northerly right of way of State Highway No. 135". City Ordinance #12.07

This portion of property was never formally vacated by the County. City Engineer stated the property was included in the Purchase agreement, that's when it was realized it wasn't vacated. Therefore, it was introduced today, then two readings will occur to pass the ordinance to approve the vacation of Pleasant Street. Clerk-Treasurer Zaller will reach out to the City Attorney to make sure the ordinance number is correct.

The Mayor let Luke Soderling (Approve Plumbing) know that the council is working with the City Attorney, reviewing a past meeting and motion to sit down and work with Soderling for the cost. Attorney Lindsay advised that some council members should plan to meet with IRRRB, Clerk Treasurer, City Attorney Lindsay and Soderling to work with Soderling to get everything straightened out. Clerk Treasurer Zallar will work with setting up that meeting.

Soderling presented and read a letter of thanks to the City for working with and welcoming his business to the City of Gilbert. Soderling stated his goal for this business is to maintain the core values of Faith, Family and Fantastic Service. In his quest to be true to those values, he would like to pledge 5% of all the gross sales for Approve Plumbing performed in the City of Gilbert for 2024 to the repayment of the new fire truck. The council thanked him.

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to approve Twin Cities Off Road to conduct a benefit Raffle for Crawl for the Cure on July 17th to the 21st of 2024. MCU

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Motion by Skenzich, seconded by Pulles to approve Clerk Treasurer Jill Zallar to attend Ehlers Public Finance Seminar and obtain education credits through this training January 31st- February 2, 2024 (2 overnights), approximate cost \$897.00. MCU

Motion by Skenzich, seconded by Pulles to approve Resolution 2024-01 Official Designations - The City of Gilbert is to designate official depositories, collateral authority, official newspaper, appointment of acting mayor and legal counsel. MCU The Council chose as follows:

Motion made by Pontinen, seconded by Pulles to continue with Legal Counsel as follows: Trenti, Attorney Brian Lindsay. MCU

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to continue Depositories as follows: 1st National Bank of Gilbert, League of Minnesota Cities. MCU

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to continue Newspaper as follows: Hometown Focus. MCU

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to continue using the City Hall Council Chambers as official election polling place. MCU

Motion by Skenzich, seconded by Pulles to continue with designation of City Clerk Treasurer as Collateral Authority. MCU

Motion by Skenzich, seconded by Pontinen to appoint Councilor Joe Pulles as acting Mayor. Motion carries: 3 votes, 1 abstained.

The Council did not have time to review the 3 bids they received for City Engineer. The Council will review and decide at the next council meeting.

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Skenzich to approve the regular meeting schedule for 2024, with the change of not having a meeting on December 24th and have one meeting for the month, for now. MCU

Motion by Pulles, seconded by Pontinen to adjourn meeting at 8:09PM. MCU

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

ATTEST:

Jill Zallar, Clerk Treasurer

Thomas Smith, Mayor