

CITY COUNCIL

PROCEEDINGS

The Plankinton City Council met in regular session on December 2, 2024. Members present included Mayor Brad Kehn and Council Members Magdalena Popek-Hurst, Jim Nielsen, Terry Schuldt, and Carl Bode.

City employees present were Deputy Finance Officer Cindy Geiman, Electrical Supt. Chance Boyd, and Maintenance Supt. Darin Cranny.

Visitors were Howard Weischedel, Blair Metzger with DGR, Curt Nelson, David Dixon, Gayle Van Genderen, and Clint Bultsma arriving at 6:38 pm.

Mayor Kehn called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

AGENDA

APPROVAL

Nielsen made a motion to approve the agenda with adding Code Enforcement under Old Business, Electric bills, and an end-of-year meeting under New Business. Seconded by Bode. All voted aye. Motion carried.

BILLS TO PAY

Popek-Hurst made a motion to approve the bills to pay, which was seconded by Schuldt. All voted aye, and the motion carried.

AURORA BRULE WATER- WATER PURCHASE- \$6268.90; AVERA QUEEN OF PEACE OCCUPATIONAL- CHANCE DRUG TEST- \$71.00; BELL BANK- MINI EXCAVATOR- \$919.42; BORDER STATES- ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES- \$634.15; DAKOTA PUMP- MAIN PUMP REPAIR- \$ 1200.15; DELTA DENTAL- DENTAL INSURANCE- \$378.20; FARMERS AND MERCHANTS PAYROLL FEE- \$7.60; FARMERS AND MERCHANTS SAVINGS ACCOUNT FEE- \$10.00; GOLDEN WEST- UTILITIES- \$502.90; GREAT PLAINS LUMBER- SAKCRETE- \$103.55; H&W CONTRACTING- SEWER PROJECT- \$400771.53; HEARTLAND LOAN #1- \$1241.68; HEARTLAND LOAN #2- \$1241.68; IRBY- ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES- \$1155.00; MENARDS- FIRESTATION ELECTRICAL- \$415.78; OVERWEG- OIL FILTER, TIRE REPAIR, AND BATTERY- \$147.95; ROADSIDE- FUEL PURCHASES- \$ 328.40; RUNNINGS- SHOP SUPPLIES- \$288.44; SCHMUCKER PAUL NOHR- ENGINEERING FEES-\$40682.59; SD DEPARTEMENT OF HEALTH- WATER TESTING-\$15.00; SD DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION- DIESEL PURCHASES- \$432.19; SDARWS- ANNUAL DUES-\$525.00; SOUTH DAKOTA MAIL- PUBLISHING- \$1542.92; STEVES WELDING- SHOP SUPPLIES- \$68.54; TITAN MACHINERY- FREIGH ON PART- \$55.68; TOSHIBA- COPIER CONTRACT- \$202.59, VISA- SUPPLIES- \$782.19.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Bode made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting held on November 19th, 2024. Seconded by Popek-Hurst. All voted aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dave Dixon representing the VFW Post #6554 came before the council to request a timeline of when the jail pond would get power. They are currently running a power cord from the pole to light up the jail pond with Christmas lights. Electrical Superintendent Boyd addressed that he now is waiting until spring to run power and would like the gazebo in place before he does.

OLD BUSINESS

DGR RATE STUDY

Blair Metzger with DGR came to the council at the request of the Electrical Superintendent Boyd to explain what DGR does and give recommendations to the council on what they should do with the increase of WAPA and East River rates. DGR did a full rate study in 2008 and 2009 and then updated it in 2017 and 2018. The last financial model for the electricity was completed in mid-2017. It is recommended by Mr. Metzger that the council do a current rate study and start the process of a 5-year financial model to cover the current rate increases and possible future rate increases. Chance has contacted Heartland and applied for a \$5000 grant to offset the cost of the rate study and financial model, but he hasn't heard anything back. By the January meeting, he will have numbers ready for the council to look over.

PLANKINTON CITY HEALTH

INSURANCE RENEWAL

Mayor Kehn authorized Finance Officer Kylee to sign the employee health insurance contract for 2025 last week due to the need to have it signed by the 1st of December. We could have waited but then we would run into the trouble of them holding off on paying any claims until it was signed. Agent Clint Bultsma explained the insurance went up 3.06% or \$33.28 per employee. The current plan we have is probably the best plan out there for the price. A motion was made by Popek-Hurst to accept the current health insurance plan. Seconded by Nielsen. All voted aye. Motion carried.

