

Owatonna City Council Minutes

December 5, 2023

On Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m., Council President Schultz called the regular session of the Owatonna City Council to order in the Chambers of the Charles S. Crandall Center. Present were Council Members Raney, Voss, Burbank, Boeke, Dotson, Svenby and Schultz; Mayor Kuntz; Community Development Director Klecker; Public Works Director Murphy; Communications Manager Sheely; IT System Administrator O'Connor; Sergeant Zackary Schumaker; City Attorney Walbran; City Administrator Busse and Administrative Coordinator Clawson.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Council President Schultz welcomed everyone including members of Boy Scout Troop 351 present. Council President Schultz advised Item 2.4.2, an Event Permit for the 2024 Corky's Earlybird Softball Tournament will be tabled to the next meeting. Member Dotson made a motion to approve the agenda with this item removed, Council Member Svenby seconded the motion; all members voted aye in approval.

Consent Agenda Items

Council President Schultz explained council members review the Consent Agenda items prior to the meeting for approval in one motion. Consent Agenda items for this meeting include:

- Minutes – Council Meeting – November 21, 2023
- Minutes - HRA Meeting - October 23, 2023
- Minutes - OPU Commission Meeting - October 24, 2023
- Minutes - OPU Commission 2024 Budget Session - November 6, 2023
- Minutes - Human Rights Commission Meeting - November 14, 2023
- Building & Inspections Monthly Report - November 2023
- Exempt Permit - Owatonna Healthy Seniors Program Raffle at OHS - April 13, 2024
- Proposed 2024 Parks and Recreation Fees Manual
- T-Hangar Lease Agreement - Brenden Selk, Farmington, MN

Council Member Boeke made a motion to approve these Consent Agenda items, Council Member Voss seconded the motion, all members voted aye for approval.

Finance Report

Council Member Raney recapped payments made for amounts greater than \$20,000 during this period. The total amount of bills presented was \$783,434.52. Council Member Voss made a motion to approve payment of all bills presented, Council Member Burbank seconded the motion, all members voted aye in approval.

Proposed Ordinance 23-20 – Amend Sewer Rates

Public Works Director Murphy requested approval of the second/final reading of the proposed ordinance to adjust the sewer rates effective January 1, 2024. The Council approved the first reading during their last meeting on November 21, 2023 and there have been no changes. Annual adjustments of the sanitary sewer rates are necessary to maintain adequate funding for future operations and to fund the costs of the wastewater treatment facility expansion. Council Member Raney made a motion for approval, Council Member Burbank seconded the motion. With a roll call vote, voting aye were members Boeke, Raney, Svenby, Voss, Dotson, Burbank and Schultz. There were no nay votes, the motion carried. This will be known as Ordinance 1659 and will be published for new rates effective January 1, 2024.

Amendment #1 – Professional Services Agreement for Staff Augmentation – Services - WHKS

Public Works Director Murphy requested approval of Amendment #1 to the Professional Services Agreement for Staff Augmentation Services with WHKS & Co. The agreement, dated November 15, 2022, will add for services to provide staff augmentation services to assist with engineering projects anticipated to be constructed in 2024, along with in-house training in Civil 3D. Services will include design oversight, design direction, establishing design schedules, and assessing staff's design skills and needs. WHKS will assist with determining if outside engineering services are needed to complete budgeted design projects on time. Additional time will be available, as needed, via TEAMS or phone calls. WHKS will assist with educating and guiding staff through State Aid and Federal project guidelines and process to ensure compliance on all projects. WHKS will review the City's Civil3D template and provide a recommendation to update the template. See attached for entire scope of service and pricing details. Billed hourly per the previously approved schedule. The agreement will not exceed \$50,000 (\$20,000 original contract and \$30,000 amendment) without additional authorization. This amendment for contract services is needed to assist the Engineering Department which is currently understaffed and looking to fill positions of an Assistant City Engineer and an Engineering Technician. Council Member Boeke made a motion for approval, Council Member Svenby seconded the motion, all members voted aye in approval.

Letter of Support – Local Road Improvement Program Funding Application – Steele County

City Administrator Busse requested approval of a Letter of Support for Steele County to develop the East Side Corridor as growth has occurred and traffic patterns have changed. The area between 18th Street SE in the south and County Highway 8/Kenyon Road in the north has roads that were designed for neighborhood use that are now being used as major corridors by through-traffic which also creates additional congestion in our downtown. The City of Owatonna's Strategic Plan and the 2040 Transportation Plan that was adopted both identify the need for this new corridor at 29th Avenue to

address increased north-south traffic on the east side of town due to community growth. In addition, future development is expected to dictate the need for another north-south route on the east side of Owatonna at 34th Avenue. City planners anticipated the need for this corridor and the City Council adopted a resolution in 2004 to set aside land for the proposed project.

The introduction was made of Greg Ilkka, Steele County Engineer who provided a presentation of the proposed project. He encouraged anyone with questions on this project to contact their office to view their presentation at "eastsidecorridor.com". The county is currently in the Capital Program for this project. In 2015, the county created a sales tax for road improvements because there weren't funds available to previously consider this project, now there are. Also, state legislation passed last year allocated funds for the Local Road Improvement Fund which the county is making a grant application for \$1.2 million for this project. They have requested Letters of Support from the City of Owatonna, the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and Owatonna Public Utilities.

City Administrator commented that the Letter of Support provides the City's support to encourage Steele County to apply for funding through the Minnesota Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) to help cover the project costs to support Owatonna's continued growth.

