



Watertown City Council
Work Session

Mayor Steve Washburn
Lindsay Guetzkow
Adam Pawelk
Michael Walters
Dan Schuette

2/8/2022 - Minutes

1. Call To Order And Roll Call

Mayor Steve Washburn called the Watertown City Council work session to order at 5:43 p.m. on Tuesday February 8, 2022, in the council chambers of City Hall.

Council Members Present: Washburn, Mike Walters, Dan Schuette, Adam Pawelk, and Lindsay Guetzkow.

Staff Present: City Administrator Jake Foster, Public Services Superintendent Mike Dressel, and Administrative Services Director Lynn Tschudi.

Guest: Randy Lehs with Carver County.

2. New Business

2.1. Fiber/Broadband Discussion

City Administrator Jake Foster said the City was approached by MetroNet about bringing fiber optic network into the City of Watertown. Randy Lehs gave a background on his role with Carver County and Jaguar/MetroNet. Lehs said the CarverLink fiber network has been expanding since 2013 and flows through every city in Carver County. Lehs is developing an initiative called Connect up Carver where he is hoping to bring fiber to the more rural areas of Carver County.

Mayor Washburn asked council if they would want to continue with a traditional franchise agreement with video services or offer fiber only. Council Member Pawelk asked what the alternative would be for the video option for residents. City Administrator Foster said the trend is that residents are moving away from cable TV and using more streaming services such as Hulu, Netflix, etc. The existing franchise agreement with Charter Spectrum would still be an option as well for video service.

Lehs explained that almost all 11 cities have been connected into the CarverLink Fiber Network. Lehs said 85% of new customers are subscribing to internet only services so he does not see a hindrance in leaving behind the video services.

Council Member Guetzkow voiced her concern with the customer service level of MetroNet versus Jaguar. Lehs said Watertown is too small to have other providers bring fiber to the area so they can't be too picky, but he does agree that the customer service could be better. Guetzkow asked if the fiber being installed will be obsolete in five years. Lehs said no, the infrastructure will be the same that is used other places.

Council directed staff to work with MetroNet to bring fiber connections into the City of Watertown and leave the video services out of any contracts or agreements.

Foster explained that MetroNet has been offering to connect all city properties (lift stations, wellhouses, parks, etc) free of charge in lieu of paying permit fees.

Lehs said the bids are being drafted for the project and he is presenting the plan to the County in the next week.

3. Adjournment

Work session adjourned at 6:30 pm.

309 Lewis Avenue South; P.O. Box 279, Watertown, MN 55388

Steve Washburn, Mayor

ATTEST: _____

Lynn Tschudi, Admin. Services Director