

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**

February 19, 2008

**Tuesday, February 24, 2009**

**4:30 p.m.**

**City Hall, Council Chambers**

---

1. Call to Order
2. Additions / Deletions to Agenda
3. Approval of Accounts Payable Listing
4. Wayne Runningen – Birding Trail
5. Tom McSparron – West Central Initiative
6. Farm Leases
7. Old Fire Hall
8. 2008 Budget Comparison
9. Annual Fire Department Meeting – Tuesday, 03-03-09, 7:00 p.m. @ Fire Hall
10. 2009 Fire Department Budget - Expenses
11. Certify Unpaid Utility Bill to Otter Tail County for Collection with Real Estate Taxes
12. River Park Update
13. Cable Television Rate Notice

## **CITY OF PELICAN RAPIDS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES -02-24-09**

The City Council of Pelican Rapids met in regular session at 4:30 p.m., on Tuesday, 2-24-09, in Council Chambers, City Hall. Mayor Ben Woessner, Council Members Steve Foster, Kevin Ballard and John E. Waller, III were present. Council Member Richard Peterson was absent. Administrator Don Solga, Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert, Wayne Runningen, Tom McSparron and Kelley Gorman of the Pelican Rapids Press were also present.

Meeting called to order by Mayor Woessner. All present rose and said the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Motion by Foster, seconded by Ballard to add LMC Conference Report to the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Council considered the Accounts Payable Listing of 02-24-09. Motion by Waller, seconded by Foster to approve the 02-24-09 Accounts Payable Listing as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Former Mayor and Birding Trail Committee Member Wayne Runningen addressed Council regarding the Pine to Prairie Birding Trail, Minnesota's first birding trail. It was started in 1998 as a collaborative effort of various communities from Pelican Rapids, Fergus Falls, Detroit Lakes to Thief River Falls, Roseau and Warroad along Highways 59, 32 and 11, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Explore Minnesota Tourism, the Lakes Area Birding Club and the Minnesota Ornithologists Union. Runningen explained that the City pays \$1,000 per year to belong to the organization. The advertising with the Audubon Association and US Fish and Wildlife is very worthwhile. Birders are as avid as hunters and fishermen. The brochures are distributed through the Visitor Centers, Tourism Shows and at the site contact stations. Runningen also said since the Tourism Association is involved in the trail that in the past he has invited the Chamber of Commerce Director to attend meetings with him. Mayor Woessner said he asked Wayne to continue representing the City on the Birding Trail. Council Member Foster said, "By all means continue the work and take the Chamber of Commerce Director to meetings."

Mayor Woessner introduced Tom McSparron who is Donor Services Officer with the West Central Initiative (WCI). McSparron reviewed the organization and programs offered during the past year and at this time. He said the money donated by the City is matched dollar to dollar by the McKnight organization, giving the organization more dollars for work in the community. Administrator Don Solga said the City budget committee has approved \$2,000 per year to contribute to the WCI Endowment fund each year for the next five years. This is the same level of support provided by the City in the previous five year. "It's been a good partnership," said Administrator Solga. Mayor Woessner said the City has worked with WCI since WCI's beginning in 1985.

Administrator Don Solga reviewed three parcels of property that the City of Pelican Rapids leases to farmers. The leases are all for five year periods with a set rate for this year and includes a 3% increase each year. To set the rates for the two types of land, Administrator Solga reviewed the Otter Tail County rates for comparable land. Motion by Waller, seconded by Foster to approve farm land leases with Tom Axness and Keith Haugrud as presented for a lease period of 2009 through 2013. Motion passed unanimously.

## **CITY OF PELICAN RAPIDS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES -02-24-09**

Administrator Don Solga said the previous Council had approved a proposal from Scott Richardson to purchase the Old Fire Hall with an extension of time to secure financing. Richardson recently provided a letter stating that he has decided not to purchase the building due to higher than expected expenses for renovating the building and the slower economic times. Solga said he has contacted other people who were interested in the building previously and will provide Council with more information as he has it available.

