

**CITY OF RANIER
CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MEETING MINUTES
RANIER COMMUNITY BUILDING
TUESDAY DECEMBER 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, Public Works Manager Nick Hagen, Deputy Clerk Tara Mai, Liquor Store Manager Jenn Seegert, Ranier Recreation Club Rep- Berta Wilcox, Ranier Roost-Linda Salo & John Decker, Tammy Toratti, Bud Lessard, Darcy Sullivan–KCC-TV, Jennifer Lahmayer, Koochiching Historical Society-Ashley Lavigne, Charles Helleloid, Dan Joyce, Mike Wellcome

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 Dunbar and carried unanimously.

BUDGET/ADMINISTRATION

- Recommend approval of the minutes of the previous Council Meeting (11/17/2020).

Recommendation by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Kellner and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the previous Regular Council Meeting of 11/17/2020.

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

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

\$18,859.24 for General Fund
\$ 8,368.29 for Liquor Fund
\$23,451.19 for Water/Sewer Fund

- Review the Account Balances, Disbursement Ledgers and Financial Statements as of 11/30/2020.

Gautreaux distributed an updated General Fund Financial Statement pointing out that the City has received its second payment of property taxes. Local Government Aid and Insurance Trust refunds totaling around \$30,000 are due to be received in December. Over \$22,000 of the rink expenses occurred in 2019 and will not be calculated into the 2020 expenditures because the City is accounting on a modified accrual basis rather than a cost basis. In reviewing the expenses, if the CARES Act expenditures are deducted, the City is still \$35,000 under budget.

With these receipts, the General Fund will be above its budget by around \$30,000 and therefore will not necessitate the transfer of \$20,000 from the Liquor Fund. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, cash flow projections for 2021 are unpredictable, especially through the winter.

A recommendation to not transfer \$20,000 from the Liquor Fund to the General Fund was made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Wilcox and carried unanimously.

A recommendation was made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Dunbar 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.

- To recommend approving 2021 Liquor Licenses for Loony's Brew, Cantilever Distillery + Hotel and Rainy Lake Grill

Loony's Brew and Rainy Lake Grill are applying to renew their Intoxicating Liquor and Sunday Sales licenses for 2020. Cantilever Distillery + Hotel is applying to renew its cocktail room and Sunday sales licenses. In addition, Loony's Brew is applying to renew its Brew Pub Off-Sale (Growler) and tobacco retail license.

A recommendation was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Coulombe and carried unanimously to approve the Intoxicating Liquor and Sunday Sales licenses for Loony's Brew and Rainy Lake Grill; Tobacco Sales license and Brew Pub Off-Sale for Loony's Brew; and Cocktail Room and Sunday Sales for Cantilever Distillery + Hotel.

- To recommend approval of Resolution #2020-14 Adopting 2021 General Fund Budget

A recommendation was made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Coulombe and carried unanimously to approve Resolution #2020-14 Adopting 2021 Budget for General Fund.

- To recommend approval of Resolution #2020-15 Adopting 2021 Property Tax Levy.

A recommendation was made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Dunbar and carried unanimously to approve Resolution #2020-15 Adopting 2021 Property Tax Levy in the amount of \$253,000.

- COVID-19 and CARES Act update.

Noted that cumulative cases of COVID-19 in Koochiching County are 421 compared to last month's committee of the whole meeting of 197 cumulative positive tests. Minnesota as a whole has recorded around 333,000 cumulative positive cases. Approximately 4.6 million tests have been administered to date in Minnesota. As of 12/03/2020, testing rates are at a 5.2% cumulative positive rate for Koochiching County and the Statewide positive rate is 7.7%. Compared to last month's rates for Koochiching County of 3.6% and 5.7% statewide.

The Koochiching County Small Business Relief Fund Program has completed its mission. Over \$400,000 was distributed to small businesses and non-profits in Koochiching County.

- To recommend approval of Resolution 2020-16 CARES Act expenditures

Resolution 2020-16 asks the Council to approve \$8,237.97 of expenditures from the CARES Act funds for the period ending November 15, 2020. The funds had to be expensed by November 15 and any remaining funds had to be transferred to Koochiching County by November 20.

The three criteria that had to be met in order to use CARES Act funds for projects are:

- 1) Necessary and due to COVID-19
- 2) Not accounted for in the most recent budget; and
- 3) Incurred with the covered period which is March 1 to November 15, 2020.

The final CARES Act expense report to Minnesota Office of Management and Budget was submitted. Ranier spent \$15,425 on Small Business Grants including rebate of liquor licenses; \$85 on administrative expenses for CARES Act accounting advice; \$10,008.33 on "Budgeted Personnel and Services Diverted to a Substantially Different Use" for a portion of city administrator wages and councilmember wages for attending COVID Emergency Management Meetings; \$160.31 on "Public Health Expenses" to sanitize the Ranier Municipal Liquor Store following an employee's positive COVID-19 case; \$12,010.18 on unemployment benefits for employees laid off in the spring due to COVID-19 closures; and \$3,919.04 on purchase of PPE, sanitizing supplies, air ionizer equipment for Ranier Community Hall and Ranier Municipal Liquor Store; tent for outdoor seating and rental port-a-potties for outdoor seating at Ranier Municipal Liquor Store; Webex subscription; and wind barriers to go around the fire pit at the Ranier Rink since the warming house will be closed. The unspent funds of \$2,617.14 were distributed to Koochiching County prior to November 20 as required by the CARES Act.

