

**Regular City Council Meeting
Mountain Lake City Hall
Monday, March 16, 2020
6:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Dana Kass, Darla Kruser (6:37p.m.), Mike Nelson, David Savage, Andrew Ysker

Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: Michael Schulte, City Administrator/Clerk; Maryellen Suhrhoff, City Attorney; Jon Beck, Police Officer, David Watkins, Ambulance Director; Carol Lehman, Library Director

Others Present: Doug Regehr, Rachel Yoder, Jay Schied, Tammy Omdal, Northland Securities (conference call), Amber Hughes, Emily Adrian

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nelson at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda & Consent Agenda

Motion by Savage, seconded by Kass, to add 2.K – Resignation of Audi Nickel from Mountain Lake Ambulance effective March 31, 2020 to the consent agenda and 8.B – Discussion/Action of COVID-19 Pandemic. Motion carried 4 – 0. Motion by Kass, seconded by Ysker, to approve the consent agenda and agenda as amended. Motion carried 4 – 0.

Bills: Checks #23444 – 23498, 661E – 662E

Payroll: Checks #65214 – 65245

Approve January 13 Tree Commission Minutes

Approve January 13 EDA Board Minutes

Approve January 28 Police Commission Minutes

Approve February 10 Lake Commission Minutes

Approve February 20 Utilities Commission Minutes

Approve March 2 City Council Minutes

Approve to Submit Grant Application to Big Bend Wind for \$2,000 on Behalf of the Active Living Committee

Approve Resolution #6-20 Accepting Donations to the City

Accept Resignation of Audi Nickel from Mountain Lake Ambulance effective March 31, 2020

Public

Jay Schied asked if there was going to be an ordinance to require new businesses in the commercial park to utilize solar panels for energy consumption. Nelson and Savage responded that the city did not want to hinder development in the commercial park as solar panels may be an added cost as not all solar panel installations are cost effective. Schied asked if they could provide an update on businesses interested in the commercial park. Nelson responded that they could not provide business names except that the EDA has been working with Subway on a possible project where the EDA will be constructing a building in which Subway would lease. Schied asked if there was an ordinance on wearing reflectors while riding bike as he stated there was an incident where he was backing up from his driveway and almost hit a biker as it was dark in the early morning. Schied reported it to Chief Bristol but did not know if was addressed. It will be reviewed. Rachel Yoder stated she had a land survey completed and wanted to know who she could meet with to discuss it. The administrator will look into it further.

Series 2020A, Taxable General Obligation Refunding Bonds & Resolution #3-20

Tammy Omdal, Northland Securities, over a conference call explained to the council the finance plan of Taxable General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2020A. The plan involves refunding Series 2013B, 2014A, and 2016A. Refunding of the bonds would not need to change the lease agreements of the tenants involved with Series 2013B and 2014A. Refunding would save an estimated \$267,000 in gross savings. Omdal explained that as we are in the middle of a pandemic with various changes in the market, savings and rates could fluctuate throughout the refunding process. Resolution #3-20, which was also explained by Omdal, approves the issuance of taxable general obligation refunding bonds and gives the mayor and the administrator authorization to approve the sale of the bonds in an aggregate principal not to exceed \$2,700,000 and to execute a bond purchase agreement for the purchase of the bonds with Northland Securities provided that the total net savings is at least \$200,000. The administrator explained the resolution was updated from what was sent in the council packet to reflect these numbers.

Motion by Savage, seconded by Kass, to approve Resolution #3-20 as newly presented. Motion carried 5 – 0.

Resolution #4-20 Calling for a Public Hearing for Establishment of TIF District 9

The EDA is working on a project to build a building in which Subway would lease in the commercial park. The resolution calls to set a public hearing at 6:30pm on April 20, 2020 to discuss Redevelopment Project #1 and the establishment of Tax Increment Financing District #1-9 among other related items. Motion by Kruser, seconded by Kass, to approve Resolution #4-20. Motion carried 5 – 0.

Minnesota Public Facilities Authority Bond Purchase and Project Loan Agreement with Point Source Implementation Grant

The city administrator presented the PFA loan agreement and loan amortization schedule. The city will receive \$2,582,152 in a Point Source Implementation Grant, and a PFA loan of \$8,018,787 for a total project of \$10,600,939. The PFA contacted the city administrator and presented two loan amortization schedules. One schedule had payments near \$465,000 each year for the next 19 years starting in 2021 with a payment near \$27,000 later in 2020. The second schedule added a payment in 2040 near \$465,000 but only had a payment near \$80,000 in 2021. The added interest on the second schedule was just under \$80,000. Milk Specialties will begin to pay their base charge when the new wastewater ponds are operating which will begin likely in the fall of 2021. The utility can afford the debt service payment in 2021 without Milk Specialties contribution. With this schedule, debt services payments will stop in 2039 but Milk Specialties will still be paying their base charge into 2041. The administrator contacted Councilmember Savage and Commissioner Langland earlier in the month and they both agreed to go with the first schedule to save on interest. In addition to the agreements, a PSIG grant fee was sent to the city in which the fee needs to be paid to receive the grant. The utilities commission approved a motion to recommend to the council to approve the bond purchase and project loan agreement. Motion by Savage, seconded by Kass, to approve the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority Bond Purchase and Project Loan Agreement with Point Source Implementation Grant. Motion carried 5 – 0.

