



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
April 21, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 pm.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner (telephonic); Council: Deirdre Kvale (telephonic), Michelle Jerde (telephonic), Jahn Dyvik (telephonic), and Tom Skjaret (telephonic)

Staff Present: City Administrator: Scott Weske (in person); Fire Chief: James Van Eyll (telephonic); Public Works Director: Sean Diercks (telephonic); City Attorney: John Thames (telephonic); and City Clerk: Jeanette Moeller (in person)

Absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MAYOR'S COMMENTS - LONG LAKE NEWS, MEETING REVIEW AND UPDATES

Mayor Miner offered the following comments and updates:

Mayor Miner commented that he hoped everyone is staying healthy through the COVID-19 pandemic, and he appreciated efforts of staff and fellow Council members as meetings continue to be held via Zoom. He also gave a shout out to Chief Van Eyll for keeping Council updated with regular situational reporting. Mayor Miner confirmed that he had tested negative for COVID-19, had contracted some other viral illness, but was feeling healthy again.

He stated that thoughts and condolences are with Meridien Manor staff and residents. The facility had experienced an outbreak of COVID-19 and had been closed. Two recent deaths had occurred among residents. He reflected upon the heartbreaking experiences of the City's neighbor to the east.

Mayor Miner encouraged everyone to support local businesses as they can and to stay safe using masks and protective measures.

Prior to the regular Council meeting, the EDA had met and adopted a resolution approving the sale of the City owned Virginia Avenue property. The matter will also be heard during the Council meeting.

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Jerde, seconded by Dyvik, to approve the Agenda as presented. Ayes: all by roll call.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda consisted of:

- A. Approve Minutes of April 7, 2020 City Council Work Session
- B. Approve Minutes of April 7, 2020 City Council Meeting

- C. Receive Minutes of March 24, 2020 Economic Development Authority Meeting
- D. Approve Vendor Claims and Payroll
- E. Adopt Resolution No. 2020-15 Accepting a Donation by the Long Lake Volunteer Fire Relief Association to the Long Lake Fire Department for \$618.25 to Purchase a Humminbird 410950-1 Depth Finder for the Fire Boat

Mayor Miner highlighted the donation from the Fire Relief Association for the purchase of a depth finder for the fire boat.

A motion was made by Jerde, seconded by Kvale, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Ayes: all by roll call.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

Marty Schneider, 1176 W Wayzata Boulevard – Former Mayor Schneider expressed his gratitude to Council, EDA and staff for putting together a public meeting during very difficult circumstances. While he may not agree with everything that took place, he expressed his appreciation and respect for everyone's work.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Proposed Sale of City-Owned Virginia Avenue Property to Lifestyle Communities, LLC

City Attorney Thames reported that following holding a public hearing, the EDA approved the sale of the Virginia Avenue property to Lifestyle Communities subject to conditions contained in the Purchase Agreement. Per the EDA's bylaws, the City Council has the authority to approve or not approve that decision. The Council is requested to motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-14 approving the land sale as approved by the EDA.

Thames clarified that the deed from the state was issued to the City. The intent was always to have the EDA handle aspects of the negotiation, whether or not that was formally memorialized. Thames also pointed out a few changes to the purchase agreement that had been approved by the EDA, including adding a clause making it clear that the City retains discretion to control project scope with the developer, requiring a financial certification of project lending, moving the maximum closing date to the end of the year, and updating the signatories in the signature block to allow the City Clerk to notarize for the Mayor and Administrator.

A motion was made by Dyvik, seconded by Miner, to adopt Resolution No. 2020-14, "A Resolution Approving the Sale of City-Owned Property on Virginia Avenue to Lifestyle Communities, LLC", with changes to the Purchase Agreement as stated by the City Attorney. Ayes by roll call vote: Jerde, Dyvik, Miner. Nay by roll call vote: Skjaret. Abstained during roll call vote: Kvale. Motion carried.

Mayor Miner thanked City Attorney Thames for his work and last minute editing of the Purchase Agreement.

Authorize City Water Tower Interior/Exterior Cleaning Project

Public Works Director Diercks recalled that this subject had been touched on during the last Council meeting while Diercks was providing Public Works updates. Diercks reported that the tower had been constructed in 1983, was conditioned and recoated in 2004, cleaned in 2014, and it is due again for a cleaning. Staff is requesting Council consider approving a quote in the amount of in the amount of \$7,950 from Water Tower Clean & Coat of Wisconsin to perform interior and exterior washing, and inspection of the tower. If approved by Council, staff will coordinate with Orono to feed off their tower so the work can be completed in summer 2020. He added that it has been a

common practice during his time in Long Lake that the cities work cooperatively to switch tower operation back and forth occasionally when needed.

