

**CLEARWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2022**

**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, September 12, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Members present were Mayor Lawrence, Council Members Luhmann, Crandall, and Lenz. Member Kruchten was absent. Also present were members of the staff, sheriff's department, and guests.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

- **MOTION** by Crandall to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 3-0.**

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

- Deputy Neubert gave the sheriff's update. He noted an uptick in dogs running-at-large and stated some citations had been issued. He also stated that a suspect from the local canoe theft had been caught and that most of the stolen property was returned. He did not have an update on the recent bank robbery at American Heritage Bank.

**4. Public Forum**

- Several guests were present at the Public Forum to share concerns about the proposed Central Minnesota Cold Storage project.
- Comments from residents included the following:
  - Some felt the public hearing at the Planning Commission was only a formality and that their comments were not considered.
  - Some felt their questions were not answered.
  - Some believed they had the power to stop the project.
  - Those present expressed no desire for a Community Center.
  - Some felt disrespected by Mayor's comments that property owners could have purchased the property proposed for the cold storage.
  - Residents would like speed limits lowered on County Road 7 and T.H. 24 to reflect the new city boundaries.
  - Residents would like no parking signs on County Road 7 so trucks know not to park there.
  - Residents wanted more information about how the cold storage project promotes the public welfare.
  - Residents had concerns about traffic increases and traffic safety with passenger vehicle traffic mixing with truck traffic. They noted that even with the current lower speeds, vehicles passing through are still speeding when they come into town.
  - Residents wanted to know where the checks and balances would be as the company grows in the future.
  - Some felt that the project was poorly planned and didn't believe the current infrastructure could handle the additional truck traffic.
  - Some were concerned that the project would lower their property values and would handcuff residential growth in the city.

- Lionel Kull, representing the development team, stated that they have made several changes to their original plan in an attempt to address the resident 's concerns. He stated that the proposed project would generate less traffic than a residential development, which some residents said they would prefer. He stated that they are trying to do a good project that improves the tax base for the community which can help pay for future park or safety improvements. They hope to be tremendous benefit to the community.
- Member Lenz asked how many trucks there would be per day. Mr. Kull replied that there would be roughly 6 trucks an hour or about 40-60 per day, and that all deliveries were by appointment only.
- Mayor Lawrence closed the Public Forum after asking twice for additional comments.

## 5. Consent Agenda

- a. **Claims/Accounts Payable in the Amount of \$ 249,768.12**
- b. **Approval of Minutes from 08-15-2022 Regular City Council Meeting**
- c. **Res 2022-54 – Approving New Hires for Fire Department**
- d. **Res 2022-55 – Amending 2022 Budget**
- e. **Res 2022-57 – Accepting Refrigerator and Freezer Donation**
- f. **Res 2022-60 – Accepting Scoreboard Donation**
- **MOTION** by Lenz to approve Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

## 6. Old Business

### a. Clean-up Day Pricing and Signups

- Smythe explained that some of the pricing had been adjusted by the vendor. Staff are also proposing an additional fee of \$5 per load of trash that didn't fit other categories. The city has not charged for this in recent years, but the city's costs have grown, and staff are concerned that some residents hoard their trash for the year then bring it to clean-up day.
- Member Crandall stated that he didn't want the city to discourage people from cleaning up their properties and thought the city could manage the additional costs. Member Luhmann thought the city should leave it as-is for now and revisit next year.
- **MOTION** by Crandall to approve the proposed pricing with the removal of the \$5 trash load fee, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
- **All Members plan to be present at Clean-up Day on September 24, 2022 from 8 – 11 a.m.**

## 7. New Business

### a. Review Materials for Proposed Central Minnesota Cold Storage Facility

- The materials for this item were discussed and considered during the Public Forum as residents had several questions.
- Mayor Lawrence stated that she was extremely upset by accusations of taking kickbacks on this or any project and that the allegations are not true and are very hurtful.
- Smythe noted that there were some comments from residents asking why the city didn't pursue other options for this property. She explained that property owners purchase the property and present their proposals to the city; the city does not proactively pursue these project proposals, as there isn't sufficient staff to conduct this type of activity. This developer felt the project was a good fit for Clearwater given the city's location and other local businesses that support transportation services.
- In response to concerns about traffic, Smythe and Member Crandall explained the steps that the EDA has taken to request a traffic study, outlining in writing for MnDot the safety concerns and

suggesting possible fixes for the corridor from County Road 7 to County Road 75. At a meeting with MnDot in August, they introduced the consultant who is working on our requested study right now and told us that they expected to have a report with possible options later this year. MnDot has been kept in the loop about all of the proposed commercial projects that will bring additional traffic to this corridor and are working on options to address them.

