

# Holdingsford City Council Meeting Minutes

## Tuesday, October 10th, 2023

**Present:** Seth Young, Eric Berscheid, Tim Winter, Nicky Lahr, Jayme Opatz, Andy Higgins, Keith Hommerding, Dave Blommel, Amy Opatz

Eric called the City Council meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

Jayme made a motion to accept the consent agenda and financials from August. Tim seconded the motion. AIF

### **Department reports:**

**Maintenance report** was read by Eric. Well #2 pump failed, and was replaced by Traut Wells. The Main lift station pressure transducer failed. Preferred Controls provided the replacement and staff installed it. WWTP dissolved oxygen sensor and SC200 controller failed and need replacement. The plow truck is getting annual DOT inspection. Annual service on the loader and on the Kubota were performed. Mixer #4 electric motor was replaced at the WWTP. Hydrant flushing will take place the week of October 16<sup>th</sup>. Campground restrooms will be closed after October 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Fire Department report:** Keith read off the monthly call numbers. He shared with the Council that Steve Horvath resigned from the Fire Department and wanted to thank him for his time. Keith also inquired about the hourly pay increase for the volunteer firefighters. Eric asked for this to be tabled until the next meeting, so it can be discussed in a work session beforehand.

**City Engineer's report:** Dave Blommel reported that he updated the Equivalent Dwelling Unit calculations. He explained that this fee was put into place with the last Bond for utility improvements through the USDA. The Calculations are supposed to be completed every couple of years. With the new calculations, a few businesses will be charged a different amount. He also explained that the City's new software can bill fractions, but the old software could not. Jayme made a motion to approve the revised EDU calculations effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, including the fractional amounts. The maximum EDUs charged will remain at 20. All commercial accounts that will be affected will receive notice via mail before the billing change takes place. Tim seconded the motion. AIF.

Dave also reported that Steve asked for his assistance calculating the approximate age and size of the water main within the City. He tabulated nearly 7 miles, most of which are less than 30 years old.

**Liquor Store Report** was read by the new Manager, Amy Opatz. She reported that one employee left, and she offered (2) individuals PT bartender positions pending their background checks and Council approval. She is also looking to hire one more part-time employee. Jayme made a motion to hire Nikki Horvath and Eric Kohorst. Andy Seconded the motion. AIF. Amy presented a proposal for the holiday pay for part-time bartenders. She stated that there are 6 holidays that are difficult to staff, and if she can pay double time for these days, it may make it more worthwhile for the staff to work them. She mentioned that this should cost less than \$800 annually to cover the costs. Jayme made a motion to approve the 6 holidays to include Independence Day, New Year's Day, Easter, Labor Day, Memorial Day, and Christmas Eve, to be paid at double time. Tim seconded the motion. AIF. Amy reported that the New flooring was installed and the stage was put back in with some modifications to fit more securely. A band is scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup> and a Halloween costume contest with cash prizes will happen. Jayme asked about the training schedule with former manager, Season. Amy said that they will be training together on Thursdays through the end of October, and will include distributors/product ordering, end-of-year audit, and BNG software. Seth made a motion to move Season's wage back down to the lead bartender rate. Andy seconded the motion. AIF. September Sales were down due to a lack of staffing and consistent hours. She is hoping to make this up in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Tim mentioned the Fire Relief Association is considering removing pull tabs from the Muni, as they do not seem to be profiting.

**Clerk's Report** was read by Nicky. She reported the 2022 audit was completed, and all financial reports are available. This allowed us to close out Asyst and enter starting account balances in the Banyon software. Final entries are being made in Banyon to get our financials YTD, and by the next meeting, new complete reports will be made available. We are preparing dog license renewal letters. This will be tracked through the new software as well. The safety committee meeting is scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM. Jayme stated that he should be able to attend. Nicky asked the council for guidance on a spending policy. She stated that she could not locate a policy that indicated the threshold of purchase before seeking council approval. Eric said there used to be one but he does not recall what that number is. Nicky was instructed to gather average amounts other cities of comparable size use in their policies. Nicky stated the city has undesignated AARPA funds of approximately \$37,000 that need to be designated for use by the end of 2023. Tim made a motion to use the AARPA funds for repairs and upgrades to the WWTP and Well system. Andy seconded the motion. AIF.

**New Business:** Truth in Taxation meeting has been scheduled for the December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 7:00pm. The council reviewed a request for donations to the Holdingsford Community Education program. The city donated \$1500 in 2022 and approved \$1500 to be

paid in 2023. The council decided not to donate in 2024, with concerns about donating taxpayer dollars. They did state that they would continue to provide use of the parks and facilities to the School. The Holdingford Dance Team Booster Club requested a gambling permit for a raffle to be held at the High School. Jayme made a motion to approve the permit. Seth seconded the motion. AIF. The Stearns County Sheriff sent the City's 2024 contract for services. They did not raise their hourly rate of \$55.00. After discussion, Jayme made a motion to reduce the average contracted hours down to 4 per week vs 5.5 and to cap the dollar amount at \$12,000.00 for the year. Seth seconded the motion. AIF. Nicky was instructed to ask the Sheriff's Department for an updated contract to be signed.

**Additional agenda items/council member updates:** The city received notification about a class action lawsuit against 3M and Dupont on PFAS chemicals in the water systems. Our legal counsel advised the Council to decide on how or if they would like to join the lawsuit. Jayme made a motion to join the lawsuit group. Tim seconded the motion. AIF. Nicky stated that resident Derek Schaefer from 210 Prairie Street would like the speed limit in front of his house changed to 15 miles per hour. He stated that many cars go by around the corner at 30 miles an hour making it dangerous to back out of his driveway. The council decided to take no action on the request at this time. There was also a citizen's concern about Park Street being in poor condition, as well as North High Court. The Council discussed and determined that North High Court will need to be addressed in 2024, as they do not feel it will last another winter. Park Street will be passed along to the maintenance supervisor to investigate and determine if it can be patched. And the Council discussed the condition of North High Court. They determined something will need to be done with it in 2024.

**Past Due Water Bills:** Kevin Feia, Dave Hagemann (Holdingford Hillside Trailer Park LLP), Joseph Doll, Hyatt House, Valerie Nelson, Dale Lundberg, Alisha Nutter, Walker Nienaber, Chris Mosel, Greg Willenbring, Brooklyn McGillivray, Kayla Zarbok, Eric Kohort, Terry Runge, Robert Keil

**Looking Forward:**

Hydrant flushing will take place the week of October 16<sup>th</sup>.

Next Council Meeting: Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Main Street Trick or Treat on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Ladies Night Out November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

Last Lawn and Leaf pickup until spring, November 3, 2023

**Adjourn:** Jayme made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. Andy seconded the motion. AIF

Signed:

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Nicky Lahr  
City Clerk-Treasurer, Holdingford