

Minutes
Regular Meeting of the Hoyt Lakes City Council
Hoyt Lakes City Hall Council Chambers
Monday, August 12, 2024
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Grams, Councilors Kramar, Beauregard, Scott

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Becky Lammi, City Attorney Mitch Brunfelt, Public Works Director Ken Snetsinger, EMS Director Melanie Olmstead.

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Grams at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Beauregard supported by Kramar to approve the following consent agenda items:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

- 4.1 Regular City Council Meeting – July 22, 2024.

CORRESPONDENCE –

- 5.1 Mesabi East Boys Basketball Booster Club – Fundraiser notice.
- 5.2 Public Employees Retirement Association Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan – Actuarial Valuation.
- 5.3 East Range Joint Powers Board Minutes – June 2024.
- 5.4 Colby Ridge Homeowners Association Minutes – August 2024.

APPROVAL FOR PAYMENT – CLAIMS

- 6.1 Disbursements - \$842,620.11
- 6.2 Payroll - \$190,703.11
 - 6.2.1 Payroll - \$168,032.87
 - 6.2.2 Benefits - \$22,670.24
 - 6.2.3 Insurance - \$1,758.58

Motion carried unanimously.

APPEARANCES/PUBLIC FORUM

James McGauley spoke regarding the flags presented for COHL Map 1st families. It was good to see everyone at the Water Carnival booth.

Karen McNulty thanked everyone for their hard work on the Midway and Basketball Court projects.

Amanda Wehrman, 213 Kent Road, inquired about the closed session and asked if it had to do with the open council seat. She was informed the open council seat was a regular agenda item. She asked questions on who was recommended, how many people are on the extra committee, and what attributes did he have that the others didn't. She recommends Jill Eckman for the position, who was born and raised here, is child oriented, and has pop-up shops. Diversity should be looked at here.

Mitzi Moe commented that the open council position should not have been a closed meeting and people deserve to know the qualifications of the people who represent them.

REPORTS FROM STAFF

City Administrator Lammi has compiled comparables for the Birchwood Terrace Park. She is waiting on a P&L statement prior to presentation of the information.

Public Works Director Snetsinger gave thanks to all the Water Carnival volunteers. The EMS building will be getting storm system updates. The east side of the parking lot will be closed for about a week and please use caution in the area. Fishermans Point campground will be getting a handicap access site.

REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

Councilor Kramar stated the Midway area looked good, thank you.

Councilor Beauregard thanked all involved in Water Carnival. He suggested keeping trash and bird feeders put away to help with the bear situation and to stay away from the sow and 2 cubs.

Councilor Scott thanked everyone who made Water Carnival happen.

Mayor Grams commented that next years 70th Water Carnival will be a big one and shared that many core committee members will be retiring after. Information was shared about BAM Biking event. Approximately 350 people will be camping in the Midway Area. She reminded everyone that the deadline for council/mayor applications is tomorrow at 5 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Moved by Kramar supported by Scott to approve the Ranger ATV Snowmobile Club invoice in the amount of \$31,782.83 to SEH for the Seven Beavers Moose Trail from Biwabik to Skibo. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Kramar supported by Grans to approve the Ranger ATV Snowmobile Club invoice in the amount of \$240,142.05 to Jola & Sopp for the Seven Beavers Moose Trail from Biwabik to Skibo. Motion carried unanimously.

James McGauley wants the city to do a proclamation regarding the City's 1st families.

Moved by Scott supported by Beauregard to approve request to waive rental fee at Fisherman's Point shelter for the Senior Center. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Kramar supported by Beauregard to accept Steven Lenk's retirement letter from the Sanitation department. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Beauregard supported by Scott to approve request to write off utility bill no. 1009-21407-01. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Beauregard supported by Grams to approve Resolution 2024-017 to apply for the Compeer Financial Emergency Response Equipment Regional Collaboration Grant. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Kramar supported by Scott to accept Kathryn Parks' resignation letter from the Emergency Medical Services Department. Motion carried unanimously.

