

JASPER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Regular Meeting-December 12, 2023

The Jasper City Council of the City of Jasper met in-person on **Tuesday, December 12, 2023**

Members present: Mayor Les Nath; Council members: Deb Plahn, Brian Sievert, Tim Houg; Employees present: Trinidad Garcia Clerk/Treasurer, Asst. Clerk/Treasurer: Maggie Erickson; Public Works Superintendent: Brian Thode, Asst Public Works: Angel Garcia

Pipestone Star: Sirrina Martinez

Community members: Deb Childers, Doris & Gary Mead, Paula Gerlach-Sanow, David Brown, Dhimant Patel, Sue McKenna

Les Nath called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance;

Community Input:

- David Smith – Addressed Council and explained the length of his time that he has lived in Jasper and the number of committees that he has supported throughout his time in Jasper. He expressed that he cares about the community. He shared that he replied to a personal attack on Les Nath on Facebook from a posting of the old hardware store. He replied to the posting and after a few minutes decided to make a wiser choice by not continuing to respond. David shared that he supported the action taken to tear down the old hardware building and feels that it made sense. David explained that he was really bothered by the attack on Council. David shared that it is hard on small towns and most of them look the same, they may have a bar, post office, bank and if they are lucky a gas station. David stated that it is just the sign of the times. David references Russell, Tyler, Ruthon, and Pipestone and how they have taken all their old building down. With Pipestone working on construction for 3 locations, that will bring in property taxes. Which at some point the other cities will follow. David shared that he struggles with saving old buildings and the bank part of him looks at the main ingredients when owning a commercial or residential property, paying taxes, utilities, insurance, and maintenance. David questioned how particle it is to have a building sitting empty year over year and to maintain it. David wanted to share with Council that he supports them and feels that others in the community do to but do not say anything so he stuck his neck out for them and shared. Les Nath shared that he looked at the situation and expressed that it was a public liability. David also shared that when he was on Council and the City owned the liquor store and how it struggled to make money and maintain it, so they sold it.
- Ray Cook – Silversmith Data/GIS Maintenance Software – presented to Council a GIS/Maintenance software system used to help municipalities with a handheld GPS unit to record and track data from curb stops, shut off valves, seasonal shut offs, flush fire hydrants, etc. Ray explained how the software has the ability to time stamp and pull reports. He shared that the software is designed to the City's wants, the software can bring in data supplied by other parties

such as LPRW, if the City wants to add water mains, sewer, parks, trees, EMS, work orders to track maintenance, such as maintenance on a roof, garage, and it can take pictures if you have a ground opened up. Tripping hazards can also be added. The software can be added to an IPAD, tablet, and/or computer. The company has 10,000 users, a privately owned company, 25+ years in business, 24/7 support and live chat, plus Ray will personally train the City staff to utilize the system. City Clerk shared that from a previous discussion that two Cities close by that are using this software are Lismore, which is a town smaller than Jasper and Wilmont. The cost was questioned and Ray stated that it is \$571 a year for the software and support. Council member Plahn asked Public Works Sup what he thought about this system. Public Works Sup stated that he is aware of several other companies that have something similar to this like Beaver Creek. Mayor Nath thought it was interesting. If another City requested to add something such as dog license an update will be added in the software and other Cities will also have access to the added items. First item done to start the program is to add the parcel numbers to the software to build on for curb stops. Question was addressed to how stable the pricing is. Ray stated that the pricing is stable, some Cities pay the cost for multiple years to ensure they don't receive increased pricing.