Resolution #5-20 Accepting Offer of PFA to Purchase General Obligation Note

Resolution #5-20 was prepared by Bond Council which accepts the offer of PFA to purchase the general obligation note. Motion by Ysker, seconded by Kruser, to approve Resolution #5-20. Motion carried 5 – 0.

Ambulance On-Call Wages

Ambulance Director David Watkins, Amber Hughes, and Emily Adrian discussed recruitment for EMTs and the status of the Ambulance Department. The Ambulance Department is attempting to recruit new members for the department to fill various on-call shifts but have struggled in recent efforts. Other communities are struggling for new members as well and have made adjustments to on-call wages and call-outs along with other policies to help recruit and retain members. Watkins listed other cities on-call and call-out wages and discussed shifts, budget numbers, and capital purchases for the department. The department has been under budget the past two years for wages and salaries but that unused expenses has been put into savings for new equipment such as new ambulances. Watkins stated that he rather push capital purchases out another year or two and focus on recruiting and retaining members. Watkins requested if the on-call wage could be \$5.00/hour whether effective this year or achieved in tiers. The Ambulance budget will be reviewed during budget season this summer to determine if additional changes will be needed. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Savage, to change the on-call wage from \$2.00/hour to \$3.50/hour and change the \$5.00 per meeting attendance to \$10.00 per meeting attendance effectively immediately (will be applied for Ambulance checks for the month

of March). Voting aye: Nelson, Savage, Kass. Voting nay: None. Abstain: Kruser, Ysker. Motion carried 3 – 0.

Covered Hours Policy for City Employees

Councilmember Kruser requested if discussion could ensue about implementing a policy that allows employees that work for the city or the utility to be able to take call during normal work hours and have a certain amount of hours over a period of time to be paid their normal wage and the call-out wage. Currently, staff will be on call and if they get called out, they will either take vacation time or work additional hours to make up the difference. As the Ambulance Department attempts to talk to businesses to recruit members for the department, a policy would set the example of allowing employees to take on-call time and not worry about having to use vacation time or work longer hours. Direction was given to the administrator to write a policy to review before the next regular meeting in which exact numbers could be discussed further.

Emergency Ambulance Drivers

Due to COVID-19 and the governor declaring a peacetime emergency during this pandemic, there have been restrictions lifted on who can drive ambulances. During this time, individuals who are not EMTs are allowed to drive ambulances in emergency situations if other EMTs are not available. Watkins asked if this would occur, what we would pay the emergency drivers. Discussion on wages ensued. Motion by Savage, seconded by Kass, to pay \$15.00/hour for emergency ambulance drivers. Motion carried 5 – 0.

City Attorney

Due to COVID-19, the courts have postponed court cases which will cause many delays for various court cases the city normally is involved with. Discussion ensued on a property on 10th Street. There have been reports of more than 4 cars on the property and more than 2 cars on the street which violates the agreement between the property owner and the city. The city attorney explained what she knew about the property and possible actions. The attorney will work with the police chief on addressing the current issue.

Minnesota Legislation

The City/EDA has legislation in the House and Senate that extends the lifespan of TIF District 1-8 which is the vacant downtown lot. The administrator and community development director were scheduled to testify today and tomorrow but due to the COVID-19 crisis, all hearings have been postponed until April.

COVID-19 Crisis

The administrator explained the most updated information and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Minnesota Department of Health, and the state and federal government. The state and federal government are recommending limiting large group

gatherings, keeping social distances, and preventing as much face-to-face interactions that could potentially spread COVID-19. Carol Lehman, Library Director, explained the large number of users at the library today and had concerns about being open during this pandemic and not being equipped properly to follow state and federal recommendations. Lehman presented a list of other public libraries in which many of them are closing until further notice or until the end of the month. Discussion ensued on closing city hall, the community center, and the library and waiting till later in the month to re-evaluate closings and further actions as more information becomes known from state and federal entities. Utility billing, permits, and miscellaneous items were discussed on how to properly handle public services. The administrator asked how to handle paid leave if an employee would become diagnosed with COVID-19 or have symptoms of the virus. The council wants to have employees to stay home and work with their clinic or doctor if they feel ill but did not have enough information at this time to decide if additional paid leave would be permitted. If an emergency situation were to occur, it would be reviewed on how to address it. Discussion ensued on city operations and closings. Motion by Kass, seconded by Ysker, to close City Hall, Mountain Lake Public Library, and the Mountain Lake Community Center to the public at 5:00pm on March 17, 2020 through March 27, 2020 and to schedule a Special City Council meeting at 12:00pm on Thursday, March 26 to re-evaluate the information known at that time, re-evaluate the closings, review plans moving forward, and other items involved with crisis. Motion carried 5 – 0. Staff will continue to work normal schedules. The food shelf at the community center can decide to stay open or close. Senior Dining can use the kitchen to prepare meals on wheels but not host in-house dining. Library services will be evaluated at the special council meeting on possibly allowing appointments to use the computers to gain internet access.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Approved April 6, 2020

ATTEST:

Michael Schulte, Administrator/Clerk