

HARRIS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

April 9, 2018

I. Call to order

Mayor Miller called to order the regular meeting of the Harris City Council at 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Roll Call

Deputy City Clerk Sculley conducted roll call. The following members were present: Mayor Miller, Councilmember Payne, Councilmember Rossini, and Councilmember Sculley. Councilmember Williams was absent. Deputy City Clerk Sculley advised that a quorum of the council was present.

IV. Consent Agenda

Councilmember Rossini made the motion to approve the March 12, 2018 Regular Meeting minutes, March 29, 2018 Special Meeting minutes, and the Accounts Payable exempting the \$15,486 for East Central Energy until after the council hears from the East Central Energy representative during the Regular Agenda. Councilmember Sculley seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

V. Public Comment

VI. Regular Agenda

- **John Bosman - East Central Energy**
 - John Bosman is here representing East Central Energy. Beginning in January 2015 through January of 2017 a communication device (turtle device) in one of the meters at the Waste Water Plant began to fail, resulting in the city not getting properly charged for the actual electricity used. In 2014 when East Central Energy last had a service technician out the meter checked out ok. Typical usage for the Waste Water Plant is 18,000 to 22,000 kw hours per month. The numbers dropped incrementally month to month. East Central Energy is only allowed to back charge a year due to the policy of East Central and a State Statute They said they didn't catch it and they should have but it would have been difficult with the meter used. East Central Energy has had to write off \$16,000 due to this issue. The meters have been replaced. Councilmember Sculley asked if the city had any way of preventing this and Mr. Bosman said there was nothing the city could have done. Mr. Bosman apologized on behalf of East Central Energy. City Clerk / Treasurer Balfany did look back at previous usage and payments and was able to see where this happened.

Councilmember Rossini made the motion to pay East Central Energy.
Councilmember Payne seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

- **Kathy Olson - New Planning Commission member**

- Kathy Olson was previously on the Planning Commission from 2003 through 2006 and served on the council from 2003 through 2010. Kathy was born and raised in Harris and wants to see the city grow and be successful. Councilmember and Planning Commission Chair Rossini recommends Kathy. Kathy has agreed to fulfill a three-year term. Councilmember Rossini made the motion to appoint Kathy Olson as a new member of the Planning Commission who will serve a three-year term.. Councilmember Payne seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

- **Joanne Ploetz - Bench at Legion Hall**

- The City of Harris owns the Legion and the lot where it is located. Joanne Ploetz who is the wife of Legion Commander John Ploetz and her family are requesting permission from the City Council to purchase a bench in memory of Commander Ploetz and place it outside the Legion Hall. Councilmember Rossini made the motion to support the Legion and their decision regarding a bench in remembrance of Legion Commander John Ploetz. Councilmember Payne seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

- **Construction and maintenance on 442nd Street grade crossing - track changes**

- St. Croix Valley Railroad will be replacing the existing railroad crossing at 442nd Street in Harris. The cost of this project is estimated to be \$26,136.97. This estimate does not include the final paving of approaches once the crossing is complete. The city is also responsible for setting up detours and road closure barricades. Councilmember Sculley suggests that the city begin drafting a letter informing residents of this project and asking their input. The city needs to prepare plans for emergency services to reach these homes during the time of repairs. Fire Chief Gregoire said that the Fire Department would be willing to assist the city in this process. Once the railroad sets a date, the city will begin informing residents. Councilmember Rossini made the motion to approve and sign the St. Croix Valley Railroad contract and begin this process. Councilmember Sculley seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

VII. Staff Reports

- **Fire Dept**

- **Minutes from March 15, 2018 meeting**

- Councilmember Sculley asked for clarification regarding fire hydrant care. Councilmember Sculley believes the city should be responsible for shoveling out

around hydrants. In the past, Public Works has been responsible for shoveling out the hydrants. Many homeowners are unaware that it may be their responsibility to shovel out around the hydrants on their property. Councilmember Rossini stated from a liability standpoint the city should shovel out the hydrants. The council confirmed that the city is responsible for shoveling around all fire hydrants.

