

**CLEARWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 8, 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, April 8, 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, Schwinghammer, and Winkelman. Also present were members of the public, staff, and guests.

2. Approval of Agenda

- **MOTION** by Luhmann to approve agenda as presented, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Wright County Sheriff's Report

a. 2023 Annual Report

- Lieutenant Wirkkula gave the annual sheriff's report and noted the following:
 - The department takes traffic seriously. Wright County is in the top ten in the state for serious crashes and the department wants to change that.
 - The largest category of crime is theft, which includes many different types of theft.
 - The department is working hard to crunch numbers and determine the "right size" for contract service hours. They are seeing an uptick in calls for service in Clearwater for the 2-6 p.m. time slot. The city may want to consider adding hours during this period.

b. March 2024 Monthly Calls Report

- Deputy Marschel gave the sheriff's monthly calls report. He followed-up on the previous question about semi-trucks parking illegally in the bike path area on Ash Street near Burger King. Deputies are watching this area and they have not noticed any lately.

4. Public Forum

- None.

5. Consent Agenda

- a. Claims/Accounts Payable in the Amount of \$ 200,685.25**
- b. Approval of Minutes from 03-11-2024 Regular City Council Meeting**
- c. Res 2024-24 – Accepting Donation for Fire Department**
- d. Res 2024-25 – Amending 2024 Budget – Food Shelf**
- e. Res 2024-26 – Approving Hire of Seasonal Workers**
- f. Authorizing 2023 Voluntary Contribution to Fire Relief Association of \$12,500**
- g. Res 2024-28 – Approving Temporary Liquor Licenses – Lions Club**
- h. Res 2024-30 – Approving New Hires for Fire Department**
- **MOTION** by Luhmann to approve Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Vazquez, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

6. Old Business

- a. Res 2024-27 – Accepting Donation of Historical Glassware**
 - **MOTION** by Lawrence approving Resolution 2024-27, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- b. Res 2024-29 – Approving Purchase Agreement and Accepting Donation – 17505 Huber Ave**

- **MOTION** by Lawrence approving Resolution 2024-29, seconded by Winkelman. Member Luhmann asked what funds would be used to cover the cost of the purchase. Smythe explained that general funds would be used and asked permission to do a short-term interfund loan if needed.
- **AMENDMENT TO MOTION** by Lawrence, authorizing a short-term interfund loan if deemed necessary by the City Administrator, amendment accepted by Winkelman.
- **VOTING ON THE AMENDED MOTION** – all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

7. New Business

a. 2023 Audit Report – Caroline Stutsman

- Caroline Stutsman gave the annual audit report. She explained the statements and audit standards, noting management’s responsibility for the financial data. She explained that the city has received an unmodified “clean” opinion for the GAAP statements for the water and sewer operations. She noted that the city is on a cash basis for the other operations, and so they do not comply with GAAP but do meet state auditing standards. She also noted no issues with legal compliance. The only comment was the “lack of segregation of accounting duties”, which is a normal finding in a city of our size due to the small number of staff. Mayor Lawrence asked how many staff would be needed to eliminate this finding. Ms. Stutsman noted that it would vary by entity but that generally speaking each process would need a minimum of 4 people to fully segregate duties, potentially more.

b. Consider Fee Waiver Request – Clearwater Residential Suites

- This item was considered out of order, as the City Council waited until Mr. Briggs arrived.
- Mr. Briggs asked for a waiver of some utility fees. He explained that his new apartment building had service connected in November 2023 but did not received a Certificate of Occupancy to rent units until March 1, 2024. City policy is that base fee billing begins upon connection. Mr. Briggs stated that his team did not understand that billing for all units would begin at connection and that this is different from how other cities manage this. Members asked if there was usage. There was only 20 gallons used during this time period. MR. Briggs is asking for the base fees for the unused units be waived.
- Mayor Lawrence explained that this is an unusual situation and that the city has only had one other apartment building open in the last 10-15 years. Smythe noted that the other building waited to connect until they were ready to open.
- Member Luhmann asked why it took so long to raise the issue. Mr. Briggs explained that the city bills in arrears and it took his team some time to determine how the billing was done.
- Member Schwinghammer suggested billing for just one unit for the months prior to occupancy.
- **MOTION** by Lawrence to waive the November through February fees with the exception of one unit base fee and the actual gallons used, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

