

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MEETING MINUTES
RANIER COMMUNITY BUILDING
May 12, 2014 @ 6:30 p.m.**

Mayor Dennis Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Council Present: Mayor Dennis Wagner, Councilmembers Brenda Bauer, Tony Cole, Todd Coulombe and Ron Wilcox

Others present: City Administrator Sherril Gautreaux, Deputy City Clerk Tara Mai, Liquor Store Manager Gretchen Coulombe, Maintenance Manager Nick Sears, Leon Lessard, Thomas Hall, Mike Wellcome, Barry Woods, Mr. & Mrs. Gary Abrams, Jeff McHarg, Rob Plasky, Larry Oveson, Wilbur Tveit

BUDGET/ADMINISTRATION BUSINESS

The minutes of previous Council Meeting (4/21/2014) were reviewed.

Recommendation by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Bauer and carried to approve previous minutes from the Regular Council Meeting (4/21/2014).

The Committee reviewed the List of Bills for the month of April, 2014.

Recommendation by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Cole and carried to approve the April, 2014 list of bills in the amounts of:

**\$20,331.52 for Water
\$14,390.01 for General and
\$34,645.67 for Liquor Store.**

Review of Account Balances for Liquor, General and Water accounts and Profit and Loss Statements for all three accounts.

Recommendation by Councilmember Bauer; seconded by Councilmember Cole and carried to table the reports and discuss the account balances and Profit and Loss statements to date for each account at the next regular council meeting.

City Administrator Sherril Gautreaux reported that KEDA/Small Business advisor Jenny Herman provided payroll administration assistance during which she recommended

requesting a \$1255 refund from Minnesota Unemployment Fund. A refund was received and deposited in the General Fund offsetting payroll liabilities.

LIQUOR STORE BUSINESS

Liquor Manager's Report: Liquor Store Manager Gretchen Coulombe presented the Liquor Store Operating Statement for April 2014.

The Committee reviewed the Operating Statement for the month of April, 2014 with a net profit of \$1122.52 or 3.25% and a year to date profit of \$21,497.84 as compared to April 2013 which had a net profit of \$7521.31 and a year to date profit of \$24,536.07. Profits are down due to \$4600 expense in replacing the compressor on the walk-in cooler. Additionally, the point of sale system was also down for 2 weeks. Some sales are lost because patrons aren't able to pay with a credit card. Gretchen is very frustrated with the lack of tech support as promised in the service agreement with TRS. She will be able to meet with the company to address her concerns while at the MMBA conference.

Recommendation by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Bauer and carried to approve the April 2014 Liquor Store Operating Statement.

Information relayed to the Council regarding the workers compensation petition filed by liquor store employee, Kim Nugent, for 5/25/2012 injury to her leg which became infected resulting in skin grafts.

Councilmember Todd Coulombe will be at the MMBA conference on 5/19 and asked that the Regular Council meeting be rescheduled to Wednesday 5/21/2014.

Recommendation by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Bauer to change council meeting date from 5/19/2014 to 5/21/2014.

BUILDINGS, STREETS AND GROUNDS BUSINESS

Maintenance Report Maintenance Manager Sears gave a brief report on maintenance issues. Last week, the streets were swept by the County and Sjoblom's swept the sidewalks. Tom Wherley has continuing issues with his personal sewer line. Sears has identified several culverts that are in need of repair or replacement. Sears will be attending the Class D Water Training this week. He would like for Leon Lessard to start work on Tuesday 5/13/2014 so that a maintenance worker will be available while he is out of town attending the training. Sears would like to hire an additional part-time summer worker.

Recommendation by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Wilcox and carried to approve the hiring of an additional summer worker to work part-time.

With spring time beginning, there is a long list of things to be completed for the parks and grounds. Mayor Wagner suggested making an ongoing list and reporting completion dates back to the Council.

Jameson Dock Update

Councilman Wilcox reported for Carl Brown that Rainy Lake Barge & Construction has completed the Jameson Dock except for an anchor that must be placed. Mayor Wagner offered the use of his barge for placing the dock anchor. The ramp to the dock which should be ADA compliant needs to be completed. Brown is not able to construct an ADA compliant ramp way to the dock. The Council will need to decide how to proceed with constructing the ramp. As a matter of record, Brown has been paid \$6000, ½ of the money due on the project. The remaining \$6000 will be paid upon the council's satisfaction that the job has been completed.

Mayor Wagner would like for us to look into any availability of grants for shoreline enhancement around the dock and ramp and along with rip-rap for the Seven Oaks shoreline.

