



Watertown City Council
Regular Meeting

Mayor Michael Walters
Kay Thul
Adam Pawelk
Fred McGuire
Dan Schuette

3/28/2023 - Minutes

1. Call To Order And Roll Call

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the regular meeting of the Watertown City Council was called to order in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, by Mayor Michael Walters.

Councilmembers present: Mike Walters, Fred McGuire, Adam Pawelk, Kay Thul and Dan Schuette

Councilmembers absent: None.

City Staff present: City Administrator Jake Foster and Fire Chief, Tom Hanson.

Others Present: Danette Painschab, Ty Turnquist MNSPECT, County Sheriff, Jason Kamerud and Commander Mike Wollin.

2. Adopt Agenda

COUNCILMEMBER THUL MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. COUNCILMEMBER MCGUIRE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

3. Consent Agenda Discussion And Approval

COUNCILMEMBER PAWELK MOVED TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MCGUIRE SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

3.A. March 14, 2023 City Council Meeting Minutes

3.B. Lions Liquor Application

3.C. 3C - ICC Gambling

3.D. 3D - Part-Time Administrative Assistant Resignation

3.E. 3E - Full-Time Fire Chief

4. Open Forum

4.A. Danette Painschab Service Recognition

Mayor Walters introduced the service recognition of Danette Painschab. He presented a plaque to her for her dedication to the Park Commission for the past 16 years. He thanked her and stated that the park system has come a long way over that time and that it is currently "an elite" system.

Painschab thanked everyone for the opportunity of being able to serve on the Park Commission for the past 16 years. She stated that it has been an awesome experience and that she hope good things continue and that they City Council continues to support the Park Commission.

4.B. Sheriff's Office Update - Sheriff Jason Kamerud

Wollin introduced himself to the City Council. He informed that in February, he met with the City Managers and City Administrators of the Cities served throughout Carver County regarding the Sheriff's Department contracts. He informed that in 2024, the cities would likely be seeing rate increases due to collective bargaining contracts and those items related to keeping the department competitive for retention purposes. He also explained that there would equipment replacement costs.

He referenced 2021 staffing scheduled changes due to staffing challenged at that time. He said that the Sheriff's office is experiencing some challenges again at this time. He explained that recruitment, retention, and overall interest in the profession nationally is seeing struggles.

Wollin discussed potential strategies that may be used again to help alleviate some of the staffing issues. He informed that it could include patrol shifts going back to 12-hours. He explained that benefits of the model including have full coverage and increased scheduling flexibility.

Wollin referenced discussion points that came out of that proposal which included additional regional partnership options.

Pawelk expressed concern about the regional model as the City of Watertown has been historically and strategically planning for the current coverage and model in place. He stated that there are currently issues within the City of Watertown that need continued oversight and monitoring. He was concerned about not always having dedicated personnel within the community. He stated that he understood the personnel concerns. He explained that the perception that not enough is being done to address issues and that if the coverage changes, that the perception could get worse.

Kamerud expressed appreciation for the feedback. He informed that with the regional model, the City of Watertown would be paying for and receiving the same resources. He explained that the City would switch to a 24/7 coverage model; which it currently doesn't have.

Kamerud asked the question to the City Council that if they had their own police department, what would they fix? He reiterated the challenges of staffing. He asked the City Council to consider that. He talked about turnover rates within the town cop model.

Pawelk acknowledged that the City of Watertown doesn't have the 24/7 coverage. He did express concern though about the call response time. He did express understanding for the staffing concerns.

Kamerud referenced the number of job opening throughout the State of Minnesota and how Carver County is trying to attract talent with attractive positions which includes shifts, hours, and coverage areas. He explained that he is monitoring trends, etc.

Wollin talked about current immediate openings and several upcoming retirements. Kamerud explained how the Sheriff's Department handles coverage when there are vacancies. Wollin and Kamerud discussed how the department manages training and development.

Walters expressed concern about changing the model in the City of Watertown. He emphasized the importance of timely responses. He stated that for recruitment purposes, he was in support of 12 hour shifts. He stated that the presence was important.

Walters brought up recent discussions on gun laws at the State of Minnesota and increased regulation discussions. Walters mentioned the second amendment. He referenced 70 outer state Sheriff's Departments stated that they do not support the potential changes but that Carver County Sheriff's Department has expressed support for it.

