

**CITY OF RANIER  
CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MEETING MINUTES  
RANIER COMMUNITY BUILDING  
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 2020 @ 6:30 pm**

Council Present: Mayor Dennis Wagner, Councilmembers Todd Coulombe, Bob Dunbar, JoAnn Kellner and Ron Wilcox  
Absent: None  
Others present: City Administrator Sherril Gautreaux, Deputy Clerk Tara Mai, Liquor Store Manager Jenn Seegert, Public Works Manager Nick Sears, Tammy Toratti, Sue Swendsen, John Bruggeman, Charles Helleloid, Mrs. Kucera, June Fulton, David Trompeter, Jennifer Lahmayer, Paul Kavan, Deb and Gary Abrams, Sharon Ball and Kevin, Bud Lessard, Pam Oveson, Tony Brenning

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

- To approve tonight's agenda.

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

**BUDGET/ADMINISTRATION**

- Recommend approval of the minutes of the previous Council Meeting (08/18/2020).

Councilmember Coulombe noticed a correction that needed to be made on page 4.

**Recommendation by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Kellner and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the previous Regular Council Meeting of 08/18/2020 after making the correction to page 4.**

- Review the Lists of Claims for the month of August, 2020.

**Recommendation by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Dunbar and carried unanimously to approve the August, 2020 lists of claims in the amounts of:**

\$20,837.14 for General Fund  
\$15,519.25 for Liquor Fund  
\$22,456.22 for Water/Sewer Fund

\$5,062.50 for CR 130 Fund

- Review the Account Balances, Disbursement Ledgers and Financial Statements as of 07/31/2020.

**A recommendation was made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Wilcox and carried unanimously to table the reports and discuss the account balances, disbursement ledgers and financial statements to date for each fund at the next regular council meeting.**

- COVID-19 and CARES Act update.

Noted that cumulative cases of COVID-19 in Koochiching County are 93 compared to last month's committee of the whole meeting of 82 cumulative positive tests. Minnesota as a whole stands at around 81,000 cumulative positive cases. Approximately 1.6 million tests have been administered to date in Minnesota. As of 09/03/2020, Testing rates are at a 4.0% cumulative positive rate for Koochiching County and the Statewide positive rate is 5.5%. Compared to last month's rates for Koochiching County of 4.2% and 5.8% statewide.

The Koochiching County Small Business Relief Fund Program is underway. Another CARES Act meeting will be held on Thursday to review the small business applications. City has contributed 10% and may have more money to contribute.

Mayor Wagner thanked businesses and employees for working through the COVID-19 pandemic.

- To recommend approval of Resolution 2020-10 CARES Act expenditures

Resolution 2020-10 asks the Council to approve \$2,154.81 of expenditures from the CARES Act funds.

**A recommendation was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Coulombe and carried unanimously to approve Resolution 2020-10 CARES Act expenditures.**

- To recommend approval of Resolution 2020-09 Proposed Tax Levy

The fully taxable net tax capacity for 2020 is 7% higher than last year. The proposed tax levy is can be set at the same rate of 36% and still capture the increased net tax capacity without raising the property taxes. The proposed tax levy is \$253,000.

**A recommendation was made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Dunbar and carried unanimously to approve Resolution 2020-09 Proposed Tax Levy.**

## **LIQUOR STORE**

- Liquor Manager's Report

The Council reviewed the Liquor Store Operating Statement for the month of August, 2020 with a net profit of \$2,170.07. The year-to-date net profit is \$17,530.56 compared to August 2019 with a net profit of \$9,489.89 and a 2019 year-to-date net profit of \$38,341.95. The Liquor Store is only allowed to have customers at 50% capacity of the building at this time due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The sales were similar to 2019 if you subtract the sales of the Ranier Days weekend. Employees are paying attention to COVID safety precautions. There will be no pig roast because of COVID safety precautions.

**Recommendation made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Coulombe and carried unanimously to approve the August 2020 Liquor Store Operating Statement.**

## **BUILDINGS, STREETS AND GROUNDS**

- Maintenance Report

Public Works Supervisor Nick Sears reported that he is still working on the 2 personal waterlines. There is a water leak in the alley behind Percy Blair's house. The snowbirds will start leaving soon and will need their water turned off. Councilmember Dunbar stated that the boards at the rink are going to need a lot of work. Sears stated that once the boards expand and contract and once it cools off, they will work on the boards. They will also put new rails off the steps at the back door. Councilmember Dunbar painted the bridge in the park and it looks very nice. Mayor Wagner contacted MNDOT about the street lights on TH 11 which should be installed this month.

- To recommend Scheduling a Meeting with International Falls City Council Regarding Water Rates

**Recommendation made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Dunbar and carried unanimously to schedule a meeting with International Falls City Council regarding water rates.**

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- Duluth Street Boat Launch and Public Parking

Mayor Wagner stated that the council did receive a lot of comments on the boat launch project and doesn't see any comments that can't be addressed. Councilmember Wilcox added that it is just a matter of working through the issues.

