



CITY OF FREEPORT

125 Main Street E – PO Box 301 – Freeport, MN 56331 – 320-836-2112
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November 26, 2019 – Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Freeport City Council was convened at 7:00pm 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, Building Inspector Mark Harren

Others in attendance:

Troy & Sue Frieler (313 2nd St NW)
Rodney Atkinson (310 8th St SE)
Andrea Ramacher (720 1st Ave N)
Matthew Merwin (316 2nd St NW)
Zachary Ettel (Melrose)
Shannon Ritter (317 2nd St NW)
Joe Hennen (118 3rd St NE)

Carol Moorman (Melrose Beacon)
Tim & Deb Linn (37359 Co Rd 172)
Phil Osendorf (124 2nd St SE)
Mark Ettel (Melrose)
Ben Imdieke (Melrose)
Kate Duclose (217 Main St E)
Carrie Goebel (207 3rd Ave SE)

Approve Agenda

Wall asked to add Waste Management to the agenda as item d under Old Business. Ettle moved to approve the agenda with the addition, seconded by Hennen. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Forum

No comment was given.

Consent Agenda

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

Reports

Clerk-Treasurer Report

No action taken.

Fire Department Report

No report was given.

Public Works Report

L Goebel reported the City is in compliance after receiving the results of lead and copper water testing. Kotzer is waiting for a freeze so they can do the manhole project.

Engineer Report

Blommel reported the zoning map has been updated and printed copies have been delivered to the City.

Attorney Report

Dymoke reported that as of this morning, the EDA owns the property known as Welle 3.

Old Business

Elite Transport Group

Sue Frieler explained how the noise from Elite Transport Group has impacted their family for years. Shannon Ritter and Kate Duclose explained that at times they haven't been able to get out of their driveway due to how trucks have parked. Mark Ettel explained that he understands the business needs to move, and he would like to build elsewhere in the spring. Ettle and Eveslage expressed the Council would like to see Ettel move the business to Freeport's industrial park. There was further discussion among Elite Transport Group employees, the neighbors, and the Council.

Dymoke explained that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) regulates allowable noise levels. If the City wanted to pursue this avenue, the City would need to hire someone to measure noise levels to see if they are in violation of the nuisance ordinance.

Eveslage expressed that he feels for both the neighbors and for Mark Ettel and his employees. Actions that were discussed:

- Mark Ettel will attend the next EDA meeting scheduled for December 16 at noon to discuss moving to the industrial park
- Elite Transport Group's mechanic will ensure all trucks have mufflers instead of resonators
- Elite Transport Group's mechanic will see about parking one of the trucks alongside the creamery building, which will give him more room to shuffle trucks around and will result in fewer trucks being started
- Elite Transport Group's drivers will do their best to crawl out of the residential district after a short warm-up window
- Neighbors will continue to be patient until spring

Accessory Structures

Dymoke suggested scheduling the hearing for January's meeting to change the ordinance to allow for doing proper notice and Council agreed.

Health Insurance

Eveslage stated L Goebel and Wall were hired under the current health insurance policy and it wouldn't be right to take it away from them. Perhaps moving forward, when new employees are hired, the City comes up with a better option. Blake agreed. Hennen suggested coming up with a policy for new hires.

Dymoke suggested the Council look at the policy and figure out what they want the handbook to say. Council agreed. Wall will send a copy of the handbook to the Council.

Waste Management

Prior to the meeting, copies of Waste Management's (WM) addition to a proposed amendment to our contract were made available. Dymoke explained in the agreement, commercial rates are referenced in two places. Dymoke's reading is that the subsequent rates stated in the assignment superseded the rates originally included in Exhibit A. The City's draft just cancelled the rates in the assignment. WM wants to state that both the commercial rate original included in Exhibit A and the commercial rate in the assignment are cancelled and replaced by the new rates. Dymoke recommends having WM sign the amendment first and the Council can give the Mayor and Clerk permission to sign it after that.

Council asked if they can have volume clarified in the amendment. Wall will follow up with WM and ask for them to list the rates for the different volumes and also list rates for residential service. L Goebel stated the community center gets a discount in the winter. Can that still be included in the contract?

New Business

Rental Licensing

Phil Osendorf asked several questions: What was the reasoning for the rental licensing ordinance? Was a committee set up including landlord to research it? How did Council come up with come up with fees? Eveslage stated the City had problem properties in town and they needed a way to hold the owners and tenants accountable. Hennen stated lots of issues were coming to council meetings regarding rental properties and the EDA and Council looked at the issue together. Renneker stated the City looked at neighboring communities' ordinances during the process. With regard to the fees, Eveslage stated there weren't a lot of available properties for single families and the City wanted to make sure people could buy homes to live in. Freeport's fees may be higher than neighboring communities, but our situation is different. We don't have a surplus of available properties.

It was mentioned that neighboring towns require an inspection every two or three years, while Freeport's ordinance calls for an annual inspection. Tim Linn asked about the short amount of time it took for an inspection to be completed. Harren explained they use a checklist and many of the items on that list are seen quickly. Five minutes for an inspection is normal unless there are issues, which are usually obvious. Eveslage asked Harren what the turnaround is for getting inspections done. Harren stated this was a difficult year, as the City had trouble getting applications back from some of the landlords. From June through October they don't have time to do inspections. Normally, they want to have the inspections done by April 1. T Linn asked about getting inspected again in January since they just got inspected in November. Council suggested discussing this topic at the next meeting.

Loren's Review

Dymoke stated that L Goebel has the option to close the meeting. L Goebel said leaving the meeting open is fine. Eveslage began by saying he thinks L Goebel does a great job and always has the best interest of the City at heart. He thanked L Goebel for what he does and acknowledges the conditions can be challenging. A pay raise to \$25.50 isn't what Eveslage had in mind. He doesn't feel the current salary is very out of line after looking at the League of Minnesota Cities salary survey.

Renneker asked how L Goebel came up with the requested dollar amount. L Goebel talked to employees for the City of Albany. Their lowest guy earns \$27 per hour. He also looked at the pay ranges from 2014-2015 and added 2% per year and that put him in the middle of that pay scale. Eveslage asked how the Albany employee compared. L Goebel stated he has been here five years and the Albany employee has been there 10 years.

Council discussed the salary survey from the July meeting agenda packet to compare to towns of similar size. Renneker asked how do we explain the raise to someone on the street. L Goebel said he thinks he does a good job and he saves the City money because he is the only full-time Public Works employee. Blake stated she thinks the current wage is too low, but what L Goebel is asking for is too much all at once. She also stated it's very hard to hire people right now so we should compensate employees fairly if we have good ones.

After further discussion, Blake suggested a pay raise to \$23.50 or \$24.00. Renneker stated \$23.50 is an 8% raise and he is more comfortable with that. Ertle stated he is comfortable with \$23.50. Ertle moved to raise L Goebel's pay to \$23.50, seconded by Blake. Discussion: L Goebel would be more comfortable with \$24.00. Roll call vote: Blake – yes, Renneker – yes, Eveslage – no, Hennen – no, Ertle – yes. Motion carried 3-2.

Adjourn

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

Mayor, Mike Eveslage

City Clerk-Treasurer, Joan Wall