

Pipestone, Minnesota
February 1, 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a special meeting of the Pipestone City Council was duly held in-person in the Municipal Building at 9:00 a.m. on the 1st day of January 2025. Mayor Dan Delaney called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared. Members present: Dan Delaney, Rodger Smidt, Danielle Thompson, Scott Swanson, and Verdeen Colbeck. Absent: none. Others present: Assistant City Administrator/City Clerk Stephanie LaBrune, and City Administrator Deb Nelson.

APPROVE AGENDA - ADDITIONS, CHANGE OR DELETIONS

Mayor Delaney stated that he would like to add 2025 budget before item 6. Other on the agenda.

Motion made by Thompson, seconded by Swanson, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as presented with the addition of the 2025 budget before item 6. Other.

PRIORITIZE BUILDINGS

Carnegie Library – Administrator Nelson shared with the council the new proposal of \$42,400 from LHB to obtain a full building assessment cost estimates for repair work needed on the building. Mayor Delaney informed the council that there was a full assessment done in 2019 and the cost at that time to repair the building was approximately \$416,000. He said the estimate was before the north wall collapse and said he would guess a new ball park estimate would be around \$700,000 with inflation figured in. Smidt said he would like to get a new estimate done and get a survey from the residents. Delaney said the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) would like to make a presentation to the council and talk about the tourism that the library could bring to the city. Delaney also stated that he does not want to levy or referendum for the project, he explained that he would like to fund it through grants and use the building for historical purposes. Discussion was held on whether to pay for a new cost estimate or proceed with fixing the building in phases. Delaney said the wall could be fixed right away with the grant money the city has available to them and then the city could work on fixing the roof so it does not degrade any further.

Delaney said he foresees the building housing the Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Bureau and display area and continued by saying it could be the beginning of a walking tour that leads downtown to the city's historic district. Smidt stated he would like to have a special council meeting to tour the building. Finally, there was discussion held on the current maintenance of the building and it was noted that the public works department needs to re-install the gutters and keep the grounds in better condition.

Concrete Water tower – Smidt stated that he feels the same way with the water tower as he does for the Carnegie library and said that the city should apply for grants. Delaney said in the 1980's or late 70's the water tower was on a referendum and it failed miserably.

Municipal Building – Discussion was held on the current businesses and organizations leasing space in the municipal building and the age of the 1966 building. Nelson stated that the boiler system is in tough shape and Swanson said that the roof has been an issue for years. Discussion was held on what to do with the old building if a decision was made to build new. Discussion was also held on where a new building could be built. The idea was brought up to combine office space into a new recreation center.

Recreation Center – Discussion was continued. Swanson asked how a new recreation center could be funded. Nelson stated that there were individuals who have expressed interest in donating to a new recreation center and also shared that the city could bond or issue debt for the project.

Liquor Store – Nelson shared that she spoke with Wilson, the liquor store manager and he said that he needs more space but is willing to wait to find a more prominent location so Nelson said that the liquor store could be moved to the bottom of the priority list.

Mayor Delaney called for a recess at 10:15 a.m.

The meeting continued at 10:25 a.m. and additional discussion was held on the city building a new building so the old building could be used to sell marijuana. Delaney said he does not want to be involved in the sale of cannabis. Colbeck also shared that the state of Colorado currently spends a lot of money dealing with social problems that have resulted from the states decision to legalize cannabis.

Public Works Building – Nelson shared that the public works department is in need of storage space after loosing space at the airport. The cost and various locations for a new building were discussed and Swanson questioned if the existing water plant could be torn down to make way for a new building. Nelson said she would look into it.

Aquatic Facility Update/Upgrade – Nelson stated that there have been no upgrades to the aquatic center since its doors opened and explained that there is a company that could do a thorough walk through of the aquatic center for approximately \$14,000. Delaney said he wants to see what updates are needed and wants to see it kept up. Additional discussion was held on adding a splash pad near the aquatic center and possibly other locations in town.

Soccer Field/Paulsen Field In and Out – Maps from Bolton & Menk were provided to the council showing two different options for improving the street entrance to the soccer field and Paulsen Field softball complex. The council was in agreement to proceed right away with working with the school district to widen the entrance for safety purposes.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

City Truck Parking Lot – Nelson shared a proposal from Double D Gravel in the amount of \$100,000 - \$150,000 saying that Jamie Dubbeldee said he would work with the city to develop a parking lot for use by his business and the public on his property along East Highway 30. Delaney said he was against the proposal and did not want the city to pay for developing someone else's property. Further discussion was held and Swanson shared that the tree dump area and the parking area by the city dog park could be two other possible locations. The council liked the area along North Highway 75 near the dog park and felt it was something that could be developed right away in 2025.

