

AITKIN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
AITKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

September 18, 2023

6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Megan Workman, Council Members: Chris Dotzler, Jason Henke, Julie Miller, Kathy Galliger

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Skrbich

ALSO PRESENT: City Attorney Henry Brucker, Street Supervisor Lon Nicko, Chief of Police Paul Ryan, City Clerk Jen Thompson, Stan Gustafson, Tami Jacobs, Kat Robb, David Cluff. The City Labor Attorney, Susan Hanson was present via phone during the closed session.

Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Mayor Megan Workman at 6:00 p.m.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

Additions to the agenda are as follows: New Business; Special Event Permit – Aitkin Women of Today (moved from consent agenda), Liquor Store Committee & Termination of Probationary Part-time Liquor Store Employee. A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Kathy Galliger, and approved with all in favor.

3. **Consent Agenda.**

Lon Nicko requested the Special Event Permit from Aitkin Women of Today be moved to new business for further discussion. The following items were included in the consent agenda: - A motion to approve the consent agenda, as amended, was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Chris Dotzler, and approved with all in favor.

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- Minutes – Special Council Meeting – Work Session 09/05/2023
 - Minutes – Regular Council Meeting 9/5/2023
 - Accounts Payable:
 - City of Aitkin
9/01/23 to 9/13/23, Check #46356 to 46399 **TOTAL \$103,935.65**
 - Liquor Store
9/01/23 to 9/13/23, Check #22946 to 22965 \$74,668.39
ACH Check #99971732 \$14,114.00 **TOTAL \$88,782.39**
 - Financial Reports: - N/A
 - Special Event Permit: Aitkin Pickleball Association – Potluck 9/21/23
 - Resolution No. 2023-09-18C; Authorize Execution of TZD Agreement

4. **Public Hearing:** N/A

5. **Mayor's Report:** Mayor Workman attended the Riverwood appreciation event on 9/16/2023 and commented that she explored the beautiful new paved trail at the Tank Trail property.

6. **Administration Report:**

- Welcome to Aitkin signs should be installed by the end of the month.
- Preliminary 2024 Budget & Levy Discussion & Resolution No. 2023-09-18B were tabled. A motion calling for a special meeting on 9/26/2023 to finalize the 2024 Preliminary Budget and Levy was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Jason Henke, and approved with all in favor.

7. **Old Business:**

- None.

8. **New Business**

- **Resolution No. 2023-09-18A Notice of Order to Remove Hazardous Building; 514 3rd St NW** – Jason Henke read a letter that was brought to him by two people who are interested in purchasing the 514 3rd St NW property. The two have a purchase agreement on the property and in their letter explained that they plan to gut the structure to the studs, put an addition on, and dispose of any debris in the yard. Henke asked if the council moves forward with the resolution, will the buyers be able to rehab the home? The answer was unknown at the time of the council meeting. A motion to table the resolution until the 10/2/2023 council meeting was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Kathy Galliger, and approved with all in favor.
- **Liquor Store Committee** –

In the recent budget discussions, it has been realized that the Liquor Store needs some significant upgrades to the parking lot and to the bathrooms. During the work session the idea of a committee came up. After further discussion it was determined that the Public Works/Facilities Committee could likely handle the preliminary planning for these projects so no additional committee is needed.

- **Special Event Permit – Aitkin Women of Today, Pumpkin Patch**

Street Supervisor Lon Nicko pointed out that the event permit application is requesting garbage disposal. This is not something the city typically does; each event host is responsible for the disposal of any trash created. A motion to approve the event permit with the condition that no garbage disposal is provided was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Kathy Galliger, and approved all in favor.

9. **Committee Reports:**

- **Park Committee:**

- Jason Henke shared a long list of accomplishments such as, dasher board installation on the hockey rink, the park timbers have been installed, and that the paved trail at the Tank Trail property is complete. The committee has sent a trail grand opening event for Tuesday, October 3, 4:30 to 6.
- Your Six Contract; renewal of 6 subscriptions and adding 3 additional subscriptions for a term of 36-months. The contract was presented to the council for approval. A motion to approve was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Julie Miller, and approved all in favor.

- **Personnel Committee:**

- Personnel Policy – Discussion regarding the performance review process for department heads and the City Administrator was had. It was determined that the council would prefer to do the performance review of the City Administrator as whole. A motion to update the Personnel Policy reflecting that the Administrator will do department head and direct report staff performance reviews and the entire council will do the Administrator performance review in a closed session. The policy will be updated and brought back to the council to adopt at a later meeting.
- A recommendation to terminate a probationary part-time liquor store employee was made by Galliger on behalf of the Personnel Committee. A motion to terminate was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Jason Henke
- A motion to post the part-time liquor position was made by Kathy Galliger, seconded by Chris Dotzler, and approved all in favor.

10. **Comments from Visitors:**

11. **Closed Session:**

Pursuant to Minn. Statute 13D.05 Subd.3(a) for the purposes of discussing and evaluating the performance of an employee subject to the City Council's authority the council went into closed session at 7:40 p.m. The following summary was provided by Mr. Brucker, City Attorney and reviewed by Ms. Hanson, City Labor Attorney.

On September 18, 2023, the Aitkin City Council held a closed meeting to discuss the performance evaluation of City Administrator Mike Skrbich. During this closed meeting, the City Council received and read a letter from Mike Skrbich, who was not able to attend the closed meeting. Each member of Aitkin City Council expressed their opinions and/or concerns with the performance of Mike Skrbich as Aitkin City Administrator. One member of the Aitkin City Council rated Mike Skrbich's performance as excellent. However, three members of the Aitkin City Council expressed significant concerns with Mike Skrbich's performance as City Administrator. These concerns included but were not limited to the following: (1) issues with the City's budgeting process; (2) communication with City staff; (3) issues with the park building; (4) reports from department heads; (5) a lack of detailed minutes for committees; (6) a lack of preparation for the fireworks; and (7) complaints from members of the public, city employees, community organizations and others. It was also noted that Mike Skrbich has some good qualities, including his ability to secure grants, and the amount of time that he has spent on City matters over and above a standard 40 hour work schedule. One member of the City Council expressed the opinion that it would be difficult for anyone to be able to succeed in the position. Overall, the City Council determined that Mike Skrbich's performance as City Administrator was fair and needs improvement. As a result, the City Council mentioned the possibility of proceeding with a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

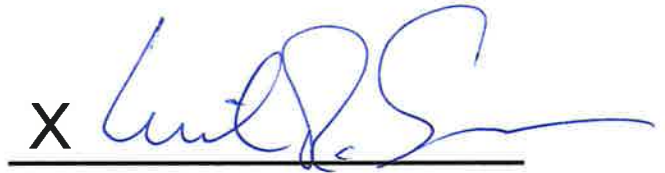
A motion to adjourn the closed session and re-open the open meeting at 8:59 p.m. was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Kathy Galliger, and approved all in favor.

12. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

X 

Megan Workman
Mayor

X 

Mike Skrbich
City Administrator