- Dhimant Patel and Dave Brown – Mini Mall – Dave Brown addressed Council and explained that they came in to give the City an update on what is taking place at the Mini Mall. He shared that they started off with some hiccups and had to add new equipment but that has been resolved and they are ready to start Phase II, which will be off-sale Liquor Store if the City will grant them a license. The plan is to take the west 50ft of the store to have a separate entrance to the west with a dividing wall and a second entrance. Renovations would start by the first of the year and by March to have the state inspections to start the process for the full off sale liquor license if the City will grant a verbal approval. Council member Sievert did not see a problem with granting a license, Mayor Nath did not either, nor did Council member Houg. Asst Public Works asked about the updating of the kitchen and the updating of the gas pumps. Dhimant jumped in to explain that the gas pumps are part of phase III. He is currently working through the underground tank report and working with the state and testing process. The tanks expire in 2 years and with implementing new tanks will require 40% down payment. The current tanks are suction tanks and do not work with a credit plan. The credit card plan is still in the plans once the gas tanks can be switch over. Dhimant shared some of the funding process for the gas tanks and upgrading. Brown continued to explain that next summer the plan is to expand the east side of the store, add new bathrooms, expand the kitchen and have more seating area; more of a café style. Mayor Nath states that consensus is to move forward with their plans. Brown also added that after talking to the City Clerk that they will try to add a catering license when they renew their food license to assist with needs of the City. They would like to keep their overhead down with a big store. This will follow the phase with expanding the dinning area.
- Paul Gerlach-Sanow – Provided Council with a letter to show interest in the current vacant seat for Council. Council discussed what would need to take place next. City Clerk shared with Council that three members would be present on the Lions club and may be viewed as a City Council quorum and that Council will have two members under Ambulance. City Clerk stated that a decision does not need to be made in the current meeting. Mayor Nath asked if any other

people have showed interest. The City Clerk stated that other than discussions in Council meetings that the position has not be promoted within the committee that Council was looking for interested parties to fill the vacancy. Council had some discussion and asked the City Clerk to look into this further with LMC to see if this posses an issue. Council discussed how it is difficult in small towns to fill positions because most volunteers are involved in other committees in the City. Mayor Nath told Paula that the City will do some checking and get back to her.

- Sue McKenna – update on Historical Society. When the Poorbaugh block building was put on the National registry it opened the doors for a ton of grant money. One of the processes with the grant money was a conditions assessment. Draft report came back and nothing came back that was not unexpected. A beam in the front will be replaced. When the final draft is received it will include some ranges of what it will cost to replace the beam and who is qualified to do it. Project will take 1-3 years phasing of plans. Another project is the Christian House, work will be done by the Historical Society and with community help. This will be done in the summer and they are asking people with big equipment and time to come help out with this project to reset and reflow the house so ventilation gets underneath it. Historical Society will be starting with the 2024 donor campaign and will start with the businesses. One big factor in the grant process is to show support from the town. Even if you can't give money, can't give a lot or can give time, it shows support. Sue shared with Council that she saw the Jasper Journal collections and that there is so much to be done with it, such as place in display cases. Sue is nervous about digitalizing the journal but they need to be in a searchable database. Working with Pipestone and Rock County museums for professional support. Mayor Nath asked if they are going to fix the Christian House and Sue answered back with a yes, that is the sweat equity project taking place in the summer. The project is going to involve a lot of paint and wood repair. Not as technical as the stone work that needs qualified engineers and not many are in our area, most come from the cities. All that work will need to be blessed by the State, this makes Sue feel good as a tax payer. Mayor Nath stated that the property falls 15ft on the Legion. Sue shared how this was discussed the night before in the Historical Society meeting regarding the water mitigation and working with the Legion on that. City Clerk let Sue know if she creates a little insert that the City can put this in with the SWG bills to share updates with the community.

Review and approve minutes from:

November 14, 2023 Regular meeting

Motioned by: Tim 1st/ Deb 2nd. All ayes followed.

Review and approve November claims to date.

Receipts noted in month.

Motioned by: Tim 1st/ Plahn 2nd. All ayes followed.

Delinquent Sewer/Water/Garbage:

No Delinquent charges to date. Previous delinquent charges reported to the County as special assessment charges and will be added to Property taxes to be paid in 2024.

- Special Assessments Pay 2024 – Resolution 23-346C for a total of \$2,361.22 to be assessed to property taxes. \$487.50 was from snow removal and \$1,873.72 was from delinquent SWG charges. Council approved the amount to be assessed to the counties of Pipestone/Rock.

Motioned by: Plahn 1st/Sievert 2nd. All ayes followed.

Wellness Center/QCC:

- Vander Stoep Award – Resolution 23-346D documenting that on November 14, 2023 the City made a motion to award Vander Stoep Furniture Inc. for the floor removal and installation for the QCC for the kitchen, dining area, two bathrooms, furnace room and five classrooms totaling \$64,399.05. Council accepted Resolution 23-346D.

Motioned by: Sievert 1st/Plahn 2nd. All ayes followed.

- Book and Dishes giveaway date – Council decided to host a giveaway day to assist with getting rid of unused dishes and books at the QCC. This is to help with the preparation of the floor project. Council decided on hosting the day on January 6, 2024 from 9-2pm with a snow day of January 13th.