Kamerud informed that Sheriff's Association that represents all 87 Sheriff's and that the association does support universal background checks. Kamerud explained that he testified to the House of Representatives in favor of a portion of the bill that would allow police chiefs and sheriffs additional discretion to deny permits to purchase specific weapons. He clarified that the provision would allow for the discretion if there is reason to believe if the person poses a threat to themselves or others. He explained that the law would be similar to the current permit to carry laws. He explained that certain convictions prohibit specific purchases. He explained that as part of him testifying at the House of Representatives that he expressed that he would like to see further discussion on some provisions within the bill that he still had concerns about. Kamerud informed that he believed that a majority of the 70 outer state Sheriff's Department disapproval data was from a specific part that referenced the "firearms storage bill".

Walters expressed that it is a "slippery slope" and expressed concern about then the regulations of what guns will be able to be carried. He referenced concerns from citizens as well.

4.C. Fire Department Update

Hanson introduced this item to the City Council. He informed that in February, the department finished with an extra 36 calls for service. He stated that at the end of February, there were a total of 85 calls for service for the year so far. He said that as of that evening, the Fire Department was at 118 calls for the year. Hanson stated that the Fire Department has been preparing for future flooding of the Crow River with the snow melt. Hanson informed that the snow melt is slow, which is helping. He said that there is some capacity within the banks to absorb some of the water, as well as the stormwater ponds. He expressed confidence in the preparation process. Hanson thanked the City Council for the hiring of the fulltime fire chief. He stated that the support for the fire service and first responders is huge. He expressed a thank you for trusting him within his position.

Pawelk explained that he looks forward to the Fire Chief position starting and the position starting to be a proactive position within the fire department as far as ongoing issues that need more attention moving forward.

5. New/Old Business

5.A. Community Programming

Foster introduced this item to the City Council. He informed that every year, the City of Watertown seeks proposals from area civic organizations and nonprofits that create and operate community programming for local residents.

He explained that the City budgets \$10,000 per year for programs that enhance the quality of life and hard a positive impact on the community.

Foster explained that the City received eight (8) applications with a total fund request of \$16,000.

Foster stated that staff is recommended the adoption of Resolution 2023-14 approving the Community Programming Disbursements as follows:

Organization	2022 Grant Award	2023 Request	2023 Grant Award
Community Education	\$ 2,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$1,750.00
St. Paul's Lutheran Church	\$ 1,200.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00
Watertown Area Historical Society	\$ 1,200.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,250.00
BIOGirls	\$ 1,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,250.00
WeCab	\$ 1,200.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,250.00
Watertown Royalty	\$ 1,200.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,250.00
Fine Arts Council	\$ 1,200.00		
Early Childhood Advisory Council	\$ 1,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00
River City Theater		\$2,000.00	\$1,250.00
Total	\$ 10,000.00	\$16,000.00	\$10,000.00

McGUIRE MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2023-14 APPROVING THE 2023 COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING DISBURSEMENTS. THUL SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 4-0-1. SCHUETTE ABSTAINED AS HE IS A MEMBER OF ONE OF THE ORGANIZATIONS.

6. Other Reports

Ty Turnquist, from MNSPECT, the City of Watertown's building inspector provided an update on the city's building permits. He reported Quarter 1, 2022 there were 152 permits and in Quarter 1, 2023 there have been 31 permits. He mentioned permits are way down. He said that it is not just in the City of Watertown either. He informed that he believed that the reason for lower number of permits is likely a combination of weather and the higher interest rates. He mentioned that there is also a supply and demand issue.

Walters stated that working with MNSPECT has been great and that he has only heard good things.

Foster thanked Nancy Pysick for her years of service with the City of Watertown and congratulated her on her official retirement.

Foster informed that staff invested some of the city's funds into investments.

Foster stated that the Park Commission discussed a free little library at the March meeting and that it will come to the City Council a meeting in April. He said that there has been some updates on the Highland Master Park Plan as well.

Walters mentioned that Easter Egg Hunt that will take place at the Community Center over Easter weekend.

7. Claims

7.A. Claims Packet 3/28/23

PAWELK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 28, 2023, CLAIMS PACKET. MCGUIRE SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 5-0.

8. Adjournment

WALTERS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:38 PM. THUL SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 5-

0.

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

Mike Walters, Mayor

ATTEST: _____

Margaret Reisdorf, Admin. Services Director