- Chief Gregoire would like to clarify snow removal at the Fire Department. Currently, Fire Department members are responsible for shoveling out all service doors at the department. After the city finishes plowing, members usually have to go back and shovel again. Councilmember Sculley clarified that since the Fire Department is a city building Public Works should be responsible for shoveling and snowplowing in front of all doors. Councilmember Sculley said since the Legion is also a city building and we already mow the grass for that property, the city should be responsible for shoveling their sidewalks as well. Councilmember Rossini agrees that the city should take over shoveling at the Legion since it is a city building. The council agreed that the city will begin shoveling the Legion.

- **New Structure of Positions**

- The Fire Department is still working on the new structure of positions. The department was considering having a structure that involved a Chief, Assistant Chief 1, and Assistant Chief 2. That structure would not currently follow the SOP's. The Fire Department would like the structure to consist of a five-person leadership team (Chief, Assistant Chief and then 3 captains). The new structure is still a work in progress. The Department will be discussing it at their next business meeting.

- **Approval of Fire Instructor 1 and Fire Officer 1 for Gabi Isaac**

- Captain Gabi Isaac is requesting certification trainings so she is able to fulfill her training obligations as a Fire Training Captain. Isaac is requesting approval for Fire Instructor 1 and Fire Officer 1. Chief Gregoire is also requesting to attend the Fire Officer 1 training. Councilmember Rossini made the motion to approve sending Gabi Isaac and Chief Gregoire to Fire Officer 1 and Gabi Isaac to attend Fire Instructor 1 for a total of \$1350.00. Councilmember Payne seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

- **Pumper Repairs**

- Both the Yellow and White Pumpers are in need of repairs. Fire Fighter Chris Collins has offered to help work on some of these repairs. The Yellow Pumper's rear wheel seals are leaking, the wiper switch is missing, and a few light bulbs still need replacement. Chief Gregoire is still waiting on additional bids for the rear wheel seals on the Yellow Pumper. The White Pumper that previously had 17

items on the list of repairs is currently down to only 5 items. The oil pan is leaking (gasket) and the front shocks will need replacement along with an oil change. Most of the Yellow Pumper repairs can be completed in house but the Fire Department is still in need of additional tools to be able to complete some of these repairs. Specifically, a 20-ton jack. The tool list that the Fire Department turned into the city has the specific tools that they need. The Fire Department is making sure all gas tanks are full and will be running Non Oxy in the small engines.

- **Grass Rig Preparation Maintenance**

- The Fire Department is preparing to begin prepping the Grass Rigs for grass season.

- **Procedures For Fire Relief Retirees**

- The Fire Relief is currently working on an award system for Fire Department members when they retire from the Fire Department. The award system would be based on number of years served. Chief Gregoire would like to have retirees be present at a City Council meeting to be properly presented with their check and award. The City would like to have the opportunity to properly thank Fire Department members. Their dedication and commitment to serving the community should be appropriately acknowledged. Councilmember Sculley agrees that they deserve proper recognition. Mayor Miller stated that she doesn't want to force Fire Department members to come to a City Council meeting to be recognized. Chief Gregoire stated that following through with this request would be part of being in good standings with the Fire Department and the city. The Fire Relief will consider adding this to the Relief Bylaws. The Fire Relief would be responsible for purchasing the awards for the retiring members who earned them. Councilmember Rossini clarified that this procedure is only for members going forward not members who previously retired, Chief Gregoire confirmed that is correct.

- **Pancake Breakfast update**

- On March 24, 2018, the Harris Fire Departments hosted the 1st Annual Easter Egg Hunt / Pancake Breakfast and it was a huge success. The Fire Department joined up with Harris's First Lutheran Church. The department would like to continue supporting and working with the community and are more than happy to build events around the community to help bring people to Harris. The city has heard many positive comments from both community members and First Lutheran Church members who were happy with the event. The Fire Department believes they had around 500 people attend.

