

## Holdingsford City Council Minutes Monday, March 11, 2024

Councilmembers in attendance: Eric Berscheid, Jayme Opatz, Tim Winter, Seth Young.

Others in attendance: Nicky Lahr, Steve Horvath, Dave Blommel, Keith Hommerding, Michelle Mader, Herman Lensing, Grayce Meyer, Melvin Breth, Dorine Rausch, Gordy Sjaaheim.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Mayor Eric Berscheid, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Jayme motioned to approve the consent agenda including the February meeting minutes and the February financials. Tim seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Resident Michelle Mader shared concerns about a 4-way stop that was added on the corner of Main Street and Washington Avenue in late October of 2023. She witnesses many people driving through the intersection without stopping, in both directions. She fears for the safety of children, other pedestrians, and motorists. Eric reassured Michelle, the City would contact the Stearns County Sheriff to monitor the intersection more often. Steve Horvath said he would look into installing solar-powered LED lights to help draw attention to the signs. Eric asked Michelle to cut down or trim back the foliage on the corner of her lot so motorists could see around the corner more easily.

Eric presented a proclamation of congratulations to Grayce Meyer for being awarded Coach of the Year and to the Holdingsford Dance Team for winning the 2024 Minnesota State High Kick Dance Championship. The City Council and attending residents applauded their accomplishments.

The Maintenance report was read by Steve Horvath. He reported a new sign was ordered for the compost site. He is working on replacing lighting at the wastewater treatment plant and may need to order new LED heads for them if the photo eye isn't repairable. He gave a tour to a student and staff member from Holdingsford High School as part of their career exploration. Steve also talked about how the gravel in the parking lot of the City Park is diminishing. He stated that he would like to get quotes on having gravel hauled in. The council asked him to also get some quotes on having half of the area paved. The Parks dept puts aside \$5000 in capital per year that may help cover that cost. Crack sealing will begin soon and 2 barrels will be needed for this year. Steve inquired about purchasing a camera for sewer inspections. Eric made a motion to purchase a camera with a budget of no more than \$2500. Seth seconded. Motion passed with all in favor. Steve shared with the council that the Lessee of the City-owned property, Jeremy Wentland, would like to sign a longer lease agreement so he can invest by putting lime into the ground. The council agreed to look at a longer-term lease and asked to have Jeremy come up with some terms for review at the next meeting. Nicky stated that the land lease does not need to go out for bid due to the low cost, and the established relationship.

The Engineering report was presented by Dave Blommel. He is continuing to work on funding for the lift station project. He has a total of 8 applications submitted including federal and state, and said the chances of receiving what is needed is promising. He is also continuing to work on funding for the test well and applied for a \$10,000 grant in addition to the \$5,000 grant we already received. This will help offset but not fully cover the test well drilling.

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The Fire Department report was given by Keith Hommerding. The breakfast fundraiser went great with approximately 1100 people attending. Keith extended a thank you to everyone who attended. And, extended a thank you to WDS for allowing the Fire Department to park the trucks at their facility during the event. Calendar donations continue to come in, and gun raffle tickets will be available soon. Keith reported 29 total calls for the year including 26 medical and 2 vehicle fires. They had MN Fire present for debriefing training for after critical incidents, firefighter emotional, and health care. They are continuing to look into new tanker options and funding options.

The Muni report was read by Jayme, as Amy Opatz was not present. He reported profits for the year at +\$3430.39. Interior updates continue. A health inspection happened and the 2 small violations were corrected on the spot. The fryer and coolers were serviced. There will be a band on 3/16, and entertainment is booked through September. They are working on quotes for chairs and a new tap system. Starting to prepare for Holdingford Daze, which will include a band on Friday night. The Muni turned 90 years old on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Seth reported a Land use permit for a new home build. Seth made a motion to approve. Tim seconded. Motion passed with all in favor. Nicky will work on the process for the land split needed. The land split will be tabled for a future meeting.

