

**CLEARWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 12, 2024**

**1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: 7:00 p.m. at City Hall**

- Mayor Lawrence called the Clearwater City Council to order Monday, February 12, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Members present were Mayor Lawrence, Council Members Luhmann, Vazquez and Winkelman. Member Schwinghammer was absent. Also present were members of the public, staff, and guests.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

- **MOTION** by Winkelman to approve agenda as presented, seconded by Vazquez.
- Administrator Smythe asked for two additions to the claims under Consent Agenda for invoices from Sharetech in the amount of \$709.73 and from Abdo in the amount of \$8,275.00.
- **AMENDMENT to MOTION** by Winkelman/Vazquez to add the requested claims payments. All voted aye on AMENDED MOTION. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

**3. Wright County Sheriff's Report**

- Deputy Marschal gave the sheriff's report and highlighted 2 domestic calls/arrests. Members did not have any questions from the written calls report. Members asked about notification procedures when a sexual predator moves into the area. Deputy Marschal offered to check into this and report back at the next meeting.

**4. Public Forum**

- None.

**5. Consent Agenda**

- a. **Claims/Accounts Payable in the Amount of \$ 294,907.04 + \$709.73 + \$8,275.00 = \$303,891.77**
- b. **Approval of Minutes from 01-08-2024 Regular City Council Meeting**
- c. **Res 2024-10 – Approving Year-end Transfers**
- d. **Res 2024-11 – Approving Temporary Gambling Permit – Ducks Unlimited**
- e. **Res 2024-12 – Approving Temporary Gambling Permit – Church of St. Luke**
- f. **Res 2024-13 – Accepting Donation for Fire Department**
- g. **Res 2024-14 – Appointing Election Judges**
- h. **Authorizing Write-off of Fire Department Costs**
- i. **Authorizing Comment Letter to PUC**
- **MOTION** by Luhmann to approve Consent Agenda as amended, seconded by Winkelman, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

**6. Old Business**

**a. Approval of Food Shelf Amended Lease Agreement**

- Smythe explained that the city attorney advised revising the lease agreement to reflect the new waiver of rental fees authorized by the city council.
- **MOTION** by Luhmann to approve amended lease agreement, seconded by Vazquez, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

**b. Res 2024-17 – Authorizing Donation to Food Shelf**

- Guest Mary Abraham outlined plans for the new food shelf construction and fundraising efforts. The food shelf has raised around \$300,000 of the estimated \$467,000 needed for the construction

of the building. This excludes costs for the parking lot paving of around \$70,000 and excavating of around \$25,000. They are asking state legislators for assistance as well as fundraising within the local community. The project is hoping to break ground May 1, 2024.

- Members asked if the city council has a donation limit. Smythe explained the previous guidance from the city attorney, noting that any donations over \$150,000 may bring business subsidy laws into play, so suggested working with him if the city council wants to donate at that level.
- Members further discussed options and possibly tying a donation to a section of the project, such as the excavating costs.
- **MOTION** by Luhmann to approve the donation resolution with a donation amount of \$25,000, seconded by Lawrence, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
- c. Res 2024-16 – Approving Abatement Order for 430 Main Street**
- Smythe explained the steps taken to date and the proposed abatement order to address hazardous conditions at 430 Main Street.
- **MOTION** by Lawrence to approve Resolution 2024-16, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

## 7. New Business

### a. Fire Chief Annual Report – Mike Keller

- Fire Chief Keller gave an overview of the annual report. The officers are the same as last year, including the switch to Harvey Doble as the secretary. Members did not have any questions.
- **MOTION** by Lawrence to approve the Fire Department officers for 2024, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

### b. Consider Fire Relief Pension Increase – Jim Repke

- Fire Relief Association President Jim Repke appeared to request an increase to the current Fire Relief pension amount. The requested increase is \$75 per year and would increase the total to \$1,925 per year of service. This increase would leave the fund at a 93.1% funding level. However, after receipt of expected revenues over the next month, the funding level would be at 101%, so no increase to the city's required contribution is anticipated.
- **MOTION** by Luhmann to approve pension increase to \$1,925, seconded by Vazquez, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
- Mr. Repke also asked if the city would consider increasing its voluntary contribution amount, which has been at \$12,500 for several years. Members took this request under advisement.