A motion was made by Kvale, seconded by Skjaret, to authorize Water Tower Clean & Coat of Lodi, Wisconsin to perform interior and exterior washing, and inspection of the 200,000-gallon water tower as quoted in the amount of \$7,950.00.

Council member Dyvik questioned which fund the expense would be allocated to. Weske replied that the expense would be from the 601 Water Fund.

Ayes: all by roll call.

Update on Goose Control Measures – Council Member Jerde

Council member Jerde had some research regarding different methods of goose control measures and learned about what other jurisdictions are using. Answers received were all across the board as a lot of methods are being tried. She stated that she thinks Long Lake can still achieve a smaller amount of geese at Nelson Lakeside Park, and do so in a humane way. She emphasized that it is not realistic to have a zero population of geese, because when they are removed, another bunch will come into a location. She spoke with several cities to get their feedback on what works and what doesn't, and also spoke to representatives at the MnDNR. Minnetonka Beach is using Geese Away, which is a light that flashes making geese not want to nest in an area. They've had it for a month or so but won't have more information on its effectiveness until further into the season. She noted that according to the City's Goose Management Plan, the plan says the City will try redistribution techniques, and she questioned why the City cannot try something other than basically killing the geese. She advocated for employing a combination of methods, and discussed examples like posting "don't feed the wildlife" signage, trying decoys, oiling goose eggs, and trying lights.

Council member Dyvik indicated he too had done a lot of reading on the subject, and emphasized that the current method of eliminating the geese is the only one that has been effective. He read aloud language from the MnDNR's website which indicated that the main drawback of using deterrent methods is that it only causes geese to move to a different territory. The MnDNR's website encourages local governments to keep goose hunting open where possible, and offers technical assistance in starting and managing hunts. Personally, he had tried using other methods on his private property and found them to be unsuccessful.

Council member Skjaret suggested that perhaps the habitat could be changed with plantings, and expressed a willingness to try some other action to maintain the population such as oiling the eggs. He commented that the City could consider trying a different approach for one year and seeing what the results are.

Council member Dyvik pointed out that the removed geese are processed at a poultry plant and given to food shelves. He indicated a letter had been received from a lake owner, as well as another resident, in support of the current goose control practice.

Council member Jerde pointed out that there are contributors of E.coli bacteria other than geese that impact beach closures annually, referencing horse farms around the lake, kids in swim diapers, and dogs at the beach. She commented that the letter received from a lake owner was Council member Dyvik's neighbor. She noted that Public Works has done a great job at raking and cleaning up the goose poop, adding that there is a company called "Life's a Beach" that could be hired to do cleanup as well. Decoys, shrubs and other things are available to employ rather than rounding up geese and killing them when their babies are unable to fly.

Council member Dyvik stated that he was not interested in a science experiment and was interested in using what works. From his perspective as an observer, people aren't feeding the geese. The geese eat grass and sit in the park all day long. They are also smart, and go around objects placed in their path. He questioned whether oiling the eggs was a more humane practice.

Diercks stated that doing so has to be timed right.

Council member Jerde indicated that the firm that handles goose removal also can oil eggs as a service as well. She noted that the lights purchased by Minnetonka Beach were at a cost of \$500.

Mayor Miner had asked his neighbor down the street, who was the former Wayzata Public Works Director, about what Wayzata had done for goose management. They had tried owl decoys, which only worked for a day or two. They had used some kind of a friendly grape spray solution they had put down on the grass which was fairly effective at spots treated, but pushed geese somewhere else. Banners or flags had been the most effective thing they had done in certain areas. Mayor Miner was not opposed to considering a variety of methods, but sought input from Diercks.

Diercks advised that in his experience, the best thing Long Lake could hope for would be a pair of nesting eagles as their presence is the most efficient goose management method to keep populations under control. As a small staff, his department does not have the resources to spend a whole lot of time chasing geese around, oiling eggs, finding nesting spots, and cleaning the beach. Staff have spent countless hours picking up five gallon buckets full of goose feces every other day. From his perspective, his opinion would be to continue the current management practice of eliminating the geese as it is the most cost effective solution. He anecdotally commented on the destructive impact the geese were having in the arctic tundra environment.

Diercks explained that he could apply for permits for oiling eggs and for removal anytime during the next few weeks, and permits take just a couple days to approve.