Nicky gave the Clerk's report. She stated a new form called City Project Request has been completed, and reviewed by the Council. This form will be available on the City Website and at the City office. A postage machine has been leased and will save .04 cents per stamp. The Township Fire billing was sent out, for 2023 Q4 and 2024 Q1. 2024 Q2-4 will be sent out in June. Credit card payments are now available for campgrounds, rentals, dog tags, and Building permits. Applications and reservations still need to be made with the Clerks. An extension was filed with the OSA, for an extension on the City's financial audit. Jayme made a motion to approve Bauman Associates LTD as the financial auditor for 2024. Tim seconded. Motion passed with all in favor. Eric requested further explanation of their additional fees as well. Continued researching new website hosts. The Clerks are recommending Town Web, however, Eric is asking for an explanation of the difference between a regular web host, and one that is specific to municipalities, as they are more expensive. Nicky will report back next month. Clerks will attend MCFOA training March 20-22<sup>nd</sup>, City Hall will be closed on those days. City Hall had an annual health inspection in the kitchen and passed all areas. The PNP election went smoothly, with great election judges.

#### Unfinished/Old business:

LMCIT denied the claim requested by Doris Ahrens. The approval of the sewer camera purchase should help identify these issues going forward.

#### New Business:

The Council received a letter from a citizen asking for the sewer forgiveness for Dorine Rausch to be rescinded as it was unfair to other citizens who did not receive the forgiveness. Dorine was present and stated she would pay the amount forgiven at a prior meeting, as she did not want to be considered as receiving preferential treatment. Discussion occurred in regards to the software, the clerks are looking into which will help citizens monitor their usage. They are also drafting a policy for sewer forgiveness to ensure fair and equal treatment is

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given in the future. Jayme made a motion to rescind the sewer forgiveness for Dorine Rausch. Tim seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Employee evaluation for the Municipal Liquor Store Manager was completed by Jayme. The review was positive and included goals to work on. Jayme made a motion to approve a pay increase from J4 to J5. Tim seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Nicky reported the election pay for the judges was low compared to other cities. She also explained the City is reimbursed by the state for election expenses. Jayme made a motion to increase the election judge's pay by \$4/hour, going forward. Seth seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Steve will be bringing the snow plow for the Big Rig event at the School on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

Jayme made a motion to approve Resolution 24-03-11-1 gambling permit for FFA raffle. Tim seconded it. Motion passed with Seth abstaining and all else in favor.

Seth made a motion to approve resolution 24-03-11-2 updating the Capitalization Policy. Jayme seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Tim made a motion to discontinue the City Hall library. Seth seconded. Motion passed with all in favor. Helping Hands will take the books, add the books to the current library at Helping Hands, which is open and available for all to utilize. They will sort the books and keep those that are most likely to be used and donate the remaining.

The IT Contract was discussed at the work session. The Council would like to request the same contract with 2 hours per month instead of 8, and any additional hours would be billed at \$150. Or to offer no specific hours, but pay \$175 per hour. They would like to have preapproval on large purchases/work still, and detailed invoices so the correct departments can be billed.

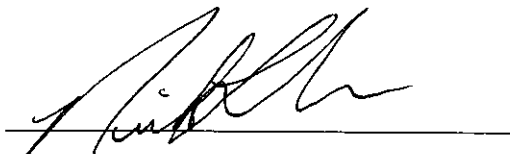
Looking forward: City Hall will be closed March 20-22.

Notices sent for past-due water bills:

Shannon Backlund, Jake Biniek, Joseph Doll, Kevin Feia, Robert Keil, Joe Lashinski, Dale Lundberg, Chris Mosel, Nathaniel Posch, Jared Voudry, Greg Willenbring, and Duane Young.

Jayme made a motion to adjourn at 8:06 p.m. Tim seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Signed:



Nicky Lahr

City Clerk-Treasurer, Holdingford