

Finlayson City Council – Regular Meeting

Finlayson City Hall

September 9, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.

The regular city council meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. Monday, September 9, 2024 by Deputy Mayor Russell Lucht, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Members present: Russell Lucht, Joe Okun, Barb Morgan.

Council Members absent: Kim Schaefer, Dave Auchter

Others present: John Mikrot, Joe Luedtke, Randy Millner, Wyatt Lucht, Ed Palmer, Steve Christensen

Additions or Corrections:

- A. Correction: Moving New Business item D to beginning of Agenda. Motion by Okun to approve the hiring of Liz Kelly as City Clerk. Motion seconded by Morgan. All in favor. Motion carried. Motion by Okun to approve the hiring of Angela Jansen as Deputy Clerk. Motion seconded by Morgan. All in favor. Motion carried.
- B. Addition - Next month's meeting will need to be on 10/15 due to Columbus Day holiday.
- C. Ferrel cats and grading road on Sherman added to new business.

Petitions/Compliments/Complaints:

- A. Complaint: Community concern that Planning & Zoning Committee is not posting agendas or minutes publicly. Recently, there was an informational meeting regarding the Creamery building that was not shared publicly. However, the regular P&Z Committee meeting agenda was posted & shared publicly. Request was made to ensure all committee meetings, including informational meetings, are publicly shared.
10/15/24 Addition: The informational session was initiated by Pine County, and did not constitute a quorum of the Committee and was not required to be posted.
- B. Petition: Ed Palmer inquired about separate meter installment for lawn irrigation. Will address under Old Business.

Public Comments: None

Approval of Meeting Minutes and bills to be paid

- A. A motion was made by Okun to approve the August 12, 2024 regular city council minutes. Second by Lucht. All in favor. Motion carried.

- B. A motion was made by Morgan to pay the August bills. Second by Okun. All in favor.
Motion carried.

Reports:

A. John Mikrot, Water/Sewer Operator:

- a. Mikrot reports hydrant by Petry's out of service. Will try to flush hydrants by 1st of Oct, will have all fixed by winter. Clerk will need to post notice of hydrant flushing.
- b. Received quotes for the VFD (variable feed drive unit) for the high service pump at the water plant. One at \$4395.08, one at \$4177, with the lower bid being the contractor who installed system originally (Total Control). Mikrot recommends \$4177 bidder. Postpone until October.
- c. We have an agreement with McGuire Iron to inspect the inside of our water tower, and are in year two. We cannot complete inspection until VFD is installed. Inspection will require water pump to run 24/7 for four days to complete testing.
- d. Water tower well pump has been repaired/rebuilt; just waiting to get it back.
- e. Valve in water plant not working, Mikrot will try to troubleshoot prior to using contractor to repair. Seeking approval to utilize contractor if he cannot fix in-house. Council determined that approval is not needed, as it falls under maintenance budget.
- f. City quarterly bacteriological water samples: John is transporting & will work with Randy to transport rather than using USPS, to ensure prompt delivery.

B. Randy Millner, Public Works:

- a. Millner reports speed limit feedback signs installed on Friday 9/6.
- b. Morgan inquired about sidewalk by Catholic church. Motion to postpone until next year, as there is not much foot traffic.
- c. City is ready for winter plowing season & working on prepping the salt machine. Determined a backup snow plow contractor is not necessary; if necessary, we can hire as-needed rather than put to bid.

C. Joe Luedtke, Liquor Store Manager:

- a. Luedtke reports bar is going well. Aug profit \$35,104.06. **10/15/24 Correction: August profit was \$9736.47.**
- b. Main freezer in kitchen down for a week, lost food (inventory) and will do insurance claim, had to shut kitchen down.
- c. New TVs are installed, came in about \$200 under estimate.
- d. Ceiling tiles (for sound improvement) are about 90% up, and they have been receiving positive feedback. Randy is storing the removed tin panels in the water tower.
- e. Looking for another bartender.

- f. Food pricing was updated to ensure a profit.
- g. Morgan mentioned holiday (Labor Day) weekend staffing concern. Okun said staffing was good for weekend, but they were unexpectedly busy on Sunday. Luedtke will prepare for staffing for future holidays, to include two bartenders plus off-sale staff.

D. Wyatt Lucht, Fire Chief, Fire & Rescue Department:

- a. There were 14 calls in August: Three fire calls, eleven medical/rescue, year-to-date, we've had 107 calls total; this time last year we had 113. A total of 111 hours were put in for August.
- b. Karsky resigned eff 9/1. Will not affect operations, as hasn't been responding to rescues. 25 total members; 8 fire/rescue, 8 fire only, 9 rescue only.
- c. Fire Safety for Finlayson Elementary on Oct 2. Home school Fire Safety is also anticipated, but the date is TBD.
- d. In need of SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus.) Would like to order 1st of the year, as prices will increase.
- e. Fire Department is mandated to have annual meetings with the contracted Townships; it's challenging to attend their individual meetings as they conflict with other schedules. Proposed to invite townships to City of Finlayson, chili-potluck style. Opportunity to view equipment, trucks, meet volunteers and discuss business / build relations.

E. Clerk/Treasurer Report:

- a. City Clerk has been training with Lois Okun and will be attending League of MN Cities training on 9/12 & 9/13.
- b. Morgan requests to change section to "Clerk" Report vs. "Administrator" Report, as City of Finlayson does not have an Administrator, but a Clerk position. Minutes for this meeting will be adapted to new title.

