



Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

March 25, 2021 at 10:00am

Remote Meeting

315 Main Street South

Link: <https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1480522218>

Meeting ID: 148 052 2218

In attendance – Mayor Carl Pederson, Councilor Gina Pettie, Councilor Mary Kay Sloan and Councilor Steve Ovick and Councilor Kyle Palmer

Staff in attendance – Interim City Administrator/Community Development Director Lezlie Sauter, Park and Recreation Director Stacy O'Rourke, Liquor Store Operations Manager Lara Smetana, Public Works Supervisor Maury Montbriand, Fire Chief Tom Miller, Safety Inspector Andy Luedtke, Administrative Assistant Carissa Kranz, City Engineer Greg Anderson, Interim Treasurer Catherine Demes Maydew and Administrative Assistant Lisa Dunbar

Others in attendance – Resident Becky Schueller

Call to Order – Mayor Pederson called the meeting to order at 10:01am

Pledge of Allegiance -The Pledge of Allegiance was respectfully forgone due to remote meeting limitations

Proposed Additions or Deletions to Agenda – Sauter requested to add the draft February 2021 Budget vs. Actual Expense Report to the agenda. This is a new template created by Interim Treasurer Demes Maydew for the Council to review and provide feedback. Demes Maydew explained that they will be able to create a similar report for Revenues and staff are continuing to work to get updated reports to Council and Staff that will meet everyone's needs. Consensus by the Council to proceed with the presentation of these reports moving forward. Demes Maydew was asked on a recap of the reconciliation process, currently BerganKDV will continue the bank reconciliation into 2021 as to keep a segregation of duties among staff members. *Motion by Pettie, second by Ovick to approve the agenda with the addition of discussing the draft February 2021 Budget vs. Actual Expense Report. On a roll-call vote, Sloan, Palmer, Ovick, Pederson and Pettie all voted in favor and none against. Motion carried.*

Open Forum – Nothing was brought forth.

American Rescue Act - Local Plan & Discussion - A presentation provided by the League of Minnesota Cities was included to explain the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Introduction (American Rescue Act). The amount that the City of Pine City will be receiving is unknown at this time. There will be two distributions 1st half 60 days after enactment and 2nd half not earlier than 12 months after first distribution. LMC provided examples of eligible uses for the funding but more information will be provided once funds are released. Pederson and Sloan attended the webinar and discussion was had on possible ways to use these funds. Three ideas were mentioned, investing in the City Hall building, water meter replacement city wide and investing in City parks (ie- WiFi in the parks). This will be a recurring discussion item on future Council agendas.

2021 City Goal Setting Presentation - Sauter included the previously presented 2021 Goal & Priorities powerpoint from the February 25, 2021 Council meeting as a jumping off point for the Council to review and discuss possible projects to fund using the American Rescue Act funds.

Committee Discussions & Updates

Executive Committee

EFMLA Leave Policy (COVID Leave Policy) - Sauter explained that this policy was drafted November of 2020 due to COVID-19 with a sunset date of December 31, 2020. The Council approved to extend the policy until March 2021 and the Executive Committee is recommending the Council extend the policy to June 30, 2021. *Motion by Pederson, second by Palmer to approve extending the Emergency Family Medical Leave Act, Leave Policy (COVID Leave Policy) to June 30, 2021. On a roll-call vote, Sloan, Palmer, Ovick, Pederson and Pettie all voted in favor and none against. Motion carried.*

Pederson requested staff to add discussion of opening City Hall on a future Council agenda. Sauter noted that staff have been working to obtain the information needed to present options to Council on fully reopening.

Fire Department

Fire Contract Amendment - extend to July 31, 2021. With a recommendation from the City Attorney, staff is requesting Council approve extending the current Contracted Fire Protection Services with other Municipalities from March 31, 2021 to July 31, 2021 to allow each municipality time to review and sign the contracts and to better align with the fiscal years for all municipalities while making minor changes to the future contract language. *Motion by Ovick, second by Sloan to approve the Extension and first amendment to contract for fire protection for contracted municipalities. On a roll-call vote, Sloan, Ovick, Pederson and Pettie all voted in favor, Palmer abstained and none against. Motion carried.*

Park & Recreation

Tree removal from City Hall - O'Rourke gave an overview Executive Committee's suggestion to remove the two crab apple trees from the northside of City Hall near the parking lot due to the berries dropping from these trees and sticking to vehicles as well as being tracked into the building causing complaints and extra cleaning charges. O'Rourke spoke with 3 local landscaping companies who all recommended not transplanting the two trees. The Public Works department has the ability to remove the trees, back-fill with dirt and plant grass seed at an estimated cost of \$700.00. Staff also obtained options from All Service North ranging from \$1,500.00 to \$3,306.00. Staff recommends Council purchase two replacement trees to be planted in another park to replace the two trees being removed. O'Rourke spoke to the Master Gardeners and they would be interested in maintaining anything we decide to put in place of the two removed trees. Sloan noted she would donate small pine trees to the project. Consensus of the Council that Councilor Palmer will work with Park and Recreation on a solution of what trees to plant in place of the removed trees or if we should plant trees in another location. *Motion by Ovick, second by Palmer to approve the Public Works Department removing and cleaning up the two trees on the northside of City Hall at their convenience. On a roll-call vote, Sloan, Palmer, Ovick, Pederson and Pettie all voted in favor and none against. Motion carried.*