PLANKINTON DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Plankinton Development Company treasurer Clint Bultsma presented the council with revenue and expenditures of the Development Company as of 10-31-2024. This explains what income and expenses the development board has throughout the year. This is required by the council for the funding request. The funding is \$15,000 per year. Clint brought some information regarding some grants that are available from the board. Urban Renewal is for the demo of dilapidated properties. Up to \$2500 available per location/ project. New home grants are grants up to \$5000 for a new home. The home can be occupied or tenant occupied. Lastly, the New/ Transferred business grant. They can give up to a \$10,000 grant for a new business or a transition to a new owner.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PAY ORDINANCE

Waiting for City Atty. Jim Taylor to get back to us. Mayor Kehn will reach out to Mr. Taylor. Will follow up in our end-of-year meeting.

TRUCK ROUTE ORDINANCE

The proposed new ordinance includes the roads that the county requested to retain access to their shop area. It also includes a section of Madison Street so TJ Scott can access his property. The first

reading will be at the end-of-the-year meeting with the second reading at the January meeting. Mayor Kehn entertained the idea of publishing the truck route ordinance in the paper before the first reading.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Popek-Hurst expressed concerns about the letter that City Atty. Taylor sends out. She would like it to be more detailed. She doesn't think one standardized letter is very fitting for each ordinance violation. Mayor Kehn stated that Mr. Taylor puts the ordinance on the letter that the party is in violation of and sometimes sends pictures of it with the letter. Maybe have a statement at the bottom of the letter stating that for further information regarding this ordinance please refer to our webpage.

NEW BUSINESS

COLA RAISES

Mayor Kehn stated and confirmed with Gayle Van Genderen that the county received a 4% COLA raise. We budgeted 3% so we will have to make a 1% increase. Nielsen made a motion to approve a 4% COLA raise for this coming year. Bode seconded the motion, all voted aye. Motion carried.

INTENT TO RENT

A letter of intent to rent the upstairs of the City Hall was received from Lucinda Overweg and Mallory Bohr for their photography businesses. They would just like to know where the council sits on rent. Mayor Kehn stated that rent would be around \$14/square foot. He also informed the council that after the last meeting, Scott Black rescinded his intent to rent the downstairs portion. It would be around \$10,000 for basic electrical. Mallory's top dollar is \$100/month. As the council agreed that would not be enough to re-coop cost. Maybe let it sit and maybe re-advertised next spring. Mayor Kehn directed Cindy to get a hold of District III to see if there are any grants available to possibly help with renovations.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

Discussion was held regarding Christmas Holiday Hours. It was the consensus of the council to give half a day off to city employees on Christmas Eve. So, office hours on December 24th will be 8 am- 12 pm. Returning to work on December 26th.

CASA

The council discussed the letter from CASA for donation. Mayor Kehn reminded everyone that just because they ask for a certain amount of money doesn't mean they have to donate that and try to keep things local. The council agreed to pass this year and maybe put it in the budget next year as local donations.

END-OF-YEAR MEETING

Mayor Kehn asked the council if they were going to be around December 23rd or have the end-of-year meeting on December 30th. The council agreed to have it on December 23rd, 2024, at 6:00 PM

DELINQUENT UTILITY BILLS

It was brought to the attention of the council that there are quite a few delinquent utility accounts that need to be addressed. Mayor Kehn hoped that these accounts would have been taken care of before winter hit, but that is not the case. The standard procedure is to shut them off if they don't pay. Mayor Kehn is going to challenge the Finance Officer to contact everyone with verbal agreements to come in and get a written agreement. One suggestion was to pay off their current bill in full and then make payments to catch up on the arrears in 4 or 6 months. No more verbal agreements and ordinances are the way it is and if they don't pay shut them off. Another suggestion that was given would be to give them a certain number of months and if they don't pay then shut them off. We provide a service to them, and they must pay for that service. Nielsen states that if anyone objects to the written agreement, they need to contact their council person and not take it out on the office staff. And as a council person, they need to stand behind the ordinance. The council decided that they should have 3 months to get caught up with the arrears, but must pay the current amount due now.