- Member Crandall suggested residents stay informed and come to staff or Council Members early on with their feedback.
- Mayor Lawrence urged residents present to consider volunteering to serve on local city Boards or Commissions, all of whom are always seeking candidates. There has been a consistent lack of volunteers willing to serve. The Park Commission presently has two members who do not live in city limits due to a lack of any other volunteers.
- Mayor Lawrence stated that she did not intend to be flippant with her comments about others purchasing the cold storage property. She was just stating the facts that the property had been for sale for a long time and this developer purchased it for this project. Other people or groups had ample opportunity to purchase the land for another purpose but didn't do so.
- Smythe summarized the findings and recommendations of the Planning Commission, which included two additions to the site plan. She also stated that the City Attorney had reviewed the resolutions and ordinance for this project and made some additions and revisions.
- Member Crandall asked if the City Engineer's memo addressed any of the concerns of residents. Engineer Kannas stated that some of the concerns were addressed in his memo or in that of the City Planner.
- b. Res 2022-56 – Approving Preliminary Plat – Central Minnesota Cold Storage**
  - **MOTION** by Lenz to approve Resolution 2022-56 approving preliminary plat for Central Minnesota Cold Storage, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
- c. Ord 2022-07 – Approving Rezoning – Central Minnesota Cold Storage**
  - **MOTION** by Crandall approving Ordinance 2022-07 rezoning request for Central Minnesota Cold Storage, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
- d. Res 2022-58 – Approving Site Plan – Central Minnesota Cold Storage**
  - **MOTION** by Lenz to approve Resolution 2022-58, approving site plan for Central Minnesota Cold Storage, seconded by Crandall, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
- e. Res 2022-59 – Approving 2023 Preliminary Levy and Budget**
  - Smythe gave an overview of the preliminary levy and budget. The only changes since the August summary were the capital plan changes suggested by the City Council for expansion of the city hall/fire hall building and reducing the community center bond amount to \$3 million dollars.
  - Member Crandall asked about staff adds. Smythe explained that the proposed shared position with the EDA was added, along with a part-time accounting clerk for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter only. The staff add for Public Works was removed due to the cost and levy impact.
  - **MOTION** by Crandall to approve Resolution 2022-59, approving 2023 preliminary levy and budget, seconded by Luhmann, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**

## **8. Committee Reports**

### **a. Mayor and Council**

- Member Crandall stated that he was available to meet with other candidates running for office if there was any interest.

### **b. Boards**

- EDA – EDA meets September 20, 2022 at 8:00 a.m. and is working on a new signage proposal.

- Sewer Authority – Sewer Authority reviewed the budget at the August meeting.
- Planning Commission – Planning Commission met last week to review the proposed cold storage project and a proposed apartments project. The apartments project was tabled so the applicant could address several areas of concern, including parking, fire department access, stormwater setbacks, and other issues.
- Park Commission
  - o Park Commission has been discussing ways to scale back the Community Center proposal. Staff will be looking at options for an earlier sketch that had less facilities included. Member Crandall suggested the city conduct another survey, given some of the feedback from residents that seem to be opposed. He offered that the EDA could discuss and conduct a new survey of residents.
  - o Member Luhmann updated that the Park Commission is recommending moving the temporary hockey rink from Spring Street Park to El Dorado Park. It will be placed on the basketball courts with a liner added to protect the concrete.
  - o **MOTION** by Luhmann to approve moving the hockey rink from Spring Street Park to El Dorado Park with a liner added, seconded by Crandall, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
  - o Luhmann also noted that the staff are obtaining quotes for adding lighting around the basketball courts/hockey rink.
  - o Smythe reported that the Veterans Memorial Park committee met and approved a project plan for completion. Initial work has begun. The project completion deadline is June 30, 2023 for the grant funding.
  - o Members discussed the “backwards” bench along the County Road 75 bike trail.
  - o **MOTION** by Crandall to flip the bench to a standard position facing the roadway. **MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.**

**c. Staff**

- Smythe stated that the city’s intern has started and is making progress on several projects.
- Smythe reported that Public Works staffer Abe Knowles recently welcomed a new baby to his family.
- Mayor Lawrence asked for project suggestions for the Eagle Scouts. Residents suggested creating benches or seating for the ball field at El Dorado Park.

**9. Other Business**

- a. **Next Regular Meeting – October 10, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.**

**10. Adjournment**

- **MOTION** to adjourn by Luhmann, seconded by Lenz, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED 4-0.**
- Meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

ATTEST

Annita M. Smythe, City Administrator

APPROVED

Andrea Lawrence Wheeler, Mayor