Mayor Miner questioned whether Council member Jerde what alternative method would be her choice if one were considered. Council member Jerde indicated she would support oiling eggs, since the same contractor who does removal also provides that service.

Council members and staff held continued discussion regarding goose management alternatives, the time sensitive nature for oiling eggs, and ultimately it was the consensus of Council to direct staff to submit the permit application for both oiling eggs and for goose removal. Council members further agreed on implementing a hybrid solution to address geese this season, with egg oiling tried first, to be followed up with removal if needed. Council member Jerde offered to send contact information for the MnDNR representative she'd spoken to as she may be able to answer questions or expedite the permit applications.

Regarding signs in the park addressing dogs at the swimming beach, Diercks indicated those signs had been placed due to numerous calls complaining about dogs in the beach area. He questioned whether Council had direction at this point relative to setting up the swimming area. Mayor Miner stated that he is on a Mayors email subscriber list and there has been conversation of whether communities will open their pools and beaches. The consensus of the group has largely been to recommend against making any decisions at this time. He recommended waiting a bit before addressing the swimming beach further.

Updates From Public Works Director

Diercks offered the following Public Works operational updates:

The sewer jetting and televising project is complete, and results are still pending.

Now that weather has improved, hydrant flushing is underway.

With Council approval of the water tower cleaning project now complete, the project will occur in various stages this summer.

A water loss audit will be conducted on the City's water distribution system. The goal of a water distribution system is for the amount of water billed and sold to be near in total to the amount pumped from wells. The last audit had been completed about 10 years ago, making the City overdue for another one. The company the City uses to help detect underground watermain breaks, Water Conservation Services, is able to conduct the water loss audit using supersensitive mics to hear water running through pipes and will travel to every fire hydrant and water connection to monitor conditions. The water loss survey will cost about \$1,200 for the whole City and will help detect if there are leaks in the system that are not surfacing. The goal is to increase efficiency between the amount of water pumped versus the amount of water sold. Diercks is hoping the audit could be undertaken at the later part of May.

With hot mix plants and street repair companies now open and active, Public Works will be focusing on street repairs in the next six weeks.

Spring weight restrictions lifted last Monday.

Verbal Updates From Fire Chief / Emergency Manager

Fire Chief Van Eyll provided updates and responded to Council questions, discussing the following:

The Fire Department had begun offering Birthday Parade drive-bys the previous weekend. So far, eight or nine had been scheduled, with a few already completed.

Responders have been scheduled in a manner to limit COVID-19 exposure to firefighters, and PPE supplies are holding up pretty well thus far. Very few COVID-19 calls had been received by the department.

An account has been created for tracking COVID-19 related expenditures. Two substantial expenses allocated to the expense account to date include a replacement for the Fire Chief's computer, as his older model computer couldn't keep up with the technological requirements of the pandemic situation; as well as deep cleaning for the fire station facility.

Fire Chief Van Eyll is working with area congregate living facilities to learn from what happened at Wayzata's Meridien Manor, where a bunch of staff and residents had been infected, with two residents having passed away as reported by Meridien Manor. Later during his update, he responded to a question from Council member Kvale asking where Meridien Manor residents had been moved, and clarified that North Memorial had rendered assistance as residents were moved to different Meridien Manor-affiliated locations across the metro area, or moved home with family members. It had taken all day on the previous Saturday to move all the residents out of the facility. He also responded to a question from Mayor Miner asking about the status of Long Lake Assisted Living and indicated that he was not aware of any confirmed cases at Long Lake Assisted Living or the other two assisted living facilities in Orono. From his conversations with North Memorial though, the majority of congregate care facilities have at least one case, and they are operating under an expectation that all congregate care locations will have some cases over the next month.

Residents can make homemade masks for dropoff at a mask collection event on Saturday, April 15 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the fire station. Information highlighting the mask collection will be on the Fire Department's social media.

Van Eyll has been electronically meeting weekly with area Fire Departments and Lakes Area Emergency managers to get an idea where departments are at from a staffing and call standpoint. For the most part, calls are down and staffing is holding steady, with few out ill or due to their vulnerable status.

Van Eyll agreed that it is a little early to determine whether to open the beach or not, and indicated he would recommend holding off on that decision a little longer. He advised Diercks not to put swimming beach equipment out until further discussion a little later, reflecting that typically equipment is placed out for the season towards mid or end of May.