New Business:

- Liquor Licensing Ordinance Section 4.52(8) – *No license shall be granted for any building within 300 feet of any public elementary or secondary school structure or within 100 feet of any church structure.* City Clerk explained that Council will need to review and discuss this current ordinance based a recent interest in granting a liquor license to the Stone Wall Bar & Grill if they relocate the business next door to the Jasper Baptist Church on Wall Street. A special hearing will need to take place. Mayor Nath explained that a Public Hearing will need to take place to change the ordinance and to have the meeting in the Hall downstairs. City Clerk went through a couple of things to consider. The Church is currently in a Business District and the Church was granted a special permit to be in a Business District. Now an existing business would like to relocate in a Business District. Clerk stated that she does not think the Ordinance was originally put in place to cause conflict in the Business District. Mayor Nath, shared that legal was consulted and legal explained that back when City Ordinances were put into place that a lot of templates were used and not fully reviewed. So, a public hearing will need to take place and gather input from the City and then Council can make a decision. City Clerk explained to Council that the ordinance does not need to viewed as eliminating it but possibly amending it. It's all how Council wants to view the request. Council discussed the timing on scheduling the meeting. Council received a question from the floor as to what will happen to the current bar establishment. Some discussion was made on the areas of concern in the bar. City Clerk made a suggestion to have the special meeting on January 9th and move the regular Council meeting to January 16th, both at 7pm. Council agreed to the dates.

- National Grid Renewables (Geronimo Energy) – changes to bill credit. City Clerk explained that we have an agreement with National Grid Renewables to receive credits for our Xcel services. With proposed changes from the email received from Michael Foss the City will see a significant reduction for forecast savings and bill credits compared to the current rate. National Grid Renewables is working on preventing the change and demanding Xcel follow through on their commitment. This was shared with Council for informational use.

Old Business:

- Sign Sheriff Agreement for 2024 – Resolution 23-346A documenting that Council accepts the agreement with Pipestone Count Sheriff as joint powers agreement with the City Attorney and Police Department.
Motioned by: Sievert 1st/Plahn 2nd. All ayes followed.
- Intelli-Pro Cameras – installation complete – City Clerk explained to Council that the new hardwired cameras for the City Office have been installed but the cameras were not working due to the firewall that the City has in place. The City IT guy is working with Intelli-Pro to resolve this issue. The QCC cameras were installed. After completing the work it was identified that the Memorial Hall was not included in the original bid. Mayor Nath stated that he thought the City needed a bid for the Emergency Services Building. City Clerk explained that the Emergency Services Building is in need of a bid and the Memorial Hall. Intelli-Pro was asked to provide a bid for the Memorial and ESB too. Council discussed that they should stick with the same provider since of the other City work has been with Intelli-Pro.

Public works Report:

- Land permits: Stephanie Garza – chicken coop, Demo – JDC Building
- Sidewalk Replacements – N/A
- Dump truck – Public Works requested approval from Council to purchase a 2009 Chev Silverado 3500HD dump truck to replace the old 1999 Chev 1 ton. Steffes Motors in Council Bluff IA was asking \$23K for the vehicle. Council approved Public Works to go take a look at it and make the purchase if the vehicle is in good shape.
Motioned by: Plahn 1st/Houg 2nd. All ayes followed.
- Olson Pest – Asst Public Works brough to Council the cost of using Olson to put mice traps down and spray for bugs came to \$2290 a year. Asst Publix talked with the Office Public Works Sup and thought this is something that he can maintain for the City. City Clerk explained that she had been sick the times that Olson came in and sprayed. Immediately after Olson sprayed, she had been sick and wheezing. Lauren down at the QCC is affected by the spray as well. Council member Sievert explained for his business that they maintain their business themselves unless it becomes a problem over the threshold then they call for professional service. Asst Public Works explained that he had put traps down and caught some mice and the traps Olson had put down nothing had been caught. He just felt that it is a lot of money to pay. Mayor Nath suggested using them seasonal to spray the foundations. The other concern that Asst. Public Works had was the service from Dust Tex services, they service the City Office, Memorial Hall and QCC every other

week. In the hall they are supposed to switch out carpets, bar rags, and dust mop. City Clerk questions the services provided, bar rags are not used or found. In the City Office the front carpet is switched out and the City staff sees when the services take place and Dust Tex provides an air freshener that is too strong and overbearing. At the QCC they are supposed to switch out rugs and provide an air freshener. Asst Public Works feels he can maintain the rugs for the 3 facilities. Mayor Nath shared that when he is down in the meeting room for coffee that he will see the truck but does not see the guy come into the meeting room to service the rugs. The Coffee Club vacuums the rugs once a week. Council agreed to have Asst Public Works take over the work of the services that the City had been paying for.

