



CITY OF FREEPORT

125 Main Street E – PO Box 301 – Freeport, MN 56331 – 320-836-2112
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September 28, 2021 – Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Freeport City Council was convened at 7:04 pm by Mayor Mike Eveslage, and council members Sarah Blake, Nick Arnzen, and Jake Renneker.

Absent was Council Member Tim Hennen

Staff in attendance: Clerk-Treasurer Wyatt Kemper, Deputy Treasurer Joan Wall, Public Works Director Loren Goebel, Fire Chief Andy Grieve, City Attorney Scott Dymoke, and City Engineer Dave Blommel.

Others in attendance:

Carol Moorman (Star Post)

Haley Ramacher (204 3rd Ave SE)

Dana Hansen (313 2nd Ave NW)

Branden Roering (Freeport Fire Dept.)

Adrian Massmann (204 3rd Ave SE)

Approve Agenda

With the addition of Claim 4865 and the Austin Jetting Bill, Renneker moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Blake. Motion carried 4-0.

Public Forum

No comments.

Consent Agenda

Arnzen moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Renneker. Motion carried 4-0.

Reports

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Kemper reported that two street vacations were submitted to the County in September. One vacation was approved by the Council in 2004, and the other in 1969, neither of which had been filed with the County. Xcel Energy will be replacing faulty lines underneath 8th Street in November to mitigate power outages. The insurance claim process has been started for the sand shed, though there have not been any estimates for the repair cost as of the meeting date. Despite weather delays, construction is continuing as-expected.

Deputy Treasurer Report

N/A

Fire Department Report

Grieve reported that there were ten calls in September. One mutual aid, three fires/ gas leaks, and six medicals. Grieve asked to have an advertisement for firefighter applications placed on the city website and Facebook page.

Public Works Report

Goebel reported that aside from construction, the only subject is that the starter on the City's van is going out. It will likely have to be replaced soon.

Engineer Report

Blommel reported that MPCA's effluent limit on phosphorus will be responded to with a formal letter stating Freeport's quantity is typically below limits that have been imposed. Aside from a very wet year, our limits should not be a cause for concern.

Renneker motioned to approve Blommel's letter to MPCA, seconded by Blake. Motion carried 4-0.

Attorney Report

Dymoke reported that he had not given a substantial amount of time toward any City projects in September.

Old Business

Nuisance Properties

Eveslage stated to the property owners that neighbors and residents who border their land have been making complaints that their property is unkempt and has become a blight with all of the clutter in the yard. Discussion was held over the reasoning of their property being considered a nuisance, with consensus being that regardless of reasoning, there needs to be improvement on the condition of the property.

Massmann Variance

Kemper reported that the Massmanns had submitted the survey of their plot that a previous variance was contingent upon. Since the survey was submitted, the variance is granted and complete.

2022 Budget + Resolution 2021-13

Wall walked the Council through the current budget for 2022. The budget is preliminary, and the final will be approved in December. The levy that is set tonight cannot be raised in December, but it can be lowered. Wall said that we typically aim high so that it can be reduced if necessary. The goal is to keep taxes roughly the same as the previous year. Water rates are raised by four percent based off of Jason Murray of DDA's analysis. Council discussed raising the preliminary General Levy to \$325,000. Arnzen moved to approve the proposed 2022 budget and Resolution 2021-13, with the General Levy set at \$325,000 for a total levy of \$543,000.

New Business

Kuechle Underground Pay Request #1

Renneker motioned to approve Kuechle Underground's pay request, seconded by Blake. Motion carried 4-0. Blommel explained that storm sewer was going in currently in the fire department neighborhood. Monday will begin filling on 4th Street.

Pioneer Inn Alley Closure October 9th

Kemper explained that the Pioneer Inn is looking to close off the alley for the night of Saturday, October 9th for their fall festival. Eveslage asked Kemper to look back at previous years' minutes to see how it was handled then. Renneker motioned to approve the alley closure, seconded by Arnzen. Motion carried 4-0.

Advance October Meeting Date

Eveslage requested the Council move the October meeting forward a week so he is able to attend. Renneker motioned to approve setting October 19th as the monthly meeting date, seconded by Arnzen. Motion carried 4-0.

Blommel mentioned that there will likely not be a pay request in October's agenda packet since they will still be working on it.

New Computers

Kemper explained that the computer at the front desk needs to be replaced with a new system, as it poses a huge security risk running the old operating system. Along with that, Wall requested a second monitor for Arnzen asked whether the software for utility billing would be compatible with a new system, which Kemper confirmed is correct. Eveslage asked if the ARPA funds could be used to purchase a new system. Blommel said that ARPA funds can be used, as well as the USDA water fund.

Eveslage motioned to approve a new computer system for the front desk, seconded by Arnzen.

EDA Recommendation- Welle 3 addition

EDA Recommendation was tabled until the October council meeting.

Resolution 2021-14; Receiving Feasibility Report, Calling Hearing on Improvement

With the October meeting date moved up, Blommel suggested calling the hearing during the November meeting.

Hearing for Nuisance Properties

Dymoke explained that scheduling a hearing is the next step in taking action against remaining nuisance properties. After which, further legal action can be taken to have the lots cleaned.

Waste Management Contract

Kemper explained that West Central had reached out about the expiring Waste Management contract. Dymoke suggested that the city send RFP letters to waste service providers before the contract expires at the end of April. Dymoke further recommended that the city put out a request by the end of January, but to have an idea of services offered before sending out the RFP. Eveslage suggested Kemper reach out to several different providers to see what services they can offer to Freeport. Dymoke explained to be mindful of the services offered by each, and not to tailor the request to any specific company that offers them all. The end of December should be the deadline for submitting an RFP.

Austin Inc Jetting/ Freeport Floral

Kemper asked Goebel to help him explain the situation with Freeport Floral. Brian Schulzetenberg requested that the city consider reimbursing them for the jetting bill that they incurred after sewer backed up into their basement. The main line was jammed with tree roots, which were routed out. Freeport Floral was the only business to have this incident occur. After discussion, the consensus was to wait and see how frequent of a problem this is, since it was requested of the city to jet that line yearly.

Wyatt Kemper 6-Month Review

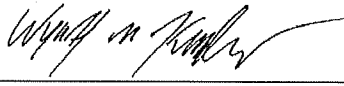
Kemper requested to have the review meeting remain open. Eveslage stated that he has had numerous concerns over the past six months. The recurring issues have been problems with water/ utility billing. Procedural items such as posting of meeting notices and sending out agenda packets have also been an issue. The liquor license for the community center also became an issue, because it wasn't received until the week that an event was scheduled. Back to water billing, Eveslage stated that he is unsure whether a single utility bill has been accurate since Kemper was hired. The lack of consistency, he said, is a big cause for concern. Some residents have not received a bill since they moved in. Renneker stated that he had run into an issue with a building permit about a month back, which became an issue during the construction process. Eveslage said that seemingly, the largest issues were initiative and follow-through. Renneker added that some new residents had received water bills that were incorrect, so he has been aware that the billing process had been an issue. Arnzen stated that he thought Kemper did a good job handling and following through with a zoning situation going on. Blake said that she had not heard any complaints from residents, but she was aware of the issues with EDA meetings that Eveslage had mentioned earlier. Eveslage stated that Kemper has resources at his disposal that he needs to use. Lastly, Eveslage said that if conditions do not improve over the next few months, there will likely need to be a different discussion.

Adjourn

At 8:46 pm Renneker moved to adjourn, seconded by Arnzen. Motion carried 4-0.



Mayor, Mike Eveslage



City Clerk-Treasurer, Wyatt Kemper