

City of Tekoa

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 16, 2023

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Schulz called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M., Councilmembers*present at the meeting were Dave Tysz, Shelly Ausmus, Mike Hale and Pete Martin. Clerk-Treasurer Eliza Evans-Teague and city attorney Eric Hanson were in attendance, as well as additional attendees Kyle Dombrowski, Leonard Cruz, Kathi Houston, Carolina Silva, Phil Overton, Alex Overton, Paul Hudson, Matt Morkert, Lydia Fletcher and Tanya Chirikov.

*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:** C. Martin postponed yard abatement until mid-November.

- IV. SEPTEMBER 18, 2023 & OCTOBER 2, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:** Mayor Schulz asked to reverse the September 18, 2023, change that removed his comment re: respect to employees being a two-way street, as he had reviewed the video and had indeed said that in the context of a conversation re: employees respecting councilpersons. C. Martin responded that his intent was not to include employees but was mostly talking to the mayor. He gave an example of how in the minutes mayor is spelled out, but councilmember is abbreviated. C. Hale moved to entertain the original minutes from September 18, 2023, without correction. The motion was not seconded. The motion died on the floor. Mayor Schulz asked for a motion approving the Oct. 2, 2023, minutes. C. Ausmus moved to pass the October 2, 2023, minutes. C. Hale seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

- V. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:**

A. COMMUNITY GROUP UPDATES: None.

B. MATT MORKERT: CENTURY WEST: PAY REQUEST/LIFT STATION UPDATE: Matt Morkert reported that everything was going forward with the Lift Station Project, and it looks like it will be complete by the end of the year. He spoke about the anticipated effect this should have on the flow levels at the sewer plant. Matt explained that now the planning and design phases can be combined through amendment at DOE. C. Ausmus inquired about land purchase timeframes. C. Martin inquired about sewer rates. Matt Morkert answered by saying much of the information he was asking for would be available about this time next year. At that time a tech team meeting will be scheduled with all the funding agencies in one room to get the best possible cost arrangement for the sewer plant project. C. Martin asked about similar plants in other municipalities. Matt mentioned St. John and that it had some similarities, but not everything is the same. They have different issues their plant must address than Tekoa does. There was additional discussion. C. Ausmus asked about possible fines if Tekoa didn't meet deadlines. Matt explained why fines could come into play, but that we currently don't meet those conditions. C. Ausmus clarified how long it would take to be able to know the costs and what rates will need to be at that time. There was discussion. C. Martin inquired about the longest timeframe for completion of the new sewer plant. Matt Morkert said he anticipated a five-to-seven-year time horizon for the completion of the plant. C. Ausmus clarified the extra cost for the lift station bedrock issue. Matt does not have the final number yet. He explained the

current plan for the lift station bedrock. He anticipates that next month he will have a change order for the extra costs. Matt Morkert submitted the pay estimate for the lift station, excluding the extra rock work. C. Ausmus moved to approve the payment request. C. Martin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Schulz asked Matt a question about retrofitting for different requirements by DOE. Matt addressed the issue. C. Tysz commented on solids application. C. Ausmus inquired about designing for land application only. Matt explained the permit process is from the EPA and enforced by DOE. He also explained that an alternative analysis is required, so both discharge and land application options will have to be explored. There was additional discussion. Mayor Schulz asked about how much input we would have. Matt explained that the city will have the final say about options from among the acceptable solutions. There was additional discussion about application options- liquid and solid. Mayor Schulz asked Matt about whether the city has been dragging its feet addressing the need for a new sewer plant. Matt replied that the city has moved on this issue as fast as they could, in light of the DOE study to figure out the options and addressing the I and I. The progression of the phases working toward a new plant has also allowed the city to get more grants and fewer loans. Finally, Matt reiterated that the pavement preservation project will go out for bid in the spring.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: Eliza Evans-Teague read a letter from Diane and Bill Harp. C. Martin said he had spoken with Bill Harp, who said we should not, “poke the bear”. C. Martin asked about the negotiation process. Mayor Schulz asked about having Eric Hanson negotiate with Harps. It was agreed that it is time for Eric to begin this process.