As far as the Long Lake Rowing Crew's operations, he has not spoken with them directly since they had moved out of the fire station. He believes they may be training at their homes, and was uncertain whether they were training out of their location at Birch's yet. He conveyed that he would be surprised if they were doing so, because rowing brings participants in close proximity. One of the things the Governor had specifically outlined is that he would be comfortable with youth sports opening back up if they don't share equipment, and Van Eyll was not certain how many rowers own their own shells.

Referencing the donation from the Fire Relief Association, firefighters had identified a need to upgrade the old depth finder on the fire boat to new equipment that could offer a better picture of the lake, including mapping of lake bottoms, showing rock piles, and has sonar. He emphasized that although the model is called a fish finder, it will not be used for that purpose at any time.

During Van Eyll's updates, Mayor Miner shared that the American Red Cross is looking for communities to help them find hosts for blood drives. They have held drives in the fire station in the past, however there is legitimate concern about doing so at this time. Trinity Lutheran Church was approached as a potential location and they declined. Van Eyl confirmed he would rather not invite the drive into the station. To keep firefighters remaining effective, he would advise against bringing in the public along with the staff who rotate in and out during a blood drive.

Council member Jerde asked whether there were grants available for firefighters due to COVID-19. Van Eyll stated the department has put in for reimbursement through disaster relief funding available, and he has all the firefighters tracking their time specific to anything they're doing related to COVID-19. There are funding programs available that talk about specifically buying equipment for response to COVID-19, and the department is looking into that. About \$500-\$1,000 has been spent on purchasing extra PPE supplies so far, and the department may look into applying for funding for additional SCBA's.

Council member Jerde noted that she was aware that on March 15, more federal funding had been issued for the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association. As this was new information to Van Eyll, Council member Jerde offered to pass on more details.

OTHER BUSINESS

Playground Equipment Closure – Based on feedback from residents and advisories regarding CDC guidelines surrounding use of playground equipment, Mayor Miner had worked with staff and staff had placed orange fencing around play equipment to close the equipment to public use.

Council member Kvale thanked everyone for taking action and following CDC guidelines in closing access to playground equipment.

Water Bill Increases – Mayor Miner had heard comment regarding Long Lake’s water bills increasing. Council member Jerde noted she had heard that the City of Orono’s utility bills had gone up substantially. Weske explained that increases may have been experienced as sewer charges for first quarter are based on current actual first quarter usage, whereas for second through fourth quarters, sewer charges are frozen by policy at the first quarter usage amount. He confirmed Orono had approved a substantial utility rate increase, with increases over 20% for the next two years, and then scaling back increases for a few more years. Later under Other Business, City Clerk Moeller commented that the City’s residential curbside recycling rate had increased by a little under \$7.00, and the MDH water connection rate had increased as well. After hearing from a resident regarding the recycling rate increase, Moeller confirmed she will be putting out a Listserv message explaining the recycling and MDH fee increases.

Goose Management, Carp Management – Council member Jerde thanked everyone who had been open to trying something new with goose management strategies. Later under Other Business, Council member Dyvik also reflected on the decision and stated that while he is passionate about water quality and parks, he believes it is a fair compromise to try oiling eggs. Both Council members Jerde and Dyvik apologized for the heated nature of the discussion. Council member Dyvik pointed out that the frequency of beach closures has dropped since the goose management program was implemented. He commented that he had also wondered if people may find carp removal inhumane too. On the subject of carp removal, Council member Dyvik had not received any further updates from the Long Lake Waters Association on their intended carp harvest. Weske stated that while he had not received a recent update, he was aware the LLWA had received feedback from the MCWD suggesting they not do a removal while the carp monitoring project was underway. Their suggestion was to conduct carp removal as part of a long range plan. Council member Dyvik indicated he would reach out to Cassy Ordway from the LLWA for any further information. He closed in stating that Long Lake is where people swim and recreate, adding that it is a gem to be protected, and doing so includes the geese.

Memorial Day – City Clerk Moeller had been in contact with the Post Commander of the Hamel VFW regarding Memorial Day observances in the park. They were looking for feedback on whether the typical Memorial Day ceremony would be scaled back this year, and offered to provide more of a short form observance similar to what they do in Union and St. George’s Cemeteries. Moeller sought Council member comment or concern relative to the Memorial Day ceremony. At a minimum, it was agreed that if the Memorial Day ceremony proceeds, there should be no food or refreshments served this year. Moeller indicated she would reach out to the Memorial Day ceremony organizer and ask what his thoughts are regarding the scope of observance activities.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Moeller
City Clerk