

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
INDEPENDENCE CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, MARCH 22 2016 –7:30 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Independence City Council was called to order by Mayor Johnson at 7:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mayor Johnson led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Johnson, Councilors Betts, McCoy and Grotting

ABSENT: Councilor Spencer

STAFF: City Planner & Interim City Administrator Mark Kaltsas, City Administrative Assistant Horner, City Attorney Vose

VISITORS: None

4. ****Consent Agenda****

All items listed under Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by Council and will be acted on by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

- a. Approval of City Council minutes from the February 23, 2016 Regular City Council Meeting.
- b. Approval of Accounts Payable; Checks Numbered 15914-15980.
- c. Approval of Liquor License Renewals for Ox Yoke Inn and Windsong Golf Club.
- d. Agriculture Preserve Renewal Applications.
- e. Approval of Home to Be Moved Into the City and Located on Townline Road.
- f. Approval of revised Resolution No. 16-0223-02.
- g. Approval of Resolution 16-0322-01.

McCoy stated he would like to pull (b) and (f).

Motion by Betts, second by Grotting to approve the revised Consent Agenda. Ayes: Johnson, Betts, McCoy, Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: Spencer. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

McCoy stated the checks approved at the last meeting were through 15888 and this group to be approved starts at 15914. He questioned the gap in the check numbers. Kaltsas stated the payroll checks are deposited electronically have a number but are not included in the register. He noted a third party processes the checks. Kaltsas said a module could be purchased for about \$2500 and a \$500 annual fee that would allow us to access a register. Betts asked if it could be done manually. Kaltsas said it could be done manually for the payroll checks.

Motion by McCoy, second by Grotting to approve item (b) accounts payable. Ayes: Johnson, Betts, McCoy, Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: Spencer. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

McCoy stated that he thought the term commercial production should be clarified for item (f) Resolution 16-0223-02 (line #6).

Motion by Betts, second by McCoy to approve Resolution 16-0223-02 with the deletion of the first half of paragraph #6. Ayes: Johnson, Betts, McCoy, Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: Spencer. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

5. SET AGENDA – ANYONE NOT ON THE AGENDA CAN BE PLACED UNDER OPEN/MISC.

6. REPORTS OF BOARDS & COMMITTEES BY COUNCIL AND STAFF

Spencer attended the following meetings:

Grotting attended the following meetings:

- Meeting at the capital with Representative McDonald, Representative Hertaus, Senator Osmek and Senator Senjem on Highway 12
- Planning Commission Meeting

McCoy attended the following meetings:

- Planning Commission Meeting

Betts attended the following meetings:

- Sensible Land Use Coalition Meeting
- Fire Commission Meeting
- Highway 12 Coalition Meeting
- West Hennepin Chamber of Commerce Meeting
- Police Commission Meeting
- Planning Commission Meeting
- Senate Hearing for Highway 12

Johnson attended the following meetings:

- Grace Center Food Bank Presentation and Breakfast
- Sensible Land Use Coalition Meeting
- Community Action Partnership Hennepin County Finance Committee Meeting
- Suburban Hennepin County Board Meeting
- Vinland Center Winter Walkabout
- Chaired Republican Caucus at Independence City Hall
- Fire Commission Meeting
- Highway 12 Coalition Meeting
- National League of Cities Meeting in Washington, D.C.
- Northwest League of Minnesota Cities Meeting
- Orono Healthy Youth Meeting
- Meeting at the capital with Representative McDonald, Representative Hertaus, Senator Osmek and Senator Senjem on Highway 12
- Hennepin County Healthy Youth collaborative meeting
- Council of Mayors Meeting

- Orono School Board Meeting
- Police Commission Meeting
- Land Use Advisory Committee for Met Council meeting
- Martin Sabo funeral

Horner attended the following meetings:

- Vinland Center Winter Walkabout
- AED Heart Safe Training in Maple Plain
- West Hennepin Public Safety Citizens Academy
- Gerhman’s Maple Syrup site meeting
- West Hennepin Chamber of Commerce Meeting
- Planning Commission Meeting

Kaltsas attended the following meetings:

- Acknowledged the tremendous efforts of Chief Kroells in the meeting with the senators and representatives at the capital meeting for the Highway 12 Safety Coalition
- MnDOT meeting pertaining to legislative funding tract for highway 12 and the prioritization of funding for the two intersections at 90 and 92

7. MELISSA POTTER, FROM HENNEPIN COUNTY ASSESSOR’S OFFICE – PRELIMINARY PRESENTATION IN PREPARATION FOR THE BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION MEETING ON APRIL 12, 2016.

Potter stated they study sales in a one-year period for the assessments. Residential lakeshore had an average of an 8% increase. Regular off-water properties had an average of approximately 4.8%. Agricultural had an average of -1.6% which was influenced greatly by the number of Green Acres and Ag preserve. Commercial properties went down an average of 1.3%. There was an overall tax increase of 3.8% for the City of Independence.

Johnson asked what Ag and Green Acres were valued at that was not in Green Acres or Ag preserve. Potter said it was upper teens or approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000 per acre. Grotting said that Ag number seemed a bit skewed and said it appears as the residential lake owner carries a bigger burden than the Ag landowner. Potter said programs are in place to help those with farmland so they do not have to carry as big as a tax burden. She noted the green acres program. Johnson said that not everyone takes it out and there is a deferred three years payback payable when the property is sold. Grotting said there was a benefit on the end sale. Johnson said when the downturn happened in the housing market then the Ag taxes went up every year. Grotting noted it was a good conversation to have publicly as residents want to understand why there taxes are where they are and Ag is where it is at.

