

AITKIN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

AITKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

October 21, 2024

6:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Street Supervisor Lon Nicko, Police Chief Colter Riedel, Fire Chief Brian Pisarek, Kat Robb, Rich Courtemanche, Stephanie Mollet, John & Darla Heins, Amanda Lowe.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- A motion to approve the agenda was made by Jason Henke, 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 10/07/2024
- Accounts Payable
 - City
 - Liquor Store
- Gambling Permit; Knights of Columbus – Event: 11/17/2024
- Revised Contractual Agreement, City & County Municipal Airport Agreement

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

PUBLIC HEARING

- None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

OLD BUSINESS

- **Cannabis – Retail Limit**
 - Carried over from the October 7 council meeting, the council revisited the topic of whether to place limits on cannabis retail business registrations within the city limits of Aitkin. Councilmember Galliger expressed her opposition to cannabis, pointing out that it remains illegal at the federal level. After an in-depth discussion, a motion was made by Jason Henke to not place any limits on retail registrations in the city. The motion was seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with Henke, Miller, & Tibbitts in support. Galliger voting no and Dotzler abstaining.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Event Permit; Block North**
 - The council reviewed an event permit application from the Block North, requesting the closure of 3rd St NE from Minnesota Ave N to 1st Ave NE. The event will feature a vintage snowmobile display and requested to extend alcohol service from the Block North to the street until 4 p.m. A letter outlining provisions for the event was included for the council's consideration. A motion to approve the event permit and the provisions was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Jason Henke. The motion carried with all voting aye.
- **Event Permit; Aitkin Chamber of Commerce**
 - The council reviewed event permits submitted by the Aitkin Chamber of Commerce for the Aitkin Fish House activities scheduled for November 29, 2024. The planned events include the Fish House parade, a Fish House 5K, and the Fish House Sip & Stroll. A letter detailing the provisions for the events was provided for the council's consideration. Council member Galliger requested the addition of a provision to the letter, stating that the Chamber shall supply posters indicating that alcohol is no permitted to businesses that choose not to allow alcohol on their premises.
 1. Fish House Parade. Motion to approve Galliger/Henke. Motion carried with all voting aye.
 2. Fish House 5K. Motion to approve Henke/Miller. Motion carried with all voting aye.
 3. Fish House Sip & Stroll. Motion to approve Dotzler/Galliger. Motion carried with all voting aye.

- **Tank Trail Closure**
 - City Administrator Jen Thompson notified the council that the recreational trails at the Tank Trail property will be closed from November 9 to November 24 during the Minnesota deer hunting rifle season.
- **Resolution No. 2024-10-21A**
 - The council was presented with Resolution No. 2024-10-21A, which proposes an increase in the benefit level for firefighters vested in the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter (SVF) plan. Fire Chief Pisarek requested the council consideration to raise the benefit from \$3200 to \$4100 per year of service. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Julie Miller, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.
- **Welcome to Aitkin Sign**
 - The “Welcome to Aitkin” sign located at the east entrance of town, previously situated in the yard of Mille Lacs Coop, was removed during road construction after MnDOT determined it was slightly within the right-of-way. Street Supervisor Nicko has been in contact with representatives from MLEC regarding the possibility of reinstalling the sign. However, they have declined the reinstallation request since the property is currently for sale. Nicko and City Administrator Thompson will continue to explore potential locations for reinstalling the sign.
- **Resolution No. 2024-10-21B**
 - The council was presented with Resolution No. 2024-10-21B, which approves MnDOT Grant Agreement No. 1058181 and the purchase of signage. Police Chief Riedel explained that the grant amount of \$58,985.00 will fully cover the costs. The Street Department has agreed to install the signage upon its arrival. The new school zone signage aims to enhance visibility and safety for student at the designated crossings. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Jason Henke, seconded by Chris Dotzler. The motion carried with all voting aye.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

- **10/14/2024 Meeting was canceled.**

PLANNING & ZONING

- **Draft Minutes – 10/16/2024 Mtg. Minutes**

BUDGET COMMITTEE

- **None.**

PARK COMMITTEE

- **10/14/2024 Meeting was canceled.**

LIBRARY BOARD

- **None.**

AIRPORT COMMISSION

- **None.**

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- **None.**

EDA

- **None.**

COMMENTS

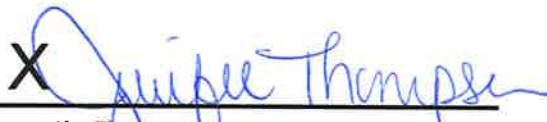
- **None.**

ADJOURNMENT

- A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 pm was made by Chris Dotzler, seconded by Julie Miller. The motion carried with all voting aye.



 Gary Tibbitts
 Mayor



 Jennifer Thompson
 City Administrator