City-Owned Electric Utility – Nelson stated that Colbeck was interested in the city taking over the electric franchise so she added it to the agenda for discussion. She said the city has a 20-year franchise agreement in place and the agreement was just signed in 2017. She said the city of Slayton is currently pursuing their own electric utility and will have a meeting next week with their city administrator if any of the council members want to join in on the meeting. Additional discussion was held on the poor internet quality in town. Swanson said that he feels the internet service is more important and would like to see if Woodstock Communications would be interested in coming into Pipestone to provide service. Nelson said she would contact them to find out.

Water/Sewer Base Fee Charge – Nelson clarified that the utility base rate charges for water and sewer will be charged on a monthly basis to all properties that have a water meter. She said the Pipestone Development, Winter, and Southwest Acres lots that have not been built on yet will not be charged the base water and sewer rate, only the storm sewer rate. Additional discussion was held concerning plumbers who are turning the curb stops on and off without letting the city know. Swanson said the city is losing out on the on and off charges when someone decides to go on

vacation. All of the council was in agreement that private plumbers can not shut off water to a property unless it is for an emergency that requires the water to be turned off before water department staff is able to get to the property.

Continue Sanitary Sewer Loan Program – Nelson asked if the council was interested in continuing the sewer loan program. She said the interest rate from the state is no longer 0% and if they apply the new rate would be 1.5%. Swanson said 1.5% is still cheap interest and said the program has gone over very well so far. All agreed that the city should apply for more funds from the state.

Industrial Road Project – Discussion was held on the preliminary cost estimates for paving Industrial Road. Nelson stated that the engineer was off on the footage and said Everett Tire's proposed assessment will likely increase from what they were told in the letter that was recently sent out. Smidt said he spoke with Brian Schneider about the project and said that he is not against the project but had questions about past projects and how they were assessed. Overall, the council agreed that there needs to be consistency with street and utility assessments and there needs to be clear explanation if the council does choose to deviate from the assessment policy. Lastly, Delaney asked Nelson to find out if a business could apply for a deferral of an assessment based on hardship.

REVIEW ONE AND FIVE YEAR PLAN

The council reviewed the existing one and five year plan and agreed to move the recreation center to the top of the priority list combined with making updates to the aquatic center. For the one year plan, the council added the Paulsen field road entrance, splash pad, public works building, safe routes to school sidewalk project, blight enforcement, and the implementation of a 50/50 cost share sidewalk repair program to the list. The east side project (Main Street project) was removed from the list along with the soccer field concessions stand, the Harmon Park pickle ball courts, the PAPI and REIL project, the 622 3rd Ave. project house, and updating the ag lease agreements. Additionally, the Hiawatha Park master plan was put on hold and removed. For the five year plan the council emphasized the need for a street improvement and sealcoat plan and removed the consideration of alternative energy sources for city operations and amenities, the development of the Hiawatha Pageant grounds, and Armory building. The creation of a liquor store task force and the development of new and updating of existing recreational facilities were also removed due to the liquor store project being pushed back and the recreational facility updates being moved to the one year plan. Delaney said the city may not achieve all of the goals but said it is good to aim high when it comes to setting goals.

2025 BUDGET

Delaney started the discussion by saying that 48% of the levy is to pay off debt with the remaining 40% being used on the general fund and 12% going towards the recreation and street departments. He said of the 40% that goes towards the general fund, 40% of that is used for public safety which is mostly the contract with the Pipestone County Sheriff's department. He said everyone should be more involved with the budget so we can figure out ways to reduce the levy and do things more efficiently. He said the elected officials are the financial managers of the city and the watch dogs for the city. He said all of the elected officials need to be more involved with the budget to see where we can trim things. Swanson also said it should be the city's goal to try and provide more services with what we already have. Nelson said she would like to start the budget process earlier, around June. Smidt agreed, saying that it would be good to meet again in May and see how the city is doing before starting the budget.

OTHER

Department Head Reviews - Nelson spoke with the council about department head reviews, saying that it is the council's responsibility to do department head reviews. Delaney asked if the city's attorney had example evaluation forms so each department head's review would be treated the same. Nelson also stated that the reviews could be open or closed. Swanson said he does not want public reviews. He said in all of his years working for the city as a department head the council never did his review and said he would like to see the personnel committee handle reviews. Nelson said the code states that the council has the authority to hire and fire department heads and is responsible for their reviews. LaBrune said the council could consider changing the code with the upcoming recodification of the city code. Nelson said personnel committee meetings are open to the public and cannot be closed according to Attorney Hill. Discussion was held on how to proceed with holding reviews and scheduling special meetings to perform the reviews for department heads.

Bottle Water – Smidt asked how much capacity the city water plant has remaining. Swanson replied by saying it is only operating at approximately 50%. Smidt went on to say that he has been at several events where they have had bottled water from the city of Canby. He said that the city of Pipestone should look into it to see if it is something that the city could do to generate more income.

Peace pipe – Delaney said he is still seeing the peace pipe logo at the liquor store and said the liquor store manager needs to get rid of it. Nelson said she would take care of it.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Smidt, seconded by Colbeck, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 12:46 p.m.

Dan Delaney
Mayor

ATTEST:

Stephanie LaBrune
Assistant City Administrator / City Clerk