VII. CONTINUING BUSINESS:

SALARY COMMITTEE: C. Ausmus clarified the original proposal that the Deputy clerk have the 1.50/hr. raise and other employees would receive the percentage raise. C. Ausmus moved to preserve her clarification and C. Martin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. AIRPORT WSDOT GRANT APPROVAL/BUDGET PROPOSAL: C. Hale explained the grant approval from WSDOT. Because the cost has gone up, he would like to ask for approval to cover the extra several hundred dollars to meet match requirements. He also wants to add an additional \$15,000 to next year’s airport budget to meet next year’s grant requirements. C. Martin moved to approve the increased match amount and C. Tysz seconded the motion. There was discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

A. CROSBY ST./COMMERCIAL ZONING: C. Ausmus postponed until next time.

B. CAROLINA SILVA: FORMER KEITH ANDERSON BUILDING: Carolina showed a power point presentation about the former Keith Anderson Building. She bought the building that used to share a wall with that building. She is sending a formal letter to the council about her complaint to the council. Carolina gave some of the history of the building. Her complaint is that the formerly shared wall was exposed to the elements and the job not finished. She read selections from records from the project. She is proposing that the city should “finish the job” to make it safe and visually appealing. Carolina read a letter from a former owner of her building. She quoted a note from a contractor for the repairs she mentions. Eric Hanson spoke to some points of the history and the agreements from the time the city was involved in the condemnation and demolition of the building. Eric will look over the formal complaint when it is received.

C. **PHIL OVERTON RE: EASEMENTS ON TRUAX:** Phil Overton explained his search for property and that the Overtons are working on an offer for the Stoneham property. He spoke about a 30' jog in the formal street width at that property site. He proposed a variance that allowed them to build to within 5' of the street, and that would keep them 41' from the pavement. C. Tysz spoke about the utilities and power on those lots. The mayor asked about boundary lines, etc. C. Tysz moved to approve the 15' variance. C. Hale seconded the motion. There was discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

X. REPORTS:

A. MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Schulz reported the reader sign is coming along. C. Ausmus reported it has electricity as of just prior to the meeting. Mayor Schulz reported the Port of Whitman has some dock walkways they are surplussing that would work for replacing the walking bridge. There was discussion. Mayor Schulz reminded everyone that the culvert work is starting tomorrow from 8:30 A.M. -3 P.M. Mayor Schulz asked about funding. C. Tysz commented on the structure of the bridge. C. Ausmus moved to take the monies from street reserves to buy the bridge components and from the current expense fund to cover the installation. C. Martin seconded and the motion passed unanimously. C. Ausmus asked about the status of maintenance position interview and including council in those interviews. Mayor Schulz asked C. Tysz if he would like to be part of the interview body and C. Tysz agreed. C. Ausmus asked to be a part of the interview body and the mayor consented.

B. CLERK/TREASURER REPORT: Eliza Evans-Teague let the council know that there is a required training from AWC, Elected Official Essentials Training, in Fairfield Dec. 9, 2023.

C. COUNCIL REPORTS: C. Hale is meeting with Kara Riebold from the Port of Whitman to talk about the needs for the airport project. C. Ausmus asked Eric about employees using equipment as a perk. He said best practice would be to keep it for city use or rent it with an operator and indemnify the city from any liability and account for damages. There was discussion. Eric said it could also be construed as part of the employee's benefits. C. Martin commented that EMS is doing well. They have more EMTs on board who are getting ready to take the test. C. Tysz reported the burn pile was burned this weekend. He would like to see a hydrant down there. He is willing to help with that installation.

D. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE: Kyle Dombrowski reported that the EV charging station has some give to it and needs to be looked at.

XI. PAY BILLS: C. Tysz moved to pay payroll EFTs and checks 16760-16776 and payroll EFTs and checks 16777-16809. C. Martin seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: C. Tysz moved to adjourn the meeting. C. Martin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Schulz closed the meeting at 8:05 P.M.

APPROVED:

Roy Schulz - Mayor

ATTEST:

Eliza M. Evans-Teague– Clerk/Treasurer