COUNCIL APPLICATIONS

There were 3 applications for Ward 3 council vacancy. The council will have to appoint a person which they will serve until the election date, and they will have to take a petition out and the election process. Then they can fill the term out. Howard Weischedel, Chris Schleuning and Nathan DeGeest. Mayor Kehn asked the council to do their due diligence and contact them on a one-on-one basis and decide on December 23rd. meeting who to appoint.

MAINTENANCE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

There was quite a bit of time with the sewer project again this month. As you know the roads have been turned to gravel for the winter instead of rushing to get asphalt done. 1st Street sewer should be done this week, then hopefully they get that road to gravel soon afterward.

I spent a couple of days sweeping up the chip rock off our newly chip-sealed roads. Just my luck I had to fix the sweeper both days I used it, but I got it done.

We got our dirt and scrap piles cleaned up around the shop and got the equipment inside all moved and arranged for winter.

Barry and I spent one day re-doing 2 storm sewer drops on the west end of the new storm lines they put in, so those drops went into the new line east of the intersection instead of the old-line west of the intersection. As it was there would have been an issue tying them into the new storm sewer structure that was installed.

We got some gravel delivered and bladed on our new road at the fairgrounds. We need more gravel on it, but I didn't get any more now as we will have some around in the spring after the road crews take some out that was added for the winter.

I got the west R.U. site pit pushed in and covered with dirt as well as I could for the winter.

I mowed the remainder of the creek that needed it and did one more mowing around the lagoon cells with the tractor mower.

I sorted all the old top rings and manhole lids out of the scrap pile the contractors had and moved them to our west R.U. site. I will never need all of them, but I can and will use some of them and can always dispose of them later. Some of them were not very old as we had raised up MANY manholes that used to be buried under the roads.

I saw an ad that was placed on the Facebook marketplace about wanting an ice shack to place on the jail pond. We have not allowed anyone on the ice for many years for liability reasons. We have signs we place around it saying to keep off. Has something changed? Nielsen representing the VFW says that the VFW has taken responsibility. They are taking out a million-dollar liability policy that will show the city as co-insured. They will test the depth before they put the ice shack out. Mayor Kehn wants City attorney Taylor involved before we go any further. Nielsen stated that he has contacted Mr. Taylor and Mr. Taylor stated to follow the state guidelines and get the liability policy in place. Mayor Kehn instructed Deputy Finance Officer Cindy to send a letter to Mr. Taylor and see what he says.

We just got a bill in the mail for A/B rural water. Our water costs are going up 7% in February. Just a quick rough number here, but that is around 5-7000 dollars annually. We are set to raise rates again next year and in 2026. I've mentioned this before, but I think after that we need to set up a small yearly rate increase to stay ahead of the rising costs of EVERYTHING. This needs to be done with the sewer rates also. By doing this we could hopefully avoid any major increases in monthly bills for our citizens. Discussion is going on with the electrical rates already, so I'll leave that out of mine.

ELECTRICAL SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

We had no outages this month

I finished up the underground on North Duff Street as of now. We got it energized and got the people cut over that had trenches and holes opened before winter. We will finish the rest of them up in the spring. We will have about a block in a half left through the alleyway that they just put water in. The sewer crew still must do their part, so this won't be done until next year.

We put 2 services in, waiting on electricians before we can finish our end of it

Finished up at the fire station. Waiting for the inspector to come and do a final. There will be some demos of old conduits and heaters left to do but will be later.

We did a little maintenance on some of the electrical equipment. Barry was able to get the digger truck in and get it fixed as well as he could. This is something I would like to investigate replacing at some point. We don't use it a whole lot in a year, but it seems every time we use it we are fixing something on it. It is also way too big for anything we would need it for.

I have spent some time in the office working on the electrical rate stuff, along with figuring some estimates out if the council decides to rent out the north side.

We have been getting the shop ready for winter, and getting things put away.

We put up the Christmas lights last week.

I have been keeping a close eye on my budget, as I would like to get some more transformers in stock before the end of the year. I have a decent stock of 25kva but could use some 37.5KVA and 50 KVA.

MAYOR REPORT

Mayor Kehn asked if there has been any progress on getting the work orders completed? Directed Deputy Finance Officer Cindy to have Finance Officer Kylee contact him in the morning regarding this.

Popek-Hurst would like to move the tree project scheduled for January to be put on the February meeting. And put lifeguards on the agenda for January.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Signed by Brad Kehn, Mayor

Attest:

Cindy Geiman,

Deputy Finance Officer