Electronic Vehicle Charging Station & Greater Pine Area Endowment (GPAE) Grant - O'Rourke gave an overview on the East Central Energy's electric vehicle charging station grant awarded to the City of Pine City in February 2021 valued at \$1,360.00. Staff found the best and most affordable option for installation would be done at Robinson Park. Staff received two quotes from local electricians at roughly \$7,500.00 to install the charging station. This is an unbudgeted expense, however, the Park & Recreation improvements other than buildings (100-45200-530) budget line item can fund half of the installation, if Council supports staff to apply for the GPAE Grant for \$3,750.00 to cover the other half of installation costs. A lengthy discussion was had on the possible benefits of installing the vehicle charging station as a free service to residents in and out of town and the future costs that may be incurred. O'Rourke will look into the ECE awarded grant regulations further but noted a 2 year timeline for the charging station to be a free service. *Motion by Sloan, second by Pettie to approve proceeding with the Greater Pine Area Endowment Grant application process. On a roll-call vote, Sloan, Ovick and Pettie voted in favor and Palmer and Pederson voted against. Motion carried.*

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Alternative Landscaping Equipment Grant - O'Rourke explained the grant opportunity the MPCA is offering to replace 2-cycle gas powered landscaping and snow removal equipment with electronic powered equipment. The Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments came up with a list of equipment that will need to be replaced soon and a list of EGO brand equipment with interchangeable batteries that the

MPCA grant would cover. O'Rourke noted that they are looking to replace a chainsaw, push mower and snow blower and if awarded the City would be able to turn in any broken equipment. Discussion ensued regarding safety concerns. O'Rourke stated that the electronic powered equipment is quieter, lighter and easier for staff to use with interchangeable batteries. *Motion by Sloan to approve proceeding with the MPCA Alternative Landscaping Equipment Grant application, seconded by Pederson. On a roll-call vote, Sloan, Ovick, Pederson and Pettie voted in favor and Palmer against. Motion carried.*

National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Resilient Park Access Grant and Coaching - The NRPA is offering a Resilient Park Access Grant with Coaching to support projects that advance community driven, systems-level strategies for equitable park access that improves the environmental resilience and health of communities that is due on April 23, 2021. Roughly 6-10 grants will be awarded at \$300,000 - \$500,000 each. Staff listed Hilltop Recreation Area and Woodpecker Ridge/Lions Park as the most community-driven project at the moment. *Motion by Sloan to approve proceeding with the Resilient Park Access Grant and Coaching from NRPA for Hilltop Recreation Area, second by Pettie. On a roll-call vote, Sloan, Palmer, Ovick, Pettie and Pederson all voted in favor and none against. Motion carried.*

Cable Commission

Franchise Agreements & Discussion on Treasurer position with East Central Cable Commission - Councilor Palmer Questioning if the City of Pine City should be taking on the East Central Cable Commission Treasurer position and why North Branch isn't since they are the largest seat in the Commission. Noted that each member of the Commission normally takes turns serving as Treasurer and the Commission will reimburse us for our service.

Communications Team

March News Release - Staff submitted the March Article topic of Housing Programs-Funding Availability to the Pine City Pioneer & WCMP last week. Sauter will reach out to Lakes and Pines to see if they can hand out information on the housing projects when qualified applicants are scheduling tax appointments. Sauter will also send the news release to local real estate agents.

WCMP Radio Interview Monthly Schedule - Staff have been working with WCMP to create a monthly schedule for Council and staff members to attend interviews on the Monday following the first Wednesday of the month City Council meeting to discuss what's happening within Pine City. Staff will coordinate who will be interviewed each month and what topics will be discussed.

Public Works

Update on DNR Water Usage Report and Water Connection Report was presented for information. Dunbar explained that the City pays \$.81 per water connection to the state as a state tax requirement annually. The DNR water usage report is based on the gallons of water pumped from wells and unmetered water from sewer jetting, flooding the skating rinks etc., this report is due by February 15th every year. Dunbar and Montbriand will be working on the Water Conservation report at the end of March.

The February 2021 Running Water Report was presented for information. - Dunbar presented the summary of the residents who had to run water to prevent freezing of water lines during the month of February. Discussion was had on how to resolve this issue so residents would not need to run water and Montbriand noted reconstruction of infrastructure would need to be done. The areas that are running water are streets that have less pavement, deadends that have curb and gutter and lines are only buried 4 ft down. The number of accounts that need to run water has decreased over the years due to reconstruction improvements.

EDA

EDA draft February 24, 2021 meeting minutes were presented for information.

HRA

HRA draft March 16, 2021 meeting minutes were presented for information.

Liquor Committee

A Liquor Committee meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2021.

Mayor - Nothing at this time.

Miscellaneous

MSA Professional Services 3-11-2021 Update (Planning, City Hall & Robinson Park) - Kate Eiyneck and Lucas Jones of MSA provided a memo update on the City Planning Services, Robinson Park Concept Planning and City Hall Concept Planning as well as the status and next steps for each project. Pine County has provided all the documents they had on the building and all the information has been relayed to MSA.

Pine County Community Broadband Resources project - Sauter provided information on the Blandin Foundation selecting Pine County for Community Broadband Resources (CBR) Accelerate Program with the Goal to Improve Broadband Access. The program will provide a 15 week course of study and education about broadband for a community team. Currently there's 19 community members that have volunteered to participate, including Interim City Administrator Lezlie Sauter, Executive Director of the Pine City Area Chamber of Commerce Becky Schueller, and City of Pine City Resident Brian Scholin.

Adjourn

Motion by Sloan to adjourn meeting, second by Pettie. Verbal vote, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:32pm by Mayor Pederson.

Carl Pederson, Mayor

Lezlie Sauter, Interim City Administrator

Minutes taken by Administrative Assistant, Carissa Kranz
Next Regular Council meeting is April 7, 2021 at 6:30pm