

City of Tekoa

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Schulz called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M., Councilmembers*present at the meeting were Dave Tysz, Shelly Ausmus, Mike Hale and Pete Martin. Clerk-Treasurer Eliza Evans-Teague was present, as well as additional attendees Lydia Fletcher, Rebecca Grace Lambert, Darlene Pearson, Suzanne and Hugh Evans, Steven Thomas, John and Marge Jaeger, Kyle Dombrowski, Lynette Faunce, Adrian Wall, Edward Bartowski and Jennifer Olson.

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

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

- III. AGENDA:** No changes.

- IV. AUGUST 21, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:** C. Ausmus moved to accept the August 21, 2023, council meeting minutes. C. Hale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- V. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:**

A. Edward Bartowski wants to set up a farmers' market in Tekoa. He gave his thoughts. He also wants to set up a program with the U.S. Government to house the homeless, using Tekoa as a pilot program.

B. Jennifer Olson asked about how the city handles our alleys, noting their condition. She would like to see our alleys regraded. The mayor addressed her concerns. C. Tysz said the new grader is too big. Steven Thomas addressed what he has been doing to re-grade as he is able with rain, etc. There was discussion. Eliza Evans-Teague noted that vegetation maintenance issues belong to each neighbor to the middle of the alley. There are also fire department access issues.

C. COMMUNITY GROUP UPDATES: Jennifer Olson asked everyone to fill out the Tekoa Community Surveys to keep the Healthy Tekoa Coalition functioning.

- VI. CORRESPONDENCE:** Dan Brinkman submitted a letter re: fire protection services in Tekoa. He would like to see a higher level of coverage and suggested the Fire Warden system of hoses in neighborhoods. His letter is also on Neighborhood Watch Site. The mayor explained the history of Dan Brinkman's concern. There was discussion.

Duane Groom's letter of resignation was read and has been accepted by the mayor.

Diane and Bill Harp: Eliza Evans-Teague read the email from Diane and Bill Harp outlining their understanding of the water agreement with the city, their wish to work with the city, and their expectation of being paid \$1500/year or receiving free water in perpetuity. C. Martin suggested allowing the Harps to use a base amount of water around 20 thousand gallons a month and then pay overage. C. Hale objected on behalf of citizens subsidizing the Harps' usage. C. Tysz made suggestions. Eliza reminded the council that the city attorney advised that the city cannot give free water, and the city needs to settle the value of the easement and not have an ongoing obligation to the Harps. There was discussion about a couple of properties that have had more recent -vs.- historical easements. There was additional discussion about how and why the issue came up in the first place. C. Ausmus brought up the

history of water issues and wants to make sure we do things in the most sensitive manner possible. There was additional discussion. C. Ausmus suggested giving the Harps three additional months of free water to ease the Harps into billing them for their water use. C. Tysz said he agreed. Eliza Evans-Teague stated this was clearly gifting of public funds. Ausmus moved to give them 3 months of free water until Eric Hanson can work up a plan. C. Martin seconded the motion. The mayor asked C. Tysz his opinion re: auditor's position. C. Tysz said not to make them mad. C. Hale said not to give the Harps more than 90 days of water use. "Yes" votes came from C. Ausmus, C. Martin and C. Tysz. Abstaining was C. Hale. The motion passed.

VI. CONTINUING BUSINESS:

- A. JACOB LUND VARIANCE REQUEST:** Eliza Evans-Teague read the letter from the realtor about property prices re: partial vacation of Washington St. Jacob Lund asked for a variance to be able to be closer to the alley than the usual setback on the two south lots. C. Ausmus moved to grant the variance to a zero-lot line on the two south lots off S. Washington St. belonging to Jacob Lund. There was discussion. The motion passed unanimously.
- B. YARD ABATEMENT ORDINANCE:** C. Martin said he was aware there is a town hall meeting at 7 P.M. at the Community Center on Sept. 11, 2023. He thinks this will be an important forum to talk about the yard ordinances. C. Martin would like to see the city promote the meeting.
- C. THEODORE ROOSEVELT PROCLAMATION:** C. Ausmus wanted to clarify whether there was a motion to officially recognize the day. C. Martin moved to officially recognize the day Theodore Roosevelt visited Tekoa. C. Ausmus seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Eliza Evans-Teague will put it on the council calendar for May 2023 for an official proclamation.
- D. RESOLUTION 23-06 RE: WEED ABATEMENT:** Eliza Evans-Teague brought the ordinance and pictures for the council. The mayor let the council know the thoughts about getting pictures out the previous Friday so they can look at properties. C. Hale moved to pass the resolution. C. Ausmus seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
- E. SUSANNAH SCARONI SIGN:** Postponed.