Moved by Beauregard supported by Kramar to approve purchasing a new ambulance from MacQueen Equipment. Motion carried unanimously.

Informational discussion on FY2025 Budget meeting dates.

Mayor Grams stated the Council had 5 applications for the vacant council position, 4 of whom had interviews. The recommendation of the Personnel Committee was to appoint Jordan Hronoski to the vacant council seat. She put it up for discussion by the council.

Moved by Kramar to appoint Jordan Hronoski to fill council vacancy. Councilor Scott asked if Stu had any questions before he jumped in. Councilor Beauregard stated Councilor Scott could go ahead. City Attorney Brunfelt stated there was a motion that required a second before the council can start discussion of the motion. Mayor Grams stated there's been a motion, is there a second. She called for a second two additional times. Motion died for lack of support. Mayor Grams stated the council can continue discussion on that.

Councilor Scott stated: I believe it would be important to discuss it prior to jumping into motions. I will get into the things I had written down. In the packet, only Jordan's application was provided with no further information on the other candidates being provided. Also there was no sort of information about them that I've gotten. I don't know if Stu's gotten any information about the other candidates and I have no information about how the interviews went, what they had to say about things, the public had asked various questions; it sounded like we can't answer the questions the public has. So at this point I don't feel confident in support this appointment at this time. I would like to have some time to see those other applications hear about how the interviews went. I had previously brought up concerns that I and residents who had reached out to me had about Becky essentially playing a role in about who her supervisor is but it didn't seem like anybody else seemed to kind of engage with that or have concerns, from my understanding before Becky came to her position the entire council would be a part of those types of interviews. This being such an important appointment as a councilor is someone who can vote on things like city policy and laws, I think these interviews now and in the future should be things all the council members have a chance to be a part of. I believe we should do the interviews again, whether we call them some sort of follow-up interviews or whatever sort of thing you want to call it, just to give me and Stu the chance to see what those interviewees have to say. I also want their applications provided to the entire council so Stu and myself included so we're all able to make the best informed decision we can. Or I guess we can just make motions.

Mayor Grams stated ever since she's been here it's been the Personnel Committee who make a recommendation that's voted on by the entire council. She isn't sure if that's an ordinance or if that's just how things have been set up and done in the past. No one has had it been done any other way since she's been on the council. Councilor Beauregard stated it was how it was done when he was selected. Mayor Grams asked if that was an ordinance or if it was how we structured it. City Administrator Lammi stated it was how the council structured it. Councilor Grams stated that topic is open for the council to discuss or to talk about to have that change; but that is how it's set up right now, and that is how it was done according to how it's always been done. Councilor Scott stated the recent past. Mayor Grams stated yes, her experience, that she has. Councilor Scott asked how long. Mayor Grams stated two and a half years; she didn't know there was another way they used to do it. That is something we can certainly look at and

discuss. She believes now isn't the time, as we aren't going to make that decision, but if it's an agenda item, how that works, something we can talk about.

Councilor Beauregard stated the recommendation is Jordan; he asked if Jordan was still our active blight officer. City Administrator Lammi responded that he is. Councilor Beauregard asked who oversees that position. City Administrator Lammi stated she supervises the blight officer. Councilor Beauregard asked if there was potential for conflict there. City Attorney Brunfelt states they may be conflicting offices. City Administrator Lammi stated the blight officer is not a full-time position. City Attorney Brunfelt stated he would have to look at it. City Administrator Lammi stated we currently have a councilor who supervises a relative, and then that relative also supervises him. City Administrator Lammi is not related in any way, so it is unclear where there would be additional conflict over the EMS Department. Councilor Beauregard thinks there is enough separation there, with Councilor Brennan Scott being on the council and City Administrator Lammi overseeing EMS Director Mel Olmstead. City Administrator Lammi pointed out that Mel also oversees Brennan. Councilor Scott states we have a nepotism policy. City Administrator Lammi stated the policy does not apply to part-time employees. Mayor Grams asks about the conflict-of-interest policy not applying to part-time employees. City Attorney Brunfelt said it's not an issue of conflict-of-interest, it's whether they're incompatible offices. It's a different issue. Councilor Beauregard thinks whether real or perceived, it could easily be perceived as a conflict, so either he would have to be willing to step down from his position as blight officer, in his opinion, or we should make a different selection. City Administrator Lammi asked if that would follow through for any employee of the city who applied, would then have to step down? Councilor Beauregard stated if they are directly supervised, yes, in his opinion. It appears to Councilor Beauregard that it could be a conflict that the person supervising City Administrator Lammi is also being supervised by her.