Wagner read through comments as follows:

- Trees should be plotted on the actual location of the drawings. Wagner stated that it was not necessary because the trees are marked out with the survey.
- Larger floating dock. Wagner stated that the floating dock is just for putting boats in and taking boats out, but will look at pricing of a larger floating dock.
- Handicapped parking closer to the ramp. Mayor Wagner stated that perhaps some work could be done on Duluth Street for closer parking and could perhaps make it handicapped.
- Project aims to bring more traffic to already congested area. Mayor Wagner stated that he didn't see that it would bring more congestion because it would be one boat at a time. Councilmember Dunbar asked who would be enforcing the parking regulations stating that he is for the project but at other launches he sees vehicles parking anywhere they want. Mayor Wagner stated that there would be signage. Councilmember Coulombe stated that vehicles that would violating would be towed away.
- Day use only. Mayor Wagner stated that is a good idea. Councilmember Kellner stated that there should be no overnight stays in the parking lot.
- No wake buoy. Minimal lighting. Mayor Wagner stated that lights could be on a timer.

Sharon Ball commented that she doesn't want people turning around in her yard rutting up her yard. She stated that she doesn't want any parking in front of her home on the river. Mayor Wagner offered that there would be plenty of signage. Ball heard rumors of the city taking her property by eminent domain; Mayor Wagner stated that there would be no reason to take her property. Ball worried about lighting disturbing her and her guests in the vacation rental. Wagner stated that lighting will be minimal especially with no overnight parking. Ball worried about speeding in the area. Wagner stated that he couldn't see anyone speeding with a boat trailer. Ball worried about drainage from North Duluth Street. Wagner stated that there would be a culvert under the boat landing with a catch basin.

Ball stated that she wanted the wooden pillars with the nautical rope like at the park to be put around her property to stop people from entering her property. Ball stated that she removed a tree from a blind spot on city right of way at her own expense. Ball stated that she has made many improvements to her property. Right now, people park everywhere they want around 7 Oaks Park. Ball doesn't want her view ruined. July 1<sup>st</sup> is always a problem (Canadian fireworks). Ball doesn't want lighting from headlights to go right into her residence. Ball wants something for blockades to keep folks from parking on her property and her yard getting rutted. Ball is worried about folks backing up into her property and will end up being a liability to the city. City can afford to do something to help her property. Mayor Wagner agreed and will look at how to address her issues. Ball also hears from neighbors that they have discomfort and is ruining their life. Ball wondered if there was a better place for the launch.

Bruggeman wanted a clarification of the areas that will be disturbed. Are trees going to be cut down? Wagner stated that there will be some additional plantings and that they are not planning on cutting trees down at 7 oaks park. Bruggeman asked if the city will comply with city zoning ordinance. Wagner stated that the city will comply with its ordinances. Bruggeman stated that

last Tuesday's meeting was pathetic. Wagner stated that he wanted comments on project and for folks to look at plans.

Dave Trompeter stated that he has enjoyed the park for 75 years and doesn't want it destroyed. Trees that are over 100 years old should never be cut. Trompeter stated that we don't need another marina. Trompeter stated that he doesn't want the project. Mayor Wagner thanked him for his opinion.

Sue Swendsen voiced her opinion stating that it is a stupid plan and that there are residences impacted by this plan. Swendsen continued with how come none of those residents even knew about any of this? How come steering committee was behind closed doors? She stated there was no attempt to reach out to residents. Paid attention to Main Street residents. Don't want any business here.

Jennifer Lahmayer commented about increased congestion and that adding a boat launch will bring more congestion and that it needs to be considered. Mayor Wagner stated that there is no denying that will bring some traffic to the area. Lahmayer stated that what's not being said is that a lot of people think it is a great plan but not there. Wagner stated that the committee looked at 6 spots and determined that this is the best spot that is available. Lahmayer asked if the committee did any fact finding with community and that if so there would have had better acceptance of project.

Dunbar inquired if we need another landing?

Charles Helleloid stated that he is not a resident but has property in Ranier and is concerned whether a boat landing is needed. It seems that you would want to have a targeted user. The existing landing has been used for years. Like to do the things that we have to do and not do things that we don't have to do.

Mayor Wagner stated that the existing ramp will be eliminated with the pier project. Wagner stated that you build things for entire community not just a few.

Paul Kavan stated that he has seen dozens of boats over the past week and multiple times this summer that could not park their boat at Spruce Street because the spots were full.

Deb Abrams wondered if you just close the existing ramp, then just let them go someplace else to launch. There are plenty of other launches around. Mayor Wagner stated that it is a convenience to be able to launch your boat in the city.

Gary Abrams stated that at a meeting it was sold to us that the current launch was dangerous and obsolete why don't they close it down. Who owns Duluth Street? Why is it in rotten repair and now it is critical?

Bruggeman stated that he has looked at minutes and that the steering committee has vested interest in this project. Councilmember Wilcox stated that the projects are about the future of Ranier and that we want it to grow for our children and grandchildren.

Mayor Wagner asked if he could get a recommendation to proceed with the project. Councilmember Wilcox stated that there is nothing to vote on yet and that it would need to go to zoning committee first.

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

**THE COMMITTEE MEETING ADJOURNED @7:46 p.m.**