



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
December 5, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Deirdre Kvale, Mike Feldmann, Jahn Dyvik, and Gina Joyce

Staff Present: City Administrator: Scott Weske; Fire Chief: Mike Heiland; and City Clerk: Jeanette Moeller

Absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MAYOR'S COMMENTS – LONG LAKE NEWS, MEETING REVIEW AND UPDATES

Mayor Miner offered the following comments and updates:

Mayor Miner expressed his appreciation to John and Diane Hughes of Bollum Lane for hosting their annual event, 'Turkeys on the Luce', to collect food for the local food shelf. He talked about the history of the event and its growth over the years.

On December 2, the Long Lake Fire Department Slow Burn Brigade held their annual Holiday Food and Toy Drive which was also a great event. Both Santa and Sparky the Fire Dog had made an appearance.

The Holiday Tree Lighting event will be held on December 8 at Holbrook Park. Mayor Miner recognized the Park Board for planning the celebration, and gave thanks to the sponsors who were supporting the event, including the Long Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Caribou Coffee, Gopher Ace Hardware, Otten Brothers, and North Mallow.

Mayor Miner also reminded residents of the upcoming annual Holiday Home Decorating Contest and encouraged them to register by 3:00 pm on December 13 to participate. He offered his gratitude to the sponsors of this year's contest, including Birch's on the Lake, Carbone's Pizzeria, Gopher Ace Hardware, Liquor Barn, and Lakeside Wine + Spirits.

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Joyce, seconded by Feldmann, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. Approve Minutes of November 21, 2023 City Council Work Session Meeting
- B. Approve Minutes of November 21, 2023 City Council Meeting
- C. Approve Vendor Claims and Payroll

D. Accept the Resignation of Firefighter Shane B. Gardner from the Long Lake Fire Department

Mayor Miner stated that he wanted to draw attention to Consent Agenda Item D and recalled that Shane Gardner had been the Assistant Fire Chief for the last few years. Mr. Gardner was leaving the Long Lake Fire Department and would be joining the Mound Fire Department, which is where he lives. His resignation will be a very big loss for the Fire Department because Mr. Gardner has truly been a rock for the Department for many years, including when he had served as Interim Fire Chief following the departure of former Fire Chief Van Eyll. Mayor Miner thanked Mr. Gardner for his service to the community over the last 16 years and noted that while he will be greatly missed, the City wished him well with his future endeavors.

Council member Kvale asked some questions about engineering vendor claims in the packet and voiced concern that there may not be enough in the escrow accounts for certain development projects.

City Clerk Moeller assured the Council that Finance Director Nowezki was keeping a close eye on all of these projects and their escrow account balances to assure there would not be any surprises.

*A motion was made by Dyvik, seconded by Feldmann, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
Ayes: all.*

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

No one was in attendance to address the City Council during Open Correspondence.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Public Meeting to Discuss Proposed 2024 Budget and Levy

City Administrator Weske reviewed the varying considerations factoring into preparation of the proposed 2024 budget and levy and reminded the Council that both would be adopted at their next meeting. He explained that the purpose of tonight's meeting was to allow for comment from the public. He also gave an overview of some major CIP items for consideration in 2024 that had not been included in the budget.

Mayor Miner opened the meeting for public comment at 6:56 pm. There being no comment, he closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Council member Dyvik asked about additional revenue from the new development projects and asked if there was a way to estimate how revenue from the projects would impact the levy moving forward. He sought clarification on whether funds would be received in 2025 or in 2024.

Weske believed that in 2025 the City would begin seeing revenue from those projects as their valuations are updated. Ehlers is working on assessment information for The Stax project current and trying to bring some revenue from that project to fruition.

Council member Dyvik indicated that he would like to be able to see how much of the revenue would come from the recent development projects so it would be easier to see how it would impact the tax burden for future years.

Weske replied that he should be able to provide a look back and show comparisons, for example, from years 2022 through 2025 so the Council can review the data.

Council member Feldmann added that this information would be helpful because there remains a lot of uncertainty with the Fire Department, possible legal bills, and housing prices leveling off.

Council and staff discussed details related to the proposed 2024 budget and levy and how other cities set up their budget/levy allocations.

Weske reiterated that the Council would be taking formal action on the 2024 budget and levy at their next meeting.

Council member Dyvik commented that because of the upcoming unknown expenses for the City, he would reluctantly vote in favor of what has been proposed; though he would have liked to see a single digit levy increase.

Council member Kvale asked about accounting for reimbursement of the City's attorney fees related to the recent Order for Contempt.