Councilor Scott asked if there are any other employees within the city that play a part in choosing their supervisor. City Administrator Lammi stated yes, when we interview for supervisors, typically several of the direct reports are in the interviews. For example, when City Administrator Lammi interviewed for her current position, all of the supervisors, as well as Tammy and Betsy were in on the process.

Councilor Beauregard asked who else applied for the council vacancy. City Administrator Lammi stated the applicants were Daniel Dudley, Jill Eckman, Dave Jarvela, and Jordan Hronoski with completed applications; the name of the incomplete application was unavailable. Councilor Scott asked if the information gathered during the interviews was available; he said Cherie suggested it wasn't. City Attorney Brunfelt stated it could be a discussion item of the council; he isn't sure if there were written materials, that's a separate data request; the council can engage in a discussion of what transpired at the interviews or personnel committee meeting. Councilor Scott asked if it was open to the public. City Attorney Brunfelt stated no, but they can discuss it. He asked is where the council vacancy was created, did the council make a formal motion that this would be the process – that it would be referred to the Personnel Committee to conduct the interviews of the candidates and then make a recommendation to the city council? So the council basically tasked the Personnel Committee with the job of conducting the interviews, and based upon those interviews, basically vetting the candidates, to make a formal recommendation to the city council. The recommendation before you, the council can act on that recommendation by either approving or denying it. Certainly, as part of that process, you asked questions about who said what in the interviews, and people who participated can talk about it. But essentially the council created a process of how the council wanted to fill this seat, and the Personnel Committee has engaged in that process and they've made a recommendation. If the council wants to create a different process, go ahead and create a different process, but that's the process the council has created, and how you have the recommendation the council needs to act on. Mayor Grams stated she's not opposed to discussing how to do this in the future, but in light of this is how it was passed now, and getting someone on the council, and moving forward, would it be legitimate or legal for me to make a recommendation of our second choice, or would that have to be a separate interview process and a separate recommendation


at a different meeting? City Attorney Brunfelt stated it is council discretion – if you can't agree on one candidate, you can certainly have discussion and try to arrive at a different candidate, and you can engage in that process tonight if you want, or you can create a new process, or you can refer it back to the Personnel Committee for more work. The council did create a process – to have the Personnel Committee vet it and make a recommendation, you do have a recommendation before you, a motion to go ahead with that recommendation has failed for lack of a second, so it's up to the council to sort your way through this. Councilor Beauregard asked what would be the options if we can't agree on somebody at some point? City Attorney Brunfelt responded that it would remain vacant until there is an action taken by the council by a majority vote or a general election. Councilor Scott stated the council has been able to function with four people so far, he thinks it should be up to the people. Councilor Beauregard believes the seat needs to be filled as we are in contract negotiations and some councilors need to remove themselves from that conversation. Mayor Grams stated there is also the concern about having a quorum to hold a meeting. She would like to fill the seat, and in November the public can make their voices heard and their choices be known. The second choice for the appointment is Dave Jarvela.

Moved by Grams supported by Scott to appoint Dave Jarvela to the open councilor position. Motion carried unanimously.

Closed session under 13D.03 for labor contract negotiations began at 6:17 p.m.
Present at meeting: Kramar, Scott, Grams, Beauregard, Brunfelt, Lammi.
Closed session ended at 6:57 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Kramar supported by Beauregard to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.



Cherie Grams, Mayor

ATTEST:



Becky Lammi, City Administrator