

AITKIN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

AITKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

September 3, 2024

6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Acting Mayor Jason Henke, Council Members Chris Dotzler, Julie Miller & Kathy Galliger

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Street Supervisor Lon Nicko, Police Chief Colter Riedel, Kat Robb, Tami Jacobs, Gary Tibbitts.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Addition: Letter of Interest from J. Henke. A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were included in the consent agenda:

- Minutes – Regular Council Meeting 8/19/2024
- Accounts Payable
 - City
 - Liquor Store
- Resolution No. 2024-09-03B Authorized Signatures on Financial Accounts

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

PUBLIC HEARING

- None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

- None.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

- **Hoglund Property – 113 4th St NE**
 - A timeline of notices issued to the property owner at 113 4th St NE was presented to the council, with documented complaints dating back to March 2024. O. Hoglund has received multiple notices. On July 30, Mr. Hoglund was given a notice requiring him to clean the property by August 19. He was informed that if he failed to comply, he would have the opportunity to address the City Council at the September 3 meeting. Mr. Hoglund did not attend the meeting. The council reviewed and approved Resolution No. 2024-09-03C, Notice of Order to Abate Nuisance. If the property remains uncleaned after 21 days, the city may seek a court order for cleanup and may assess the associated costs to the property owner. A motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-09-03C was made by Kathy Galliger and seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

- None.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Aitkin PD – Bill Cline Way Parking & Speed**
 - Police Chief Colter Riedel requested a modification to the parking restrictions on the north side of Bill Cline Way, where much of the road is currently marked as "No Parking" Monday through Saturday. Chief Riedel believes that opening up this area for parking would benefit events, the ball fields, and the city park. Additionally, he requested a reduction of the speed limit on the entire street to 20 mph to enhance safety. A motion to approve both the increase in parking availability and the reduction of the speed limit was made by Chris Dotzler and seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.
- **Aitkin PD – JPA City and State of MN Evidential Breath Test Machine**
 - Chief Riedel proposed entering into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the State of Minnesota to allow the Aitkin Police Department to acquire an Evidential Breath Test (EBT) Instrument. This machine will be provided at no cost to the city; the department will only need to cover the expense of mouthpieces, which

Chief Riedel indicated would be minimal. The addition of the EBT Instrument at the Aitkin Police Department will enhance efficiency by removing the need for officers to depend on the Aitkin County Sheriff's Office for breath testing. Furthermore, the EBT Instrument could be made available for use by other agencies if needed. A motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-09-03A and the Joint Powers Agreement was made by Kathy Galliger and seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Baratto Bros. Pay Estimate No. 5 & 6**

- Street Supervisor Lon Nicko provided the council with a brief update on the construction status of the new fieldhouse. Pay Estimate No. 5, in the amount of \$53,564.98, and Pay Estimate No. 6, in the amount of \$129,360.43, were presented for approval. Both pay estimates have been reviewed and approved by City Attorney Henry Brucker. A motion to approve Pay Estimates No. 5 and No. 6 was made by Chris Dotzler and seconded by Kathy Galliger. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Interim Mayor Appointment**

- Mayor Megan Workman resigned from the position of mayor, creating a vacancy in August 2024. The city accepted letters of interest from individuals willing to fill the position through December 31, 2024. A successor will be elected in the November 5, 2024, general election and will assume office on January 1, 2025. Two letters of interest were considered: one from Gary Tibbitts and one from Jason Henke. The council discussed that Gary Tibbitts has filed to run for the mayoral seat and will be on the ballot for the November 5 election. There was concern that appointing Gary Tibbitts to the interim position might be perceived as effectively choosing the next mayor.

City Attorney Henry Brucker reviewed Gary Tibbitts' eligibility and stated that Minnesota Statute 412.02, Subd. 2a, which addresses vacancies of city officers, including the mayor, does not contain any restrictions that would bar someone from being appointed to the position even if they have filed for the seat and will appear on the general election ballot.

After deliberation on both letters of interest, a motion was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Kathy Galliger, to approve Resolution No. 2024-09-03D, appointing Gary Tibbitts to the position of interim mayor through December 31, 2024. The motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Draft Preliminary 2025 Levy**

- City Administrator Thompson shared preliminary information regarding the 2025 levy. Currently, the preliminary levy stands at 9.41%. Thompson noted that while additional anticipated revenues are expected, they are not yet confirmed and, therefore, are not included in the budget at this time. She reminded the council that between the adoption of the preliminary levy in September and the final levy and budget approval in December, the levy amount can be reduced but not increased. The preliminary budget will be presented to the council for consideration at the September 16 council meeting.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

- **None.**

PLANNING & ZONING

- **8/26/2024 Meeting was canceled.**

PARK COMMITTEE

- **Wayfinding Project**

- In collaboration with Aitkin County Public Health through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) and the Aitkin County Land Department, we are initiating a significant Wayfinding project for the Aitkin Recreational Trail system. Our initial focus will be on enhancing the newly paved tank trail and the cross-country ski trails. The project is funded through a combination of SHIP (\$10,000), the Aitkin County Land Department (\$1,865), and a pending donation of \$2,500. This funding arrangement ensures that the project will not impact the park fund. A motion to approve the proposed Wayfinding project was made by Julie Miller and seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

LIBRARY BOARD

- **None.**

AIRPORT COMMISSION

- 8/28/2024 Meeting canceled. (No Quorum)

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- None.

EDA

- None.

COMMENTS

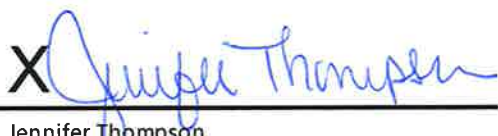
- Newly appointed Interim Mayor Gary Tibbitts expressed his gratitude to the council for his appointment. He indicated his eagerness to work with the Cuyuna Lakes Trail Association and the RAMS organization. Additionally, he stated his intention to familiarize himself with the city's pending projects and ongoing initiatives.

ADJOURNMENT

- A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 pm was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Kathy Galliger. The motion carried with all voting aye.

X 

Gary Tibbitts
Mayor

X 

Jennifer Thompson
City Administrator