### c. Res 2024-15 – Approving Hire of Accounting Clerk

- Smythe outlined the reposting and interview process for the Accounting Clerk position and introduced her recommended candidate for hire, Cheri Singleton. Smythe recommends hiring Ms. Singleton per the conditions in the resolution, with a salary of step 3 - \$26.77/hour.
- **MOTION** by Lawrence to approve Resolution 2024-15 hiring Cheri Singleton at a salary of \$26.77/hour, seconded by Winkelman, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0**

### d. Res 2024-18 – Approving Step Increase

- **MOTION** by Luhmann approving Resolution 2024-18, seconded by Winkelman, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

### e. Consider Attending LMC City Day at the Capitol

- Mayor Lawrence outlined the program and benefits of attending. Given the city's current projects in progress, she believes the city should send someone to this meeting. Members were uncertain about their schedules but would like to attend, if possible.
- **MOTION** by Lawrence to allocate funding to register 4 people (3 council members and 1 staff), to attend the LMC Day at the Capitol, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

**f. Consider Changes to City Council Compensation and Board/Commission Stipends**

- Members considered the materials related to compensation. Member Luhmann noted that some sort of increase should be considered. Smythe suggested that Members consider streamlining the ordinance. Other Members wanted more time to consider the options.
- **MOTION TO TABLE** by Lawrence, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
- Members plan to discuss further at the upcoming workshop meeting.

**g. Discuss Scheduling Joint Workshop – Comprehensive Plan Review**

- Smythe explained that the Planning Commission discussed conducting a joint workshop with the City Council for later this spring to consider changes to the Comprehensive Plan. The discussion would be high-level. Staff suggest that Members review the current Plan online and bring the top five issues/areas to the meeting for discussion.
- Members set a joint meeting date of April 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. for the workshop.

**8. Committee Reports**

**a. Mayor and Council**

- Mayor Lawrence stated that the contractor working on the T.H. 24 project for MnDot is seeking contact information for the Cedar South Facebook page administrators so they can use it as a resource to send out meeting information.

**b. Boards**

- Sewer Authority – Held a special meeting in January to approve the Pay Equity Report. The February meeting was cancelled.
- EDA – Reviewed the housing study progress at their last meeting. Next meeting is February 20, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.
- Fire Relief Association Board – Held their annual meeting January 24, 2024 and met with the pension fund manager, who discussed 2023 investment performance. They also adopted Member in good standing rules. Mayor Lawrence has requested to hear from the state’s pension fund, but that hasn’t happened yet.
- Fire Commission – Met January 31, 2024 – reviewed the Fire Chief annual report and 2025 draft budget. Lynden Township noted that they decided to not install a dry hydrant, so the grant was not pursued.
- Planning Commission – Met January 27, 2024 and welcomed new member Mary Thomes. This was a housekeeping meeting to select officers and plan for the year.
- Park Commission – Met and discussed splash pad project, by-laws, and the ball team storage in the city shed. Splash pad committee is meeting every two weeks.

**c. Staff**

- Smythe asked for clarification on when the city council wants packets, as there was discussion about moving up the deadline. Consensus was to keep the deadline as Thursday before the meeting but provide a draft copy of whatever is ready on the Tuesday before the meeting.
- Smythe outlined the negotiations for the purchase of property on Huber Ave, and asked if Members were okay sharing the costs of the property appraisal. It is estimated to be around \$2,000. Consensus was to proceed but bring it back to the Council if the cost greatly exceeds \$2,000.
- Engineer Kannas discussed the assessment options for the Spring Street storm sewer costs. He stressed that because of the high cost of the improvement and the small number of benefitting parcels, the assessment costs would be very expensive on a per-parcel basis. Members had questions about how the assessments are calculated and how other projects were done. Staff explained the assessment policy and requirements under state law when a project includes

bonding funds. Members stressed that they want it to be fair and equitable. They asked staff to provide more information about the costs and assessments for the 2015 and 2019 street projects.

**9. Other Business**

**a. Reminder – Special Workshop February 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.**

– Special workshop meeting scheduled for February 20, 2024, moved to 7:00 p.m.

**b. Next Regular Meeting – March 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.**

– Next regular meeting date was confirmed.

**10. Adjournment**

– **MOTION** to adjourn by Winkelman, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

– Meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

ATTEST

  
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Annita M. Smythe, City Administrator

APPROVED

  
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Andrea Lawrence Wheeler, Mayor