Mayor Miner advised that the situation remains ongoing and there is a hearing coming up. His understanding is that the City can submit for those legal fees as part of that hearing. The attorneys will be providing an accounting of their fees to the court when the time comes.

Updates and Discussion Regarding Fire Department Matters

Mayor Miner reported that there is a conference call scheduled for December 7 regarding the Order for Contempt where he believes they will be identifying a hearing date, and a mediation date has been set for January 30, 2024. He noted that the Council will be holding a closed session during a Special Work Session meeting on December 12, 2023 to discuss matters related to the Fire Department.

Council member Dyvik asked Fire Chief Heiland about the duty crew program standards. He recalled that the subject had come up at the Fire Advisory Board (FAB) and the last Orono meeting that perhaps there should be some changes made. When this was brought up, he had pointed out that the duty crew program standards document was clearly labeled 'draft' so it was not meant to be final. There had been some discussion about changing some of the things, such as the objective shown for service response times. He mentioned that, in his opinion, they should not change a response time goal because it is an objective for a pilot program and was basically a goal to continue working towards. He sought feedback from Fire Chief Heiland on the idea of changing the response time goal of two minutes.

Fire Chief Heiland responded that he felt the duty crews will be able to achieve the response time as outlined, and should continue to work towards doing so.

Council member Dyvik commented that the duty crew standards document also has the implementation shown as one duty crew member at Station 1 for each shift and two at Station 2. He noted that Long Lake is currently fully paying for this program and he felt that this was the City's opportunity to fine tune it before it goes into full scale operation in 2024. At the last FAB, Council member Dyvik had suggested that because of the other duties that Fire Chief Heiland has, it would be nice to have two duty crew members at Station 1 in addition to himself because he was not always available to go out on a call. He noted that the change would put them over budget and Orono had already asked that this budget be cut down to about 60% of the full budget amount. He asked if Fire Chief Heiland felt it was more important to have a second person at Station 1 rather than a Saturday duty crew.

Fire Chief Heiland responded that from the trend they were seeing, he believed they could scrap the Saturday afternoon duty crew if needed; however, they have had pretty good participation for Saturday morning duty crew.

Fire Chief Heiland also reiterated that the objective of a two-minute service response time should continue to be the duty crew program's objective he was confident that they would be able to achieve it. He noted that he has been very pleased with how this program has shaken out for the Department.

Council member Joyce stated that she was hopeful that Orono will approve the Fire Department budget that will be presented, but pointed out that it would still be within the City's power to find a way to keep the program whole as they have done for equipment needs and the pilot program itself. She reflected on the importance of the duty crew model to the Department and service community for both efficiency and saving lives.

Council member Dyvik agreed but added that the duty crew program could also eventually save money because they would not be paging out all incidents as 'all calls'. He noted that he also likes how the duty crew has allowed firefighters to be involved in more community engagement too, such as inspecting business lock boxes and escorting the local swim team when they were heading to their State competition.

Fire Chief Heiland added that he has been very pleased with the duty crew program. He reported that on December 7, he would be going to Wayzata to speak with their Fire Department officers and share how Long Lake's program started and was evolving. They have been very curious and had expressed a desire to learn more about Long Lake's model.

Council member Dyvik asked if Fire Chief Heiland and City Administrator Weske could put together the relevant duty crew statistics for November like they had done for the month of October for the FAB.

Mayor Miner mentioned that Fire Chief Heiland had provided a weekly update last week which indicated that there were 41 calls in the month of November and 478 calls year to date, which is up from the total amount of calls for last year.

Council member Joyce asked if it would be possible to go over the statistics at their next meeting and explained that she did not believe she had seen them yet.

Council member Kvale asked about 'all calls' and how they relate to duty crews.

Fire Chief Heiland explained that right now if there is a regular call, the duty crew responds but they still have the normal response and calls are paged out as 'all calls'. He is hopeful that they will be able to cut back on those and stated that their tones would be changed after July 1, 2024. He outlined uses and procedures for the different tones.

Council member Dyvik agreed that it would be a good idea for them to have an end of the year review of the duty crew pilot program information, like Council member Joyce had suggested.

City Clerk Moeller asked if the Council would prefer to have this on the agenda at the last meeting in December or at a meeting in January, noting that waiting until January would allow for complete December data to be available.

It was the consensus of the Council that a year end review of duty crew pilot program data should be scheduled as an agenda topic for one of the January meetings.

Fire Chief Heiland observed that overall the duty crew program is even further ahead than he had hoped for and he believes they should have some really good data to help them make decisions for the future. In other Fire Department updates, he stated that on December 7 they will be interviewing three applicants for the Assistant Chief position. There are also two new hires that have passed their background checks and are in the process of obtaining their psych evaluation. His goal is to have them in the new firefighter class by January. He added that he is also excited about participating in the Holiday Tree Lighting celebration coming up on December 8.