A recommendation was made by Councilmember Dunbar; seconded by Councilmember Coulombe and carried unanimously to approve Resolution 2020-16 CARES Act expenditures.

- Linda Salo and John Decker, Ranier Roost Representative

Linda Salo and John Decker attended the meeting to thank the Ranier Council for the Small Business Grant from CARES Act funds. They explained that the funds went to purchasing air purifying units, temporary quarantine system, PPE supply and to upgrade technology for virtual meeting with families. A 65-inch screen was purchased for clients to be able to see and hear their families that they have not seen since March. The Roost has been successful in keeping COVID cases out of the facility.

- Reminder of Truth on Taxation Special Meeting on 12/15/2020 @ 6:30.
- To recommend termination of The Costin Group consultant contract.

The consultant services were meant to marshal the LCCMR grant through the process. The consultant services were to terminate June 30, 2020, however, the legislature continued special sessions without voting on the LCCMR funding. The LCCMR grant is included in the legislative proposal and will either get approved in another special session or in the 2021 session.

Mayor Wagner received a phone call from the consultant that the LCCMR funds will be released in January and a recommendation to make another application in March for additional funds. Mayor Wagner would like to extend the contract to get through the LCCMR grants.

A recommendation was made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Wilcox and carried unanimously to table the termination recommendation.

LIQUOR STORE

- Liquor Manager's Report

The Council reviewed the Liquor Store Operating Statement for the month of November, 2020 with a net loss of (\$3,868.01). The year-to-date net profit is \$18,604.29 compared to November 2019 with a net profit of \$2,838.78 and a 2019 year-to-date net profit of \$49,3030.91.

On 11/19/2020, Executive Order 20-99 implemented a four week dial back on certain activities to slow the spread of Covid-19 including the closing of bars and restaurants for on-premises consumption. The order also prohibits Ranier from renting the Ranier Community Hall for celebrations, receptions and other private parties. Organized youth and adult sports are required to cease. The Ranier Rink warming house will be closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Liquor Store Manager Jenn Seegert reported the gift baskets are selling like hot cakes and will definitely help the sales numbers. Seegert thanked Berta Wilcox and Lois Fogelberg for all of their help with making the baskets to look as beautiful as they are. Seegert reported that the winter hats she had just gotten in have all sold.

Recommendation made by Councilmember Wilcox; seconded by Councilmember Dunbar and carried unanimously to approve the November 2020 Liquor Store Operating Statement.

BUILDINGS, STREETS AND GROUNDS

- Maintenance Report

Public Works Supervisor Nick Hagen reported that this month wind blocks were constructed for the rink; worked on the rink boards; getting new heater installed at the warming house; a water main break behind the post office was repaired (cast iron pipe fractured); a water main break on CR 132 (4 leaks at service laterals) was repaired. Mayor Wagner suggested that the 3 saddles to the 3 remaining lines on 132 should be replaced next year. They will begin flooding at the rink this weekend when the temperatures drop. The lights at the billboard are out and need to be replaced; Hagen will work with the electrician to get the bulbs replaced.

- To recommend approval of Ordinance #157 Point of Sale Certification for Sewer Line Laterals

Under the MPCA violation order for illegal inflow and infiltration, the city of Ranier agreed to implement a point of sale certification for sewer line laterals ordinance. The ordinance requires an inspection of property owner's lateral sewer line prior to sale. The effective date could give time to alert local real estate agencies and plumbers of the ordinance.

Recommendation made by Councilmember Coulombe; seconded by Councilmember Wilcox and carried unanimously to approve Ordinance #157 Point of Sale Certification for Sewer Line Laterals.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Koochiching County Historical Museum. Ashley Lavigne

Koochiching County Historical Museum Director, Ashley Lavigne visited with the council to discuss budgeting issues at the museum. Lavigne shared some of things the Museum is doing for Ranier. A mobile tour app is being developed for a walking tour of Ranier. The app is free to use with the goal of driving interest in community by sharing its history. Historical photographs of Ranier are being mounted and almost ready to be installed at the Ranier Community Hall. The History on Tap program drives business into Ranier hosting 80-120 people at time. Lavigne stated that with COVID guidelines, she may have to limit it to 20-30 people and charge for admission. She wants to continue to do more programming in Ranier. Lavigne asked if the Ranier Council

would be interested in helping fund the programs. Mayor Wagner stated that it is something to consider and make a decision at the next council meeting.

OPEN FORUM

Mike Wellcome questioned the \$25,000 snowplowing budget asking if the price is negotiated and whether it could be bid out. Mayor Wagner stated that the County bills by the hour and is a fair price and that a contractor wouldn't have the equipment that the County does. Wagner stated that the County does a great job and is reasonable to work with.

Mike Wellcome inquired about whether the Council was going to meet with International Falls Council about the water rates. Wellcome stated that their upcharge of \$40,000 a year is a significant amount of money. Wagner stated that the Council will schedule a meeting sometime next year.

Mayor Wagner stated that he would like to buy an antique British phone booth to place down by the pier as a tourist attraction. They cost around \$1500. He will bring some pictures for folks to look at. Jennifer Lahmayer suggested that a phone charging station with power could go in the booth.

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

THE COMMITTEE MEETING ADJOURNED @ 7:09 p.m.