Community Building Improvements

A proposal was received from Jim Lucachick to provide architectural services in submitting grants for improvements to the Community Hall. He proposes a fee of not to exceed \$500 or broken down into hourly work which can be covered in the grant award.

Recommendation by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Cole and carried to approve the contract with Jim Lucachick for architectural services in submittal of grants for improvements to the Community Hall.

In the matter of blight, Koochiching County Environmental Services Division, Dale Olson, has sent letters to two Ranier citizens, Anton Rud Jr. and Tara Nelson, concerning blight. Jeff McHarg stated that Tara Nelson has been gone for the winter and will begin cleaning up the property. Mayor Wagner wants to review our blight/public nuisance ordinance to ensure it has appropriate enforcement provisions. Mayor Wagner would also like for the Council to consider appointing a Land Use Administrator who would handle the blight or nuisance complaints and enforce land related issues.

Council will bring ideas to the next meeting about appointing a Land Use Commissioner and how the person will be compensated, i.e., per meeting, flat rate, etc.

WATER BUSINESS

In the matter of frozen sewers, Mayor Wagner and Maintenance Manager Sears will think about methods that may be used to possibly prevent future freeze ups.

Citizen Barry “Woody” Woods spoke about increasing water and sewer rates asserting that the City of International Falls and Ranier have the highest water rates in the country. He would like to form a citizens committee to address the issue and how the water rates may be decreased. Councilmember Coulombe attended the Chamber of Commerce meeting earlier in the day who also addressed the concerns of exorbitant water rates and how they impact economic development and existing businesses. He suggested that Woody could be involved with the Chamber on addressing the issue.

OTHER BUSINESS

In the matter of the Knudson Family Grant application submittal for the playground exercise equipment, the City received the grant of \$5000.00. The exercise equipment will be ordered this week.

In the matter of placing more equipment and activities such as a fire ring in Ranier Park, Citizen Wilbur Tveit expressed his concerns over the lack of parking and noise after dark. Tveit would like for the Council to be cautious about developing the park such to minimize the parking concerns and noise. Tveit doesn’t want exercise equipment near his house. Tveit also doesn’t believe a fire ring in the park is a good idea because the park closes at sunset and generally, folks like to sit around a fire ring after dark. The Council and Sears will meet at the park to discuss placement of “no parking” signs.

Citizen Jeff McHarg, proprietor of Woody’s Pub, requested that a port-a-let be placed near the dock at Spruce Street Landing for the summer so that boaters coming in off the lake can have access to restrooms facilities rather than using the restroom in his pub. He requested that an additional port-a-let be placed at the dock during the Ranier Days Festival.

Recommendation made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Bauer and carried to approve the rental of a port-a-let to be placed at Spruce Street Dock landing with an additional one added during the Ranier Days Festival.

In the matter of the “Sunset Project” organized by Mary Ann Kasich and Jeff McHarg, KCDA awarded a \$2250 grant to retro-fit the power pole near Spruce Street Dock with additional power outlets to be used by vendors and performers. Howard Davis,

electrician, will install the outlets. He has been contacted and will begin work on the project soon.

Land Use Ordinance Implementation

In the matter of the proposed land use ordinance, members of the Citizen's Committee (Mike Wellcome, Robert Plasky, Larry Oveson, Wilbur Tveit) who developed the ordinance were in attendance. They stressed that the Council study the ordinance and bring any comments back to the next Council meeting. The implementation process involves three public meetings facilitated by Josh Bergstad, ARDC, which can begin in June.

Recommendation by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Wilcox and carried to proceed with the implementation process of the Land Use Ordinance.

In regards to the ongoing complaints stemming from quarry blasting by Bowman Construction, Mayor Wagner proposed that he and City Administrator Gautreaux attend the Koochiching County Commissioners Meeting on Tuesday at 11:00. He will again ask that the Commission require that the quarry operations follow the requirements in the draft Conditional Use Permit.

Citizens Mr. and Mrs. Abrams attended the meeting to discuss the condition of First Avenue. Mr. Abrams stated that First Avenue is in poor repair and would like to have it graveled or blacktopped. Mayor Wagner stated that we are researching the applicability of funding for city street development. Mr. Abrams also discussed weed control on the Koeffler property and that we should get on top of it in the spring before it gets out of control. Mayor Wagner acknowledged their concerns.

Recommendation by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Bauer and carried to adjourn the committee meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETING ADJOURNED @ 8:20 p.m.