Council member Dyvik stated that if the number of calls is about 100 over what they had planned for in 2023, there may be a budget overrun.

Weske confirmed the budget is getting very close to that point.

Council member Dyvik commented that the member cities should expect higher call volume to affect the budget and added that it probably should not be termed as an 'overrun' because it is simply due to there being more calls.

Council member Joyce added that she wants to make sure that people know that any increase in the budget expenses was not due to management practices, but to factors like more accidents and calls.

Moeller noted that there have been new developments in Long Lake and Orono that have come online, so it should not be completely unexpected that some of these numbers would be increasing because there are more residents in the community.

Fire Chief Heiland explained that they are definitely seeing more medical calls than they are fire calls.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chamber of Commerce Holiday Open House - Council member Kvale advised that the Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Holiday Open House gathering at the Red Rooster on December 13, 2023.

Potential LMCC Lease – Council member Kvale questioned whether there was an update on the status of negotiations with the LMCC for use of Public Works office space. Weske responded that staff is currently seeking alternative quotes and pricing for the window replacements needed.

Holiday Food and Toy Drive Event - Council member Feldmann commented that the LFLD Slow Burn Brigade's Holiday Food and Toy Drive event the previous weekend was pretty cool. He shared that the best part was seeing the Department in action when they received a call towards the end of the event, and reflected that it was impressive to see them roll out.

Ice Advisory - Mayor Miner cautioned people to stay off the ice because it was not yet thick enough to be safe.

Garland Lighting - Council member Dyvik indicated that one of the lighted garlands on the light pole across from Gear West was dark. He stated that last year there had also been a lighted garland one a

pole on Martha Lane that did not have one this year. He asked if there were plans to put up the winter banners. Weske believed that Public Works would be putting those up in short order.

Update of City Banners - Council member Dyvik stated that he had spoken with the local designer who had prepared the City's summer banner designs and asked her to put together a proposal for refreshing them. She had mentioned the idea of using children's artwork on them, which he was aware other cities have done. Moeller added that she has always liked the idea of considering incorporating Long Lake's history into the banner design. Council member Joyce agreed that it may make sense for them to be refreshed, because the City has a new logo as well.

EDA Business - Mayor Miner questioned whether there would be an EDA meeting prior to the Council's December 19 meeting. Moeller confirmed there would be a short EDA meeting. Mayor Miner pointed out that the sign at the 1905 Wayzata Boulevard W property is starting to look a little weathered and it may be time to do something about it. Moeller added that they can work on including the new logo on a refresh for that sign as well.

Upcoming Events and Quorum Notices - Mayor Miner advised that on December 11 he will be attending Representatives Myers' roundtable event at 9:00 am at the Minnetonka Beach City Hall. A quorum notice had been posted so the Council was also welcome to attend. Council member Kvale mentioned that there was also a need for posting a quorum notice for the Chamber of Commerce Holiday Open House event at the Red Rooster on December 13. Mayor Miner indicated that he would be unable to attend the Chamber's event because he and City Administrator Weske would be attending the Northwest Hennepin Municipalities holiday gathering. There is also an Open House at The Stax on December 13. Moeller explained that The Stax Open House would be offering tours and a hot chocolate bar with cookies from 3:00 to 6:00 pm on that date. She had posted both The Stax Open House and the Chamber's Holiday Open House gathering with a quorum notice to allow the Council to attend both without issue.

New Website - Mayor Miner reported that the new City website went live today and looks fabulous. He thanked City Clerk Moeller for her hard work on the project.

Downtown Holiday Lighting - Council member Joyce reflected that she thinks the holiday lighting throughout the downtown makes it feel really special. She voiced her appreciation for the effort that went into putting them up from both the City and the downtown businesses.

City Clerk Updates - Moeller confirmed that the City's new website went live earlier in the day, and reflected that she'd had a great experience with the project manager that she had been working with as they got ready to launch the site. She mentioned that there are still some things that need to be tweaked which they will continue work on, including ensuring that there is a search dialogue box for people to be able to use. Overall she is happy with how it looks so far, how it has been organized, and believes that they have a lot more resources available in an easier to find way than the previous version. The City offices also have a new VOIP phone system up and running. Lastly, she added that she will begin election training tomorrow for the upcoming March 5, 2024 primary election.

Upcoming Meetings - Mayor Miner reminded the Council that they will meet on December 12 for a Special Work Session meeting with a closed session at 5:00 pm, and for their next regular meeting on December 19.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 7:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske
City Administrator