Administrator Don Solga reviewed the 2008 General Fund Budget to Actual Comparison. He said all in all the City came in with about \$78,000 available after expenses. Some of these have been allocated but not spent. He continued, "At this time about \$56,000 of those funds are dedicated to something like the electronic reader board, seal coating, park grant match, etc. We can say that \$22,000 is in discretionary funds. Even though the State took away \$57,259 in the last weeks of December, the City of Pelican Rapids is still in a good position with a little bit to put away." Administrator Solga credited the various department heads with keeping spending down; every department came in under budget. "While controlling spending, we also accomplished several projects," he concluded.

Mayor Woessner announced that the Annual Fire Department Meeting will be Tuesday, 03-03-09, 7:00 p.m. at the Fire Hall. Mayor Woessner and Council Member Foster will attend.

Administrator Don Solga said he is working to provide the City Council with all budgets for their review and approval. Council has previously reviewed the General Fund Budget, the Water and Sewer Fund Budgets. The Fire Department Budget is right around \$100,000 for the operating expenses, excluding the building lease, truck lease and Fire Relief Association. Motion by Waller, seconded by Foster to approve the 2009 Fire Department Budget as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Clerk-Treasurer Glenys Ehlert reviewed a utility bill for collection with real estate taxes. Motion by Waller, seconded by Foster to certify the unpaid utility bill for parcel no. 76000990536000 in the amount of \$254.78 to Otter Tail County Auditor Wayne Stein for collection with real estate taxes. Motion passed unanimously.

Administrator Don Solga has been gathering information about the project budget for the Veterans' Memorial River Park and Pathway. The Transportation Enhancement Grant through the State of Minnesota for 2010 grant amount was \$156,000. This required a City match of 20%, \$31,000, plus the cost of engineering. Interstate Engineering Inc. worked on the project design. The project cost went to \$216,000 due to increases in oil costs driving bituminous costs up and steel for bridges. New match for City would be \$43,200 plus engineering. If the City wishes to continue with original project at increased cost, the State might have more money available if other communities do not go forward with their projects. Another possibility would be scaling back the project and removing the proposed hiking/biking bridge west of the Senior Center.

Administrator Solga has asked Interstate Engineering, Inc., to report on the engineering expenses to date for this project. Total revenues for the project to date are \$24,670. The engineering estimate to get the project ready for bids was \$17,500. Additional engineering costs included Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) meetings and computer drawings which bring the engineering cost to \$21,594. The City's match without the bridge would be \$68,794

## **CITY OF PELICAN RAPIDS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES -02-24-09**

for \$125,000 in grant funds for a path with no bridge. This includes engineering construction activity expenses. So it would be \$193,794 for a path around the Veterans' Memorial River Park.

Administrator Solga said the project cost to the City would deplete all the reserves the City has and postpone planned improvements. The Park Board proposed turning down the grant money and work at the path as a community as we can do it. Administrator Don Solga said, "I agree with the Park Board and recommend that we turn back the grant due to the excessive city funds needed to complete the project." Mayor Woessner agreed that the \$68,794 is an issue and he said he did not like the design.

Motion by Waller, seconded by Foster to terminate the Veterans' Memorial River Park and Pathway project and turn back the grant, based on Administrator Solga and the Park Board's recommendation. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Woessner reviewed the Loretel System, Inc., rate increase for Cable Television.

Mayor Woessner reported on the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) conference for newly elected mayors and council members. "They gave us some things to consider as to what is coming from the legislators, and the conference themes were leading in turbulent times and preparing your cities for rough waters," he commented. "I am very thankful for the position the City of Pelican Rapids is in with the community's budget. I expressed my opinion that we didn't need to be in such a fancy place for the conference," Mayor Woessner continued. Administrator Solga said the City is right sized and the department heads are very attentive to budget. Council Member Foster commented that the conference was a good overview for state and city relationship. Council Member Ballard said he appreciated hearing the city attorneys explaining the legalities and finance matters. Council Members and Mayor Woessner agreed the LMC Conference was time well spent and that it was good to talk to other cities.

Motion by Foster, seconded by Waller to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Glenys Ehlert, CMC, Clerk-Treasurer