Potter said notices were sent out to residents on March 11th; since that time her office has received 22 phone calls. Potter stated new people would have an opportunity to train beginning in July. It is a 2-3 hour class and can be done online. She stated the handbook is available on the Department of Revenue’s site. Potter said the April 12th meeting requires a quorum and one trained member. Johnson noted Spencer is trained and may represent at that meeting. Potter said the board can increase or decrease the value of a property, add improvements to the assessments list and change the classification of a property. She said the resident needs to provide market data and supporting documents of why they believe their value is incorrect. Potter said the Department of Revenue reviews the decisions made by the local board. Potter said the board may not do the following in considering a change; may not look at prior year assessments, may not reduce the overall valuation in the City by 1%, may not exempt, may not change where there is a conflict of interest, may not grant green acre status or ag preserve and may not change where assessor is not allowed to assess.

Johnson said people don’t realize that they are better off letting the assessors take a look. He said there have been a few cities in the past that have had to make changes or change assessors. He said Independence has been very fortunate that we have not had issues like that.

Potter said after the local board meeting if it is determined they need to meet again, they would have 20 days in which to meet. Potter stated another option is an open book meeting at the assessor's office and taxpayers are able to come in and meet individually. She said some people are intimidated by speaking before a council and prefer this option.

Potter stressed that residents should call her prior to that meeting so she could bring their file for a more thorough hearing.

8. DIRECTOR GARY KROELLS, WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY - ACTIVITY REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2016.

for the full report see the City Council packet materials in the 3-22-16 online packet

Kroells said at the end of February there were over 1400 complaints which is an increase over last year. Kroells talked about a few incidents including a snowmobile fire, DUI's and another attempted ATV theft from the Tri-K Sports Center on Highway 12.

Kroells stated Paige Duncan was killed in another tragic accident on Highway 12. Paige had been traveling to Buffalo from Bloomington to babysit for her niece when she lost control on the slippery curve by County Road 92. She crossed the center line and was struck by a vehicle traveling eastbound and killed. The other driver from Delano was seriously injured as well.

Kroells stated reports were received of a minor in consumption party on South Lakeshore Dr.; officers wrote tickets for minors consuming and speeding. Kroells stated the juveniles would not let the officers enter the home so the homeowners were contacted. The homeowners were not home and when they were contacted by the officer would not allow entry. A search warrant was obtained and fines were given to those remaining at the party. Some of the minors were released to parents that came to pick them up.

Kroells stated he met as part of the Highway 12 Safety Coalition with Representative Hertaus and Senator Osmek. He said the power point he presented gained additional feedback to be part of testimony given on Monday the 21st in front of the senate. Kroells stated they are looking for 15 million in funding with a three factor approach; concrete center median from 394 in Wayzata to at least ½ mile east of County Road 6, County Road 90 intersection realignment whether that is a round-about or traffic control device and County Road 92 realignment. He said they are looking at making County Road 92 one intersection which will require land acquisition and major reconstruction making it around a 10 million dollar project. Johnson asked if there were traffic counts on the county roads. Kroells stated it was 3000-6000 vehicles at this point.

Kroells said there were three very brave families that spoke before the senate and they did an outstanding job. Kroells said the Coalition will continue to push forward. The next hearing is before the House committees on March 30th with more details to come.

Kroells thanked the City Council for the generator that is now up and running.

Kroells stated Shawn Ebeling was recently hired to West Hennepin Public Safety. Shawn is a nine-year veteran of the Cottage Grove Police Department. He stated he has a strong background and is also a licensed paramedic.

Kroells said there is a new "wall of honor" that has been installed in the department to recognize the officers and reserves at WHPS.

9. DEMONSTRATION AND OVERVIEW OF NEW CODE RED EMERGENCY AND MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM.

Kaltsas stated the CodeRED is up and live. He said residents are able to sign up to get notifications of general events and emergencies. The hope is that residents will sign up for both options as it is a convenient way to get pertinent information to a select group of residents. As an example, he said if there was a road project that was going to affect a limited number of people the system has the ability to refine the delivery to those indicated. Kaltsas stated that residents could sign up by going to the City of Independence website or WHPS website and click on the logo and follow the prompts.

City Councilor Betts volunteered to go through a live sign up with Kroells so the viewing audience could see how it was done. Kroells stated this was a way to be notified by the police in the way that worked the best for you in the event of an emergency. Kroells noted you could choose one way to be notified or select them all if you would prefer that. Kroells stated that each resident would have to register themselves and the police do not have access to the information. All the information is managed by CodeRED and not the police. Grotting asked if CodeRED sells the information. Kaltsas stated they do not. Kaltsas stated a lot of residents are familiar with this as Delano and Orono schools already have it in place.

Kroells stated anything that is an emergency is handled by the police. The general notifications could be used the City for non-emergency messages that need to be delivered. The general notifications selection has to be chosen separately from the emergency status. Grotting stated that anyone that did not know how to use a computer or did not have one to use could call the City and sign up over the phone. Johnson agreed that would be a good idea.

Kroells said 6,000-7,000 people is the goal desired to reach for sign up. Kaltsas added the intent is to use the system effectively and not overuse it.

9. OPEN/MISC.

10. ADJOURN

Motion by Grotting, second by McCoy to adjourn at 9:10 p.m. Ayes: Johnson, Betts, McCoy, and Grotting. Nays: None. Absent: Spencer. MOTION DECLARED CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Trish Bemmels/ Recording Secretary