

**CITY OF RANIER  
CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
RANIER COMMUNITY BUILDING  
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15, 2015 @ 6:30 pm**

Mayor Dennis Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. A quorum was present.

**Council Present:** Mayor Dennis Wagner, Councilmembers Tony Cole, Todd Coulombe, JoAnn Kellner and Ron Wilcox

**Council Absent:** None

**Ranier Employees Present:** City Administrator Sherril Gautreaux, Deputy Clerk Tara Mai, Buddy Lessard

**Others in Attendance:** Richard Johnson of The International Falls Journal, Sue Swendsen, John Bruggeman, Paul Jones, Mary Ann Kasich, Sharon Ball, Jeff and Amy McHarg, George Hnatiuk,

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

- To approve tonight's agenda.

**A motion to approve tonight's agenda was made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Cole and carried unanimously.**

**BUDGET/ADMINISTRATION**

- To approve the minutes of the previous Council Meeting (09/15/2015).

**A motion was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Coulombe and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the previous Regular Council Meeting of 08/18/2015.**

- To approve the General, Liquor and Water/Sewer Fund Claims for August, 2015.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Cole and carried unanimously to approve the August, 2015 list of claims in the amounts of:**

**\$ 14,588.98 for General Fund  
\$ 23,977.22 for Liquor Store Fund**

**\$ 21,463.15 for Water Fund**

- To accept the Profit and Loss Statements for Liquor, General and Water fund accounts 8/31/2015.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Cole; seconded by Councilmember Kellner and carried unanimously to accept the Liquor, General and Water funds profit and loss statements from August 2015.**

- To accept the account balance reports as of August 31, 2015 for Liquor, General and Water Funds.

**A motion to accept the fund account balances for Liquor, General and Water fund for August, 2015 was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Coulombe and carried unanimously.**

- To approve city policy on vacating streets/alleys.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Cole and carried unanimously to approve City Administrator Gautreaux and Councilmember Wilcox to approve the city policy on vacating streets/alleys.**

- To approve Resolution 2015-07 supporting VNP sewer project.

Koochiching County Environmental Services Director Dale Olson asked various local agencies to pass a resolution supporting the Voyageur's National Park Sewer Project and to send a supporting letter to specific federal parties.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Coulombe and carried unanimously to approve Resolution 2015-07 supporting the VNP sewer project.**

- To review street improvement proposal

Mayor Wagner met with retired Koochiching County Engineer Doug Grindall to assess the current road conditions for any improvements/overlay that should be made this year since the price of blacktop is very affordable at this time. It would take an estimated budget of \$60,000 to blacktop the priority streets in city of Ranier including French and Jameson. County Road 113 is in the worst shape but would cost around \$30,000 itself. This road is not included in the \$60,000 estimate. Wagner stated that we may be able to approach the County to assist with expenses on upgrades on Co Rd 113 since it accesses the Foreign Trade Zone. Wagner would like to get permission to post it for use by cars and pick-up trucks only.

The 2015 budget currently has \$42,216 remaining in Street Capitol Project. Mayor Wagner asked the Council if they want him to pursue getting the cheapest quote possible to stay

within the budget. Wilcox would like to stay within the budget but not go much beyond that. Cole wanted to confirm that it would not include Co Rd 113.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Coulombe and carried unanimously to approve Mayor Wagner pursuing a quote on the street improvements while staying within the budgeted amount of \$42,216.**

- To approve Resolution 2015-09 adopting proposed 2016 tax levy.

City Administrator Gautreaux explained that the 2015 total tax capacity for the City of Ranier increased from \$486,000 to \$557,618 or around a 14% increase. The increase stems from the State of Minnesota Department of Revenue assessments of CN/Wisconsin Central RR property which increased from 2014's assessments. Gautreaux discussed the increase with Koochiching County Administrator Teresa Briggs and Assessor Len Peterson who both agreed that the increase was due to a change in the railroad valuation. Ms. Briggs stressed that valuation of railroad property is set by the MNDOR and can fluctuate annually and thus cannot be relied upon to stay the same year to year. In order to capture the total tax capacity increase without raising property taxes, the tax levy could be increased 14% from \$156,000 to \$177,840.

