

City of Tekoa

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 7, 2023

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Schulz called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M., Councilmembers*present at the meeting were Dave Tysz, Shelly Ausmus, Mike Hale, Pete Martin, Angie Rambo and Mandi Prince. Clerk-Treasurer Eliza Evans-Teague was present, as well as additional attendees Lydia Fletcher, Grace Lambert, Darlene Pearson, Suzanne and Hugh Evans, Steve Haxton, John and Marge Jaeger, Jennifer Olson, Debbie Hall and Matt Morkert.

*In the following paragraphs, Councilmember(s) will be abbreviated as: “C.”

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Schulz led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. AGENDA:

- IV. JULY 17, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:** C. Ausmus brought up phone numbers and email addresses being included on the website without councilmembers’ permission. C. Rambo moved to accept the July 17, 2023, Minutes. C. Sperber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

A. John Jaeger said he always has concerns about people on a fixed income being able to pay their bills. He spoke about the newsletter explaining salary issues and about future increases in water and sewer costs. C. Hale spoke about how the council has already formed a salary committee that will bring their recommendations to the council for the next budget cycle. The mayor also responded to John Jaeger’s comments and explained the history and reasons behind his comments and John’s concerns. There was discussion about salary history and clarifying positions. The salary committee will meet again in the coming weeks.

B. Jennifer Olson reported for the Healthy Tekoa Coalition that National Night Out went well. The annual survey is available and email copies will be out this week. Eliza Evans-Teague will get that out to the council and Jennifer asked the council to get it out to their circle of contacts. C. Martin and C. Ausmus commented on the excellence of the event. There was discussion.

C. MATT MORKERT-CENTURY WEST: LIFT STATION & WASHINGTON/RAMSEY STREET PAVING PROJECT:

Matt reported on the progress of the Influent Lift Station project. It looks like the cost estimate on the rock work will be about half of the original bid. The excavation on the rock will begin Monday. There were questions and answers about the timing of the project. Matt estimated it should be complete in October with no interruption in service. There was discussion about the sewer line that will be abandoned. The new pipe is already in place. There was additional discussion and questions. Matt also reported that the Washington and Ramsey St. scrub seal paving project is getting ready to go to bid. This method should prevent big cracks and save time on crack sealing. Once all the invoices are in for the preliminary repairs, it will be time to advertise for bids. The paving should be done this fall. The project is 100% grant funded. The mayor called for a motion.

C. Rambo moved to go forward on the project, contingent on TIB approval. C. Tysz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. There was additional discussion regarding the upcoming WWTP project. Matt Morkert explained that the Lift Station Project will likely cause the WWTP to get more grant funding because it puts the city over the hardship threshold. He explained the general concept for the DOE funding structure. There was discussion about where rates are and if the council should inch rates up to qualify for more grant funding, which Matt said may help. He clarified that when more is known, there will be funding meetings to discover what the options are as part of the facilities plan. There were additional questions and discussion.

The mayor asked about what the city needs to do to keep up with maintenance on streets that were previously paved. Matt suggested doing the necessary work next year and applying to TIB for help with that, probably in May. Matt will follow up on that.

C. Tysz excused himself to speak with Matt for a moment.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: None.

VII. CONTINUING BUSINESS:

C. Tysz returned to the meeting.

A. YARD ABATEMENT ORDINANCE: C. Martin said he has contacted many people re: the ordinance. He said they want a consistent definition of terms. He recognized the pervasiveness of some weeds, including noxious weeds. C. Martin would like to see at least two weeks before action is taken from the time a letter is sent and to have the process tightened up. He would like to see a complete list of people to whom letters are sent at the meeting. He would like Mike, the enforcement officer, to take a picture. C. Martin would like to make sure the standards are simplified. There was discussion.

B. THEODORE ROOSEVELT PROCLAMATION: Postponed.

C. DIANE HARP ALLEY VACATION REQUEST: Eliza Evans-Teague let the council know that Eric Hanson, the city attorney, recommended against vacating any property to which the city has rights. There was discussion. C. Ausmus moved to not vacate the alleyway in question. C. Martin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. JACOB LUND VARIANCE REQUEST: An email from Jacob Lund was read requesting a variance due to some misunderstandings about the current state of the proposed vacation of the east and west side of Washington St. Eliza Evans-Teague explained that the surveyor had made a “preliminary” survey based on the vacation having actually happened, which it had not. The mayor suggested postponing the issue as a vacation petition may be submitted forthwith from the citizens along that portion of Washington St. C. Tysz moved to postpone this issue until the next council meeting. C. Sperber seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. There was discussion.

