

**CITY OF LE CENTER
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024 – 7:00 PM
10 W. TYRONE ST. LE CENTER, MN 56057**

*** MINUTES ***

1. CALL TO ORDER

Present: Mayor Christian Harmeyer, Council Members Antonio Ruiz-Mendez, Dan Steffen, Nathan Hintz, Collin Scott

Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Dan Evans, Public Works Superintendent Dan Steinborn, Police Chief Mitch Overn, Liquor Store Manager Becky Vikla

Others Present: None

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Hintz, seconded by Scott to approve the agenda as distributed. All in favor, motion carried.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Steffen, seconded by Hintz to approve the consent agenda items list below. All in favor, motion carried.

A) Approval of Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on February 13, 2024

B) Approval of Bills to be Paid

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A) None

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Luann Leach at 585 N. Waterville Ave; provided comments about the new logo design that was to be discussed this evening. Leach discussed three concepts that the current city logo has which are location, identity, and growth. Leach felt it was important to highlight that Le Center is the county seat. Leach suggested that a trophy style case be installed in the council chambers or the lobby, that would house old city memorabilia like the old stained-glass logo that was donated to the city years ago.

7. PRESENTATIONS

A) None

8. REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES, & DEPARTMENTS

A) E.D.A. Report – Evans advised no report.

- B) P & Z Report - Block not present.
- C) Liquor Store Report - Vikla stated February 2024 sales were \$78,853. February 2023 sales were \$86,115 a decrease of \$7,262. Vikla indicated that there are still several issues with the CTS project. The network is having communication errors which effect all the point-of-sale (POS) machines. BNG hosts our POS system, and they believe it's an issue with CTS's server and CