

AITKIN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

AITKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

June 17, 2024

6:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Street Supervisor Lon Nicko, Assistant Police Chief Drew Boldt, Kat Robb, Tom Kuppich.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A motion to approve the agenda was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Kathy Galliger. Motion carried with all voting aye.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution No. 2024-06-17A Governing Write-In-Vote Counting was removed from the consent agenda for further discussion.

The following items were included in the consent agenda:

- Minutes – Regular Council Meeting 6/3/2024
- Accounts Payable
 - City
 - Liquor Store

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Kathy Galliger, seconded by Chris Dotzler. Motion carried with all voting aye.

PUBLIC HEARING

- None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

- None

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

OLD BUSINESS

- **Hwy 169 Construction**
 - Lon Nicko gave the council a brief update regarding the MnDOT Hwy 169 project.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resolution No. 2024-06-17B**
 - Resolution No. 2024-06-17B was presented to the council regarding compliance with reimbursement bond regulations under the Internal Revenue Code for the upcoming water tower and WWTF projects. This resolution, if adopted, would permit the city to reimburse itself using bond funds for engineering fees that have been incurred and paid prior to construction commencement. Julie Miller made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor.
- **Draft Interim Moratorium Ordinance Prohibiting Expansion of Cannabis Business**
 - The council received a draft of the proposed Interim Moratorium Ordinance for consideration. City Administrator Thompson informed the council that this ordinance aims to provide a period during which the Planning Commission can deliberate, assess, and formulate recommendations for zoning regulations to present to the council. The moratorium is scheduled to remain in effect until January 1, 2025, and it retains the flexibility to be rescinded at any point. Adoption of the ordinance requires a public hearing beforehand, and the Planning Commission will begin review and discussions during the regular meeting on June 24, 2024.
- **Special Event Permit**
 - The council reviewed a special event permit submitted by Aitkin County Friends of the Arts for the annual Ripplesippi Music Fest scheduled on June 26, from 10:00 a.m. to Midnight. The permit request included the closure of 3rd St NW between Minnesota Ave N and 1st Ave NW. The group expressed interest in coordinating with Jacob Schanz of Smokey Jake's BBQ, who now owns the vacant lot (Creamery Lot) on 3rd St NW, though the readiness of the lot for the event remained uncertain.

Councilmember Galliger requested that all adjacent property owners be notified and their needs considered during the street closure and event. A motion to approve the event permit and street closure was put forward by Kathy Galliger and seconded by Jason Henke. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor.

- **RESOLUTION NO. 2024-06-A Governing Write-In Vote Counting**

- Resolution No. 2024-06-17A Governing Write-In Vote Counting was presented to the council for consideration. If approved, the resolution would require that write-in candidates must receive at least as many votes as the non-write-in candidate with the fewest votes to be counted. The aim is to save time by not counting frivolous write-in votes. During the discussion, the council felt as though every vote should be counted so voters do not feel discounted. They emphasized the importance of maintaining voter trust and ensuring the integrity of the election process. A motion to deny the resolution was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Kathy Galliger. The motion carried with all voting aye.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

- **CLA Proposal for the Aitkin Liquor Store**

- The Public Works/Facilities Committee convened on June 10, 2024, with Mark Korte from NorSon and Tom Hammond, Mitch Thompson from CLA participating virtually to present the Pro Forma Analysis proposal for the Aitkin Liquor Store. The Pro Forma Analysis will encompass cost estimates, revenue projections, operational efficiencies, and other long-term considerations. This report is adaptable to our specific needs and suggestions. The accompanying proposal includes a sample of detailed factors and considerations. The analysis serves as a pivotal tool in the decision-making process, providing a financial forecast to better understand the potential costs, benefits, and financial implications of options such as remodeling versus new construction.

Given current concerns about the store's operational capacity, it is crucial to explore optimal strategies for its future. The estimated cost for the analysis is \$7,500 (hourly billing). Nor-Son's \$8,500 building analysis expense includes a \$1,500 contribution toward this study, leaving the City with an estimated cost of \$6,000.

A motion to approve the proposal was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

PLANNING & ZONING

- None.

PARK COMMITTEE

- **Regular Meeting Date**

- The 6/11/2024 regular meeting was rescheduled to 6/18/2024.

LIBRARY BOARD

- **Board Appointment**

- During the June 11, 2024 Library Board meeting, the board reviewed and discussed Kalen Schultz's application for a position on the library board. The board recommends to the City Council for the approval and appointment of Kalen Schultz.

A motion to approve the appointment was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.

AIRPORT COMMISSION

- None.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- **Termination of Employment**

- The Liquor Store Manager, Sam Keil, recommended terminating probationary employee Kathy Peterson. A motion to approve the termination was proposed by Kathy Galliger and seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor.

- **Employment Offer**

- Liquor Store Clerk Position: Chris Dotzler motioned to approve the conditional offer to Kayla Luke at Grade SS5, Step 1 (\$14.79 on the 2024 Wage Scale), contingent upon a background check. Jason Henke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor.

EDA

- None.

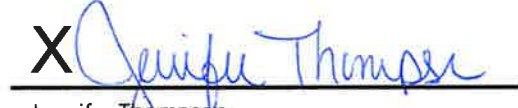
COMMENTS

Street Supervisor Lon Nicko provided an update to the council regarding the storm damage on June 12. He reported that although there was not extensive damage within the city limits, significant damage occurred at the Tank Trails where many trees fell. The Public Works Department has already cleared most of the debris from the walking trail, but additional work remains. Nicko mentioned that the crew will continue assessing the extent of the damage. Nicko also informed the council after the storm half of the Welcome to Aitkin sign on the west side of town went missing and will require replacement.

ADJOURNMENT

- A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:31 pm was made by Kathy Galliger, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

X 
Megan Workman
Mayor

X 
Jennifer Thompson
City Administrator