Additional Items Added to the Agenda:

- Approval for 2024 Council meeting Dates – Two proposed date schedules was presented to Council to see if they were open to changing the monthly Council meetings to Wednesday's since it does not conflict with School sports activities. Council had some discussions on making a change to the regular Council meeting day and it was decided to keep the second Tuesday of the month with the exception on January's meeting that will be pushed back to January 16, 2024.
- Council member Sievert suggested creating an annual Holiday schedule that is posted so the Community knows when the office will be closed. City Clerk will take care of this.
- Quartziter Club payment – City Clerk addressed with Council since Quartziter is no longer under the City that a disbursement will need to be given to Quartziter Club. This was discussed when the Auditor went through their 2022 Audit report. A check will be cut for \$19,927.03. \$7,273.42 is from the City money market account and \$12,653.61 is from regular checking account. Council agreed to the disbursement amount.

Motioned by: Plahn 1st/Houg 2nd. All ayes followed.

- Lisa Houg made a request to the Office Staff to paint the hallway of the QCC, prior to the floor project. Lisa will work with City staff to pick a color to match the new flooring. Council approved the request to paint the QCC hallway.

Motioned by: Plahn 1st/Sievert 2nd. All ayes followed.

- Fire Department recruited a new member, Chris DeGroot.
- Approval of Delta Dental Insurance – City Clerk asked for approval on the proposed bid for new dental insurance for the City Staff. City Clerk explained that the current insurance is not easy to work with. Council approved the new Delta Insurance effective 01/01/2024.

Motioned by: Sievert 1st/Tim 2nd. All ayes followed.

- Tuesday off after Christmas – City Staff requested to take the day off after Christmas using personal time to cover the day off. Council approved the request to have the City Office closed the day after Christmas.

Motioned by: Plahn 1st/Sievert 2nd. All ayes followed.

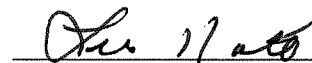
- Pipestone County ARPA of \$30K – City received a letter from Pipestone County that \$30,000 is available to the City for future capital-infrastructure projects to be used for roadway improvements, water infrastructure, sewer upgrades, capital equipment, etc. The County will provide payment once copies of project invoices are shared with the County. Mayor Nath already talked to the County and accepted it, and stated the Splash Pad would fall under the criteria to cover cost for water, electricity, etc. Asst Public Works brought up that he was thinking about the shed that needs to be built for the meter pit on Sherman. Public Works Sup shared that he spoke with the LPRW about cost sharing and LPRW is not willing to do that, so the City is looking at \$50K to complete this project. Public Works Sup brought Mayor Nath up to speed on what had been talked about in the past. Mayor Nath wants to see what LPRW comes up with, for something to think about in the future. City Clerk is waiting to receive some grant information and maybe can find a grant to cover some of the cost.
- Mayor Nath asked Council what they thought of the presentation by Ray Cook from Silversmith Database. Public Works Sup suggests investigating around towns before going off of one guy's presentation. City Clerk suggests discussing and visiting Lismore since they are new to the software and are a smaller City than Jasper. Clerk shared that she likes that updates from other Cities is available to all Customers to utilize.
- Widseth Business Development – City Clerk shared information on Widseth that made a visit to the City and can offer support to digitalize the City's mapping information. The GIS specialist continues to come into the City and provides the City with a yearly map of the City but does not provide any service to us. Something to think about for the next year to update our information.
- Council member Sievert suggested creating an annual Holiday schedule that is posted so the Community knows when the office will be closed. City Clerk will take care of this.

Upcoming Meetings:

Council Meeting: Tuesday, January 16, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.

Plahn motioned to adjourn, Houg seconded all ayes, carried; regular meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.


Trinidad Garcia Clerk-Treasurer 1-16-24


Les Nath, Mayor 1-16-24