F. Planning and Zoning Committee report by Joe Okun:

- a. Concern about minimal communication to all Council members. Okun would prefer to eliminate P&Z committee. Morgan does not agree: City has ordinances, comprehensive plan – if the P&Z committee doesn't address the planning & zoning items, it falls on the Council. No action taken.
- b. Council has received many complaints regarding building permits; however, we do not have a licensed building official. Askov, for example, uses the county, and if Finlayson utilizes the County, we could use their resources. *Correction: Askov's zoning is maintained by Askov. A current list of Pine County Ordinance*

Jurisdiction townships & Cities can be found on the Pine County website ([HERE](#)). If we continue to use our own, then we need a building official. We have ordinances in place, just no building official to enforce, and all ordinances are not currently posted publicly. Suggestion to adopt state code or county code for building rather than our own. Discussion will be continued; no action taken.

Old Business:

- A. Fire Contracts: Wagner township wanted an estimate to contract with City of Finlayson, sent by former Clerk in July. As of today, we have not received confirmation of approval of contract. Note that estimates to Townships are based on Net Tax Capacity, and those numbers are finalized by the County, and won't be available to us until November.
- B. Speed limit signs – done; see Public Works report.
- C. Northern Contractors WAC/SAC – postponed
- D. Schaefer Memorial Park – postponed
- E. Resurface on Broadway near DSE – Concern is whether resurfacing before the winter is the best move or not. Suggestion to revisit after winter, to see how it holds up. No action taken; will add to March 2025 agenda.
- F. Sewer overage fee for irrigations systems & pools – Discussion regarding filling pools, however no way to monitor usage, frequency of pools filled. No action taken regarding sewer charge for pools filled. Motion made by Morgan to forego the sewer charge for residents who have a permanent irrigation system installed. Property owners must have purchased & installed (at owner's expense) a second meter to monitor usage. Second by Okun. All in favor. Motion carried.
- G. City Hall – Aquarius geo-thermal HVAC system: Received quotes from Willow River Geothermal (D&E) & Cross-Country Mechanical (Aquarius.) Discussion regarding contractors' ability to service installed HVAC in the future; it's ideal to ensure the installer is also the servicer. Morgan made motion to accept WR Geothermal bid of \$18,258.75. Okun second. All in favor. Motion carried.
- H. Financial Report deadline Sept 30 – Clerk checked; confirmation from Oberloh & Oberloh, Ltd that report submitted at the end of July to the MN OSA.
- I. Cannabis Law – Pine Co Ordinance – Suggestion for City to adopt County ordinance; no action taken. Postponed until October.
- J. Bollig Engineering meeting reschedule date – Council would like to invite Bollig to attend October 15 meeting, 6-6:30 prior to regular meeting. Noted that this meeting would still need to be posted since there may be a quorum, all though it will be informational. Clerk will reach out to Bollig.

New Business:

- A. Pine Co Opioid Settlement Meeting 9/12 – Pine Co received opioid settlement; is holding a meeting to solicit input on best way to spend the funding. Council availability to attend is limited; Clerk will check into recorded session and pass onto Council.
- B. Policy: Sewer Rate Policy for irrigation & pools – Clerk will check with League of MN Cities to see if policy is necessary.
- C. Snowplowing preparedness: See Public Works report.
- D. Confirmation by Council of new Clerk: See Additions/Corrections section.
- E. Clerks & Deputy Clerk bank signatories: Okun motion to Liz Kelly to be bank signatory. Okun motion to approve Deputy Clerk Angela Jansen for bank signatory. Morgan second both motions. All in favor. Both motions carried.
- F. ESST / PTO policy – Morgan & Schaffer to research; postponed to October or November meeting. Will need finalized policy prior to 1/1/25.
- G. City hall hours – Suggestion by Clerk to revisit as needed, to allow for introductory period. Will revisit in January 2025.
- H. Preliminary Levy Certification - Has to be certified by 9/30 with the County. Motion by Okun to approve the proposed preliminary levy of \$134,524 by Okun. Second by Lucht. All in favor. Motion carried.
- I. Email change, forwarding, back-up process for old SCI - City has email under record retention but backup needs to be completed by November 1. Clerk will purchase external hard drive and will back up files to store; no motion required.
- J. Report on Creamery Meeting with Pine Co – Discussion regarding history of creamery: Building owned by State, offered in 2021 to City for \$1, city declined at that time as it would cost \$72k-\$100k demo. If City can purchase for minimal cost, a new asbestos analysis would be required and the County resources would be limited. Okun proposes city purchases for minimal cost, and develop a plan for the building at that time. No action taken; postponed until October meeting.
- K. Unemployment of former Deputy Clerk – info reviewed by council.
- L. Work Comp – info reviewed by council.
- M. Complaint regarding feral cats on the southwest side of town and near creamery/feed store. Resident off Lake Street is possibly feeding animals outside. Clerk will review ordinances and draft letter to resident to formalize the complaint.
- N. Finlayson grading on Sherman Rd – Clerk will contact Pine Lake township (Troy Colsrud) to inquire about agreement / responsibility.

A motion by Morgan to adjourn an 8:00 p.m. Second by Okun. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Liz Kelly, City Clerk