Public Works Director Murphy commented all projects must avoid, minimize and mitigate problems when necessary. Council President Schultz commented it is too early to fully discuss all of these issues; the East Side Corridor Study does include an Environmental Study and an Environmental Worksheet Assessment. Engineer Ilkka commented that all state statutes will be followed, the project's impact will be documented and mitigations are dependent on the impact so we can't currently discuss mitigation options. There would be a public comment period and then the County Board of Supervisors would approve or deny request for mitigation requested. Studies have been completed to direct the choice of the route and the purpose and need for the east-side corridor is there.

Council President Schultz requested clarification the Letter of Support is to support the county's application for LRIP Grant funding. Council Member Dotson made a motion for approval, Council Member Raney seconded the motion, all members voted aye in approval.

STAFF COMMENTS

Park & Rec/Facilities Director Tuma commented staff is prepping two temporary ice rinks which should be open within a few weeks. One will be in Bueckler Park and one in the North Country View Addition. If you haven't completed your holiday shopping, consider giving the gift of recreation, we have seasonal passes or gift cards available to purchase.

Public Works Director Murphy confirmed the new roundabout at the intersection of Bixby Road and 18th Street SE opened last week. This was a tough project, there were

some issues in dealing with the railroad. New traffic signs are up and the temporary measures are being removed. There was just a little bit of snow this morning and asking everything to give our street maintenance drivers some space, there are a lot of times when operations are done in reverse as they are cleaning streets, alleyways, and in the parks. Today, some staff members participated in the Dakota Tech College Career Day with Rachel from Human Resources. This provides an opportunity to contact future candidates and to also promote our community as it is a challenging time to find candidates in the engineering field.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Matt Sennett, 2519 Stoney Creek Drive commented Northview residents are in favor of an east-side corridor but do not support plans for this project to be built on 29th Avenue. They do recommend the use of 34th Avenue SE and hope this recommendation will be followed to provide a safe community-minded community. When the 29th Avenue Project was first proposed in 1995 it may have made sense but not now, some houses rest on a portion of the right of way. 34th Avenue provides a responsible location and makes the least impact on local farmers in this location and will not undo what has been done by current property owners.

Melissa Zimmerman, 2525 Stoney Creek Dr, thanked the council for their questions about the project during tonight's meeting. She provided timeline consideration of an east-side corridor. A 1995 study considered all routes and in a 1999 study, only one route was being considered and mapped but that study was not completed. In 2004, a Joint Power Agreement between the City and County approved a six-month review period and in August, recommendation was made to use 34th Avenue for the beltline. During September 2004, six months after the JPA was approved, the first home was built in this addition. The 2005 Steele County Transportation Plan and the 2006 City Plan do not show this corridor but it is shown on the map in the 2009 plans. In 2011, plans officially adopted an east side beltline; however, the current plan is to construct a corridor and not a beltline. We question is alternative routes have been reviewed; tonight, Engineer Ilkka stated all routes are being looked at but we were previously told the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) has only one route (29th Avenue) so we are looking forward to seeing all routes included in the EAW.

Steve Glenn 995 Ridge Road commented he knows of five violations occurring during the second season of the City's 2023 Deer Management Program. Use of trail cams and bait at a deer stand was found during walks and reported to the Park and Rec Office. The current program allows amateur hunters in areas with kids present. He recommends segmenting the city to obtain a deer count within each section so permits can be authorized only where needed. Also, consideration to use professional hunters for a few days, as was done in 2012 for two days, would be better than the current process which lasts for eight weeks within the city's parks.

Tyrell Hunter, 2595 Mossy Creek Drive, commented he is concerned about some of the responses made to questions asked during tonight's meeting. When asked if

mitigation will be provided, Engineer Ilkka's response was most likely and should have been yes, we are required to follow state regulations because there is a big difference between these answers.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Council Member Boeke: Last week was DECA Week, Owatonna has a very distinguished DECA program which is known within the state and also nationally known.

Council Member Svenby reminded everyone the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train would be pulling into Owatonna tomorrow at 3:40 pm. The train stops in the Industrial Park near Owatonna Bus. Streets in the area will be blocked, parking is recommended at Lowe's or Walmart for bus shuttles to the site.

Council Member Voss thanked Steele County Engineer Ilkka and Public Works Director Murphy for their work on the new roundabout project. He has a lot of good comments since it has opened and the Deacons of Cornerstone Church were pleased with the positive interaction during this project.

Mayor Kuntz commented that it is very rewarding to see growth within the city. Last year, the valuation of Building Permits issued year-to-date was \$82 million and this year, the year-to-date value is \$108 million. Currently, there are openings on three of the city's boards: EDA; HRA and Park and Rec; if you are interested, please complete the application on the City's website.

City Administrator Busse Comments: Last week several city employees participated in the Lighted Holiday Parade representing our Park & Rec, Public Works, Library, Police and Fire Departments. This is a good example of one of our Core Missions, We are Better Together. Prior to tonight's Council Meeting, the city's annual Truth-n-Taxation Meeting was held for a proposed levy of 8%. The Preliminary Levy approved in September was 9.05%; the Council will take action on the levy at the next Council Meeting on December 19th.

Council President Schultz thanked the Boy Scouts for attending tonight's meeting. Last night, he attended a concert at OHS and listened to the OHS Carolers, the orchestra and choirs. He thanked Mayor Kuntz for presenting former OHS Orchestra Director Arnold Krueger the proclamation for Arnold Krueger Day and a key to the City of Owatonna, it was a great night with many attending this first school concert in the new OHS Auditorium.

Adjournment

At 8:01 p.m., Council Member Raney made a motion to adjourn, Council Member Boeke seconded the motion and with no objection, the meeting ended.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Clawson, Administrative Coordinator