c. Authorization to Bid Project – Main Street/Spring Street Park

- Smythe explained the staff request for authorization to bid the proposed overlay of Main Street from the Mississippi River bridge to CSAH 75 on the east end of Main Street. Staff would like to exclude the Spring Street Park proposal from this project. Based on initial quotes, the project is expected to exceed the cost that requires public bidding. This project is in the capital improvement plan budget for 2024.
- **MOTION** by Lawrence authorizing bid of the Main Street overlay project per the staff request, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

d. Discuss Truck Parking Areas

- Member Luhmann explained her concerns about semi-truck parking along Pine and Lime Streets near the American Legion and Clearwater Corners. The difficulty is that a commercial zoning

district abuts a residential district and there aren't sufficient other options for truck parking near these businesses where people stop to eat. Members considered options such as posting time limits for truck parking or creating a truck parking area on the dead-end of Walnut Street. Members asked if these roads can handle the weight of trucks. Engineer Kannas noted that there are many variables and that the narrow width of the roadways is a bigger concern than the weights.

- After discussion, Members asked staff to bring this issue to the EDA for input and to reach out to these businesses.

e. Discuss Speed Limits

- Member Luhmann raised concerns about continued speeding on city streets and stated she wants the speed limits on T.H. 24 and County Road 75 lowered to 30 mph in city limits.
- Members discussed options, noting that these are not city roadways. Members asked if speed studies could be requested. Kannas explained that the city may want to look for existing data first, as speed studies could result in speed limits increasing if the data shows generally higher speeds. He suggested reaching out to Wright County to see what data they may already have on file. He also suggested that the city continue to lean on MnDot for traffic calming measures as part of the T.H. Corridor Project. Members agreed and also requested to have speed trackers moved to County Road 75.

8. Committee Reports

a. Mayor and Council

- Member Schwinghammer reported that he and Smythe attended the Wright County Mayors' Association meeting. Topics discussed included the county's draft cannabis ordinance, municipal cannabis options, and concerns about the proposed legislation removing local zoning controls.

b. Boards

- Sewer Authority – Did not meet in February due to no business to address, next meeting April 18, 2024.
- EDA – Heard an overview of the completed housing study. The study outlines a need for more senior housing options and more single family housing, possibly growth for one more apartment project.
- Planning Commission – Did not meet in March, has meetings scheduled for April 15, 2024.
- Park Commission – Member Vazquez reported on the following:
 - Israel Carper attended on behalf of the Clearwater River Cats amateur baseball team. He gave updates on several items and made some requests.
 - The Lions Club has offered to donate funds to cover the costs of replacing the benches in the dugouts.
MOTION by Lawrence to accept the new benches, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**
 - Stated that the scoreboard will be installed this summer and that necessary information for the sign/footings permit will be provided to staff.
 - Discussed the proposal to share costs with the city for use of a new shed. Agreed to cover half the costs but asked city to build shed now and give team 12 months to cover their share of costs. Members discussed the proposal and noted concerns about what happens if the team doesn't pay. Members agreed to defer the topic and reconsider if it happens.
MOTION by Lawrence to approve building the shed now and giving the team 12 months to pay for their half of the costs, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Stated that the Lions Club would like to partner with the team, possibly later in the summer, to build a larger pavilion for Sportsman’s Park in what would be the grandstand area behind home plate.
- Commissioners discussed the staff’s sketch plan for a replacement basketball court at Spring Street Park which involves moving the court over and making room for some parking. Commissioners preferred a revised option that moves the court but replaces it with a half-court and leaves space for parking. The City Council asked staff to bring back quotes for both options and would like to include striping for pickle ball.
- Splash Pad committee sent their proposals to the designers at MWP Recreation, who are working on a concept plan. Staff are also looking into state bid options for the project.

c. Staff

- Smythe reported she and Engineer Kannas had met with MnDot to review design alternatives for the TH 24 Corridor project. MnDot expects to hold town hall meetings in May to receive public input on the design options.
- Engineer Kannas reported that the utility construction for Central Minnesota Cold Storage would be starting soon. This will impact residents in the neighborhood of 9th Street. A newsletter will be sent to area residents ahead of the construction start date.
- Smythe reminded Members to prepare their Comprehensive Plan top priorities ahead of the joint workshop on April 15. Member Vazquez stated he would be absent. Smythe suggested sending his comments to staff ahead of time.

9. Other Business

- a. **Reminder – Joint City Council/Planning Commission Workshop April 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.**
- b. **Next Regular Meeting – May 13, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.**
- Next meeting dates were confirmed.

10. Adjournment

- **MOTION** to adjourn by Luhmann, seconded by Schwinghammer, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.** Meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

ATTEST

Annita M. Smythe, City Administrator

APPROVED

Andrea Lawrence Wheeler, Mayor