IX. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. INFLUENT LIFT STATION:** Steven Thomas gave an update about the bedrock issue with the new influent lift station site. He reported that the rock is within a foot of the goal, but it is not a perfect process, and DW Excavating is now finishing with a rock hammer.
- A. SALARY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION:** C. Hale presented on behalf of the salary wage committee (Council members Tysz, Hale and Ausmus), and he would like to have the whole council present to give this presentation. The committee suggested that option 1 was the best. Option 1 includes a 2% wage increase, except the deputy clerk, who would get a \$1.50/hour wage increase, and a \$200/mo. increase toward insurance coverage for full-time employees. C. Hale will send it out to the remainder of the council so they can talk about it at the next council meeting. C. Ausmus also brought up the city's plans with Duane's retirement. There was discussion. C. Ausmus brought up ideas to consider in the budget, including certifications for Kevin and overtime allowances for the clerk. C. Tysz asked about a standby position for seasonal help. The mayor suggested looking over these figures and then all council members can talk about it at the next meeting.

- B. ORDINANCE 884: AMENDING THE TIME OF CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS:** C. Ausmus moved to pass Ordinance 884. C. Hale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- C. ORDINANCE 885: BUDGET AMENDMENT:** Eliza Evans-Teague explained the ordinance. C. Hale moved to pass Ordinance 885. C. Tysz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- D. ORDINANCE 886: AMENDING THE TEKOA MUNICIPAL CODE FINE SCHEDULE:** C. Hale moved to pass Ordinance 886. C. Martin seconded the motion. There was discussion and C. Ausmus asked that this be posted on the front page of the website. The motion passed unanimously.

X. REPORTS:

- A. MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Schulz reported on being part of the support team for the fires at Deer Park. His takeaway from this experience was that there was value in keeping the emergency system active, even if everything was not running at full tilt the entire time. It was a great experience.
- B. CLERK/TREASURER REPORT:** Eliza Evans-Teague reported that she is working on another PRR request that is very involved and expects it to take until the end of September or mid-October.
- C. COUNCIL REPORTS:** C. Tysz reported that he is expecting to start burning the burn pile soon. He asked about Steven Thomas' training and suggested that Steven do as many of RCAC's classes as possible. He also brought up Evergreen Rural Water. C. Hale does not yet know how much funding we will receive for the airport. C. Martin asked about the cremains that are still needing to be delivered to families. C. Martin clarified that the increases to the sewer fees go to the sewer reserve. C. Ausmus had some questions about the walking bridge and whether it was still on the docket for this fall. C. Ausmus asked about garbage rates and how they increase. Eliza Evans-Teague mentioned that extra containers cost extra and to remember that extra charges run a month behind. C. Ausmus also asked about a possible debate. Kyle Dombrowski spoke up that they will figure out how to schedule the debate. Tentatively it is around October 14, 2023, and he is trying to reach all candidates for city council, mayor and school board positions. Let him know if there are any questions. C. Ausmus asked if the last ten years of council meetings could be put online before the election. Eliza Evans-Teague responded that the office would do their best, but they had to take care of the previously mentioned public records request and then the budget during that time. C. Ausmus would also like to see if we could have more reports from the Tekoa Code Enforcement Officer and the Tekoa Building Inspector. C. Tysz pointed out that we probably need to deal with the Burchfiels' re: water.
- D. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:** John Jaeger asked about the newsletter and rumors, etc. The mayor referenced rumors about the clerk's wages and that the city is not in good financial shape. The mayor asked Eliza Evans-Teague to clarify the budget and she explained how the city is in a good, stable financial position. John Jaeger clarified that the sewer increases were not specifically for employee wages, but for current and future sewer projects. Mayor Schulz spoke to the original reasons sewer rates were raised to get ready for the upcoming sewer plant. C. Ausmus spoke to election rumors saying they are baseless. In particular, she spoke to the rumor about firing staff. C. Ausmus said the staff members do a great job and she has no intention of firing the city staff, should she become mayor.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

XII. APPROVE BILLS FOR PAYMENT: C. Tysz moved to approve EFT payroll and checks 16706-16729 in the amount of \$128,386.01 and EFT payroll and checks 16730-16759 in the amount of \$49,863.04. C. Hale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT: C. Tysz moved to adjourn the meeting. C. Hale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Schulz adjourned the meeting at 8:35 P.M.

APPROVED:

Roy Schulz - Mayor

ATTEST:

Eliza M. Evans-Teague– Clerk/Treasurer