- **New Grant Possibilities**

- The Fire Department is currently working on a new SAFER Grant. This grant would not be for equipment, rather to help the department recruit new members. Purchasing new signs and working on curriculum for the department's Ability Test are some of the possibilities. The Fire Department hasn't heard anything back yet regarding the 2017 FEMA AFG Grant that was submitted. The DNR Grant application is next to be completed. Chief Gregoire would like to know when the Fire Department building expires so they can be on top of grant opportunities. The city is unaware of the Fire Department expiration date.
- Chief Gregoire brought up the Fire Department having issues turning from County Road 30 onto Stark Road. . Currently, there isn't a turning lane and Fire Department members have to wait for traffic to clear before turning into the hall. This slows down their response time. Gregoire stated that it would be nice if a turning lane could be added. City Clerk/ Treasurer Balfany stated that the city could reach out to the Director of Public Works and Chisago County Engineer Joe Triplett and see what he recommends.
- Chief Gregoire would like the council to approve the SCBA pack testing. This testing is coming up soon and will likely be before the May City Council meeting. Councilmember Sculley made the motion to approve the SCBA pack testing up to \$1,200.00 Councilmember Rossini seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

- **City Engineer Chuck Schwartz - written report**

- Chuck Schwartz recommends sending out the RFP to prospective developers this spring. In addition, Chuck recommends that the council consider approving the development proposal and ordering its advertisement at the May 14, 2018 City Council meeting.
- Councilmember Rossini asked Harris City Clerk / Treasurer Balfany and Deputy City Clerk Sculley if it would be possible to find out the timing of maintenance on the bridge crossing 35 and the frontage road. The city will reach out to their DOT contact.

- **Planning Commission -John Rossini**

- Councilmember Rossini presented his top ten list of places in the City that the Planning Commission would like to see action or improvement on. Tonight Rossini would like to focus on the top four. The first residence is 6525 439th street. The city

has already been working with law enforcement and the city's attorney to address this issue. Secondly, the Planning Commission has concerns regarding 42775 Forest Blvd. The city has received complaints from residents who believe people are living in buildings on this property also; the items being stored may be in violation of the properties Conditional Use Permit. The city has also received conflicting reports that the people who are there are only working in the buildings. Fire Chief Gregoire will go to the property and see if someone is living there. Mayor Miller stated that we need to focus on seeing if someone is living there. There are also concerns with 45820 Grand Ave. This property has numerous junk cars and the Planning Commission believes it is a fire hazard and not allowed per the city's ordinances. Councilmember Sculley stated that he would reach out to the owner of this property to discuss this issue. Councilmember Rossini said the Planning Commission is concerned with the size of the windows at 43856 Ginger Avenue and if this would be considered a safety issue. Chief Gregoire will go to this address and look at the windows. Councilmember Rossini told the council he will be setting up a time to meet with one of the city clerks to continue working on the Comprehensive Plan.

- **People Service - written report**

- Mayor Miller asked if there had been any updates regarding the leaking roof at the Waste Water plant. Deputy City Clerk Sculley said that someone came out to look at the roof and said that it was installed incorrectly and that they would not cover the damage.
- George Valvoda accepted the award for the Harris Waste Water Treatment Plant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

- **Public Works - Alan Teich and George Valvoda - written reports**

- Alan Teich said that he has been busy plowing snow this month. Someone hit one of the water main shut off valves on the corner of Gladstone and 438th. A cover has been placed over it until spring when they can dig it up and replace the cover. Alan said if it continues to snow he will need to order more cutting edges next month. Councilmember Rossini is concerned with how far back the trees are being cut by his house.

- **City Clerk/Treasurer - Marlys Balfany - written report**

- **Deputy Clerks report - Abbey Sculley - written report**

- North Branch Schools will have its annual Community Service day on May 18, 2018 and would like to know if the City of Harris has any projects that they need assistance with. The council said depending on weather they could rake out the ball field and scrape the old paint off of the building at the field. There is also debris by the railroad tracks that needs to be picked up. A reminder of the Local

Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting for the City of Harris will be at the City Hall at 6pm on Monday April 23, 2018. On April 17, 2018, Deputy City Clerk will meet with the Legion to see if they would be willing to work together on community events in the future.

VIII. **Mayor and Council Reports**

- Councilmember Rossini would like to know what grants the city is currently working on. Mayor Miller advised that we are working on hiring another office assistant because currently the office staff doesn't have time to take on any new tasks.

IX. **Adjourn**

Councilmember Rossini made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Sculley seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. There being no further business, Mayor Miller adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.

Deputy City Clerk Abbey Sculley

Mayor Diane Miller

Date Approved