B. WEBSITE STORAGE/MINUTES: Eliza Evans-Teague reported that the website has the capability to store all the minutes the city has accrued. C. Ausmus motioned to add ten years of minutes. C. Prince seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. The mayor added that the minutes could be recorded, in reference to past requests for the meetings to be recorded. C. Ausmus commented about the possible downside of recording the meetings and how people use the

information. There was discussion. John Jaeger said that input in the past from the lawyer was to not record the meetings. A question was directed to Jennifer Olson re: the equipment she uses for Zoom. C. Ausmus suggested that Zoom may be required if requested. C. Hale suggested we ask the Port of Whitman what they use for equipment. Mayor Schulz said we would go back to offering Zoom to those who would like to access the meetings in that capacity.

C. RESOLUTION 23-06 RE: WEED ABATEMENT: C. Sperber said the property in question on Howard St. has been taken care of. The Stoneham property has had progress in removing some of the vehicles. The council said they would volunteer to help him knock the weeds down as he is in such poor health. Eliza Evans-Teague will call him to see if he would like help.

D. STEVE HAXTON: PHONE STIPEND: Steve Haxton clarified the use of his phone for city business. C. Martin moved to approve \$30/mo. for a phone and printing stipend. C. Hale seconded the motion. C. Ausmus abstained. The motion passed with yes votes from C. Martin, C. Rambo, C. Sperber, C. Tysz, C. Hale and C. Prince. C. Ausmus had some other property-related questions. There was discussion. Steve let the council know that he has some concerns about some of the building projects in town and that he has had to do a stop-work order on one property until the owners had a better plan drawn up, so he could see that they had clear parameters for building.

IX. REPORTS:

A. MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Schulz reported Mike Bogenreif had asked about the footbridge and would like to see it closed for now. C. Tysz had priced footbridge sheeting at about \$675. C. Sperber moved to replace the decking ASAP and C. Ausmus seconded it. The rails can come after. There was discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. CLERK/TREASURER REPORT: Eliza Evans-Teague reported that Dan Hay requested that as the city was able, the other streets in the subdivision near Skyline be paved.

C. COUNCIL REPORTS: C. Prince reported that the elementary school would like to know if the elementary could use the community center for an emergency evacuation site, if both schools were evacuated, as a spill-over from the theatre. There was discussion. Mayor Schulz asked her to bring a proposal to the next meeting. C. Hale reported that the airport funding is coming, but the amount is not yet known. C. Rambo reported on dead beavers in the creek. C. Ausmus followed up on questions re: the electric vehicle charging station re: metering and distance from buildings for fire safety. C. Martin reported that EMS is getting a number of new volunteers, and they did a great job at the National Night Out. The ambulance is going on a lot of runs. C. Prince let us know there are t-shirts available as a fundraiser for the ambulance. C. Martin is talking to the state board of health re: volunteer requirements for EMS. C. Martin reported on the cemetery board meeting. He has also been following up with Robert Kramer re: unclaimed remains. Eliza Evans-Teague suggested that the cemetery changes could go in the newsletter and let people know they can follow up with the city in this area. C. Martin announced to the audience the nature of the cemetery board and the cemetery endowment.

D. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE: Lydia Fletcher asked the council to refresh her memory about how much the new WWTP expense is expected to be. Mayor Schulz explained that the price will depend on the actual plant and methods that will need to be used. Currently, the engineer expects that to be between 5 and 10 million dollars.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

XI. APPROVE BILLS FOR PAYMENT: C. Ausmus moved to approve EFT payroll and checks 16654-16676 in the amount of \$56,863.28 and EFT payroll and checks 16677-16705 in the amount of \$58,565.30. C. Prince seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: C. Ausmus moved to adjourn the meeting. C. Prince seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Schulz adjourned the meeting at 8:33 P.M.

APPROVED:

Roy Schulz - Mayor

ATTEST:

Eliza M. Evans-Teague– Clerk/Treasurer