



CITY OF FREEPORT

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July 30, 2019 – Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Freeport City Council was convened at 7:02pm by Mayor Mike Eveslage, and councilmembers Sarah Blake, Ben Ettle, Tim Hennen, and Jake Renneker.

Staff in attendance: Clerk-Treasurer Joan Wall, Public Works Director Loren Goebel, Administrative Assistant Lori Austing, City Engineer Dave Blommel, City Attorney Scott Dymoke

Others in attendance:

Travis Sand (1001 3rd Ave SE)
Rose Austing (716 1st Ave N)
Rodney Atkinson (310 8th St SE)

Carol Moorman (Melrose Beacon)
Jason Hoeschen (1020 2nd Ave SE)
Al Williams (Freeport)

Approve Agenda

Wall asked to have claim #3727 for Fastlane Repair added to item b under Consent Agenda. Renneker moved to approve the agenda with the addition, seconded by Ettle. Motion carried 5-0.

Open Public Forum

Jason Hoeschen has a pond on his property on the east end of 9th and 10th streets that he wants the City to take care of. He has a contract with the City from when the pond was put in saying the City would maintain it. He thinks it's full and would like it dug down. A lot of water has been flowing into the pond over the years. It was an overflow pipe when first installed, but now it's a large culvert. Eveslage met with Hoeschen earlier to look at the property. The Council suggested that Blommel and Goebel take a look at it. Council asked Hoeschen to bring in a copy of the contract.

Consent Agenda

Hennen moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Ettle. Motion carried 5-0.

Reports

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Wall answered a couple of the Council's questions regarding the financial reports.

Fire Department Report

No report was given.

Public Works Report

Goebel asked the Council to keep in mind that the old water tower needs to be painted, which led to a discussion about the possibility of getting the old water tower on the historic register. Lori Austing has been

researching the steps in the process, which is a lengthy one. There may be grant money available if the water tower is placed on the historic register. L Austing has seen grants as high as \$30,000.

Blommel stated that the paint is lead and chromium based. If we can overcoat it, it will be cheaper and easier. If we have to remove the old paint, it's a much bigger project. It will probably be in the six figures if we have to remove the paint. Blommel stated that the historic register is a mixed blessing because there will be additional restrictions in the future if work needs to be done in the area. He believes the tower is still sound structurally.

Atkinson asked if the City could wrap it into the wellhead protection plan since there is lead and chromium involved. He also mentioned involving a politician since next year is an election year.

Engineer Report

Blommel stated that the radar speed signs are ordered and on the way. The permits are completed with the County and they will help install the signs. On the east, west, and north entrances into town, the signs will be placed where the current 30-miles-per-hour speed limit signs are. On the south side, the speed switches to 40 mph by Jim Notch's, and discussion was had about seeing if the City could push it out further. Blommel explained that it's not likely we could get rid of the 40-mph speed limit. MNDOT determines the speed limits because it is a CSAH and the state funds it. If we make the request to lower the speed limit, the speed limit may even go up because MNDOT places the speed at 85% of what people are actually driving through there now. The process would be for MNDOT to put out data collection equipment and do a speed study. Council members expressed disbelief and frustration that drivers determine speed over public safety for children and people walking close to County Road 11. Blommel explained that we would need a formal resolution to do a speed study and he believes the speed study wouldn't cost the City anything to have this done. Council decided not to do the speed study at this time and to place the speed sign flashing 30 mph at the 40-mph speed limit sign.

Blommel and Eveslage met with Stearns County engineer Jodi Teich to discuss how to facilitate a safer crossing across CSAH 11 near Oak Station. Teich is very resistant to the crosswalk there and has compelling reasons. Teich said we can place a movable sign in the middle of the road that says "Stop for Pedestrians". It can be taken down when it's out of season. Etle moved to buy the sign, seconded by Hennen. Motion carried 5-0.

Blommel discussed funding sources for the proposed street, sewer, water, and storm sewer projects as outlined in the agenda packet. The City is most likely to receive grant funds for sewer projects. Freeport's median income is too high now to qualify for grants. The City could try to do an income survey to see if we can get our income to come down to qualify for grants. The goal would be to try to find an income survey that would qualify for both State and Federal programs. SEH has lobbyists who help talk to legislators and try to get funding. Blommel stated the realistic estimate for this project is that it will get done in 2021. The Council agreed to look at doing all the projects at once because it would be more favorable for grant purposes. With current bond payments ending in February 2021 and February 2022, the timing would be good.

Attorney Report

See discussion under Old Business for Parking Regulations.

Old Business

Rezoning Properties

No new information given besides what was in the agenda packet.

Parking Regulations

Dymoke explained that the underlined portions would be additions to Freeport’s parking ordinance. The Council directed Dymoke to take out Subd. 4 Commercial District Parking and Subd. 5 Cattle Truck Parking. Under Subd. 3 Residential District Parking, Council wants to allow trucks to park in residential driveways, but not on the street. Council also asked Dymoke to remove the “within xxx feet” wording, and would like to see an updated version of the ordinance next month.

Update Pay Ranges

Council expressed that they liked being able to see how the salary survey results compared to our salaries and would be interested in being able to use this information again in the future. No action was taken to change pay ranges.

New Business

Clerk-Treasurer Salary

Council expressed that they were pleased with Wall’s work and asked her what she would ask for a raise. Wall stated \$25.00. Ertle said that was more than he was thinking, but he would be willing to raise it to \$24.60. It was also mentioned that Wall’s annual review would come up again in April and there was a possibility of a raise at that time. Ertle moved to raise Wall’s hourly salary to \$24.60, seconded by Hennen. Roll call vote: Blake – yes, Ertle – yes, Eveslage – yes, Hennen – yes, Renneker – yes.

Adjourn

Ertle moved to adjourn, seconded by Eveslage. Motion carried 5-0.

Mayor, Mike Eveslage

City Clerk-Treasurer, Joan Wall