In accordance with Minnesota Statute, all cities must adopt a proposed budget and certify proposed tax levy to the county auditor on or before September 30. The Final Levy may be lower than the proposed levy, but may not exceed the proposed levy. On or before September 30, the city must provide the county auditor with the date, time and place of the scheduled meeting at which the final budget and levy will be determined. Our December regularly scheduled council meeting is December 15<sup>th</sup> in which the Council will discuss the final budget and tax levy. The Council must vote on a proposed levy at the 9/15/15 regular council meeting.

Mayor Wagner proposed a levy of \$190,000 stating that when we finalize the budget, we can reduce the levy amount if necessary.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Kellner and carried unanimously to approve proposing the 2016 tax levy at \$190,000.**

- To approve Resolution 2015-08 Certifying Delinquent Water Bill to be Assessed against Property Owner's 2016 Property Taxes.

**A motion was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Cole and carried unanimously to approve certifying the delinquent water bill to be assessed against the property owner's 2016 property taxes.**

- Council Proposals for CN EcoConnections.

Mayor Wagner stated that we need to have a plan to submit for CN grant application for the “From the Ground Up” program. He suggested that we talk with MNDOT about the proposed Spruce Street/Highway 11 intersection to be reconstructed in 2017 and propose an entryway with trees in the median and the triangle similar to the design rendered by Thomas Hall. Jeff McHarg would like to propose tree cover behind his property and MNDNR lot to buffer the railroad noises. Additionally, trees could be planted near the rink along the railroad. Sharon Ball asked if there could be trees planted along the alley property near her house. There is an October 8 deadline for submitting the grant application on-line.

- Koochiching County Historical Society 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Dinner 10/1/2015 @ 6:00 pm @ Ranier Community Hall

The Koochiching County Historical Society will hold its 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Dinner at the Ranier Community Hall on 10/1/2015 @ 6:00 pm. Two local authors Peggy Vigoren and Mike Williams will discuss their books on Ranier and Rainy Lake history. The public is welcome. Reservations are required @ \$25 per person.

## LIQUOR STORE

- To approve the August 2015 Liquor Operating Statement

**A motion to approve the August 2015 Liquor Store Operating Statement was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Kellner and carried unanimously.**

## OTHER BUSINESS

Sharon Ball presented a police report from July 7<sup>th</sup> where she stated that she was mauled by Dianna Hoopingarner’s dog, Duke. Ms. Ball called the Sheriff’s department on that day and made a complaint regarding the dog. Ms. Ball handed out a copy of the Sheriff’s report from July 7<sup>th</sup> along with a picture of a body part showing a scratch and a bruise. Ms. Ball stated that she feels like she should receive proper protection from the city. Ball presented the City Ordinance No. 79 and asked that notification be made to the dog owner that her dog be leashed. Ms. Ball stated that she had to construct a fence to keep dogs away from her dog. She wants council to address the issue. She stated that if the city would have followed the Ordinance that she would not have to be here before them. She stated that the Council is not protecting it’s our own citizens.

Councilmember Coulombe asked Ms. Ball why she is bringing this issue up now if it happened on July 7<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Ball stated that she is bringing it up now because of a recent incident at the Ranier Liquor Store involving Duke and George Hnatiuk’s dog, Kahn. She wants to protect Kahn because she heard that Dianna Hoopingarner wants to have Kahn put down. Ms. Ball

wants to know why dogs are allowed in the bar. Ball criticized Councilmember Wilcox stating that if he was worried about liability with a concession stand at the rink, then he should be worried about liability with dogs in the bar because someone could fall over a dog or be bitten. Mayor Wagner stated that he didn't believe that dogs should be allowed in the bar. Wilcox stated that dogs have always been coming in the Muni.

Mayor Wagner asked Ms. Ball whether she talked to the dog's owner. Ms. Ball stated that she tried to but had to make a complaint to Sheriff's Department on Ms. Hoopingarner because she said Ms. Hoopingarner stalked her and cajoled her. She stated that she didn't know she had any recourse until she read the Ordinance. Mayor Wagner stated that controlling a dog is the owner's responsibility not the city's responsibility.

Councilmember Cole brought up a recent situation regarding neighbors' dogs in Jameson Addition neighborhood.

Sue Swendsen stated that if someone came in and filed a complaint, then the owner would be notified of the complaint. She questioned "is the answer to leash every dog"? Swendsen stated that she would hate to see every dog leashed in Ranier. Swendsen stated that dogs, like people, will fight. She believes it is more of a nuisance if a dog is not neutered and believes that the Council should look into requiring dogs to be neutered.

Councilmember Coulombe stated that the Council will review the ordinance and make sure it is being followed. Mayor Wagner stated that Ranier's "no leash law" gives the town character and has been in existence for a long time. He stated that however, there will be issues, but the dog owner is responsible for their own dog. He stated that if there is a civil issue it is with the dog owner not the city. The responsibility lies with the dog owners.

Ms. Ball stated that she wants the city to follow its ordinance. Mayor Wagner stated that she has to understand the uniqueness of the town and that people like it the way it is.

Paul Jones stated that he was recently accosted by some dog and other dogs trying to get into his yard. He stated that Ranier has been cavalier about the dog ordinance. Councilmember Kellner stated that we should send a complaint letter to Ms. Hoopingarner. She stated that it is the owner's responsibility to tend to their dogs. Kellner suggested that we send a letter out to all residents to make sure that their dogs are licensed. Ms. Ball suggested that the City should charge for a license.

Mayor Wagner stated that this is a loose run community with a lot of freedom and that is why everyone likes to live here. Mary Ann Kasich stated that we have very few bad dogs. Kasich stated that we should take care of the bad dogs so that everyone can enjoy the freedom of Ranier.

Councilmember Wilcox asked whether we can we publish a notice in the paper to advise everyone that they need to register the dog? Gary Abrams stated that there are new dogs in the neighborhood that are aggressive. Maybe the dynamics are changing.

George Hnatiuk stated that there are two issues: dog-on-dog and dog-on-human. He stated that dog on human is more of a problem and that some sort of action should be taken if there is a dog bite on a human.

Sue Swendsen stated that it would be great if everyone gets their dog registered but what about the dogs that are not Ranier dogs? Swendsen stated that she walks around Ranier and not scared of any Ranier dog.

Mayor Wagner stated that it boils down to owner responsibility.

John Bruggeman asked the Council to look into a “dark sky ordinance” which has certain lighting standards for artificial outdoor lights. Bruggeman stated that “dark sky ordinances” are very common now and could help lessen the impact of the lights at the railroad depot. Sample ordinances can be found. Mayor Wagner agreed that it is a good suggestion and the Council will look into that. Councilmember Coulombe stated that we will also review the Land Use Plan lighting language.

Mr. Bruggeman asked about the city’s LGA and why are we the lowest in the state @ \$75 per capita? Mayor Wagner stated that he did get it increased around 121% since he has been in office. Wagner stated that he will see if we can get an increase and it is a very political issue. Wagner stated that it would be a good question to bring up at the upcoming State Representative candidate forum.

Gary Abrams asked how long before we have a quiet zone? Mayor Wagner stated that Koochiching County Engineer Joe Sutherland has hired a consultant to make the application for the county.

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilmember Coulombe seconded by Councilmember Kellner and carried unanimously.**

**THE MEETING ADJOURNED @ 7:44 p.m.**

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**Mayor Dennis Wagner**  
ATTEST:

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**Date**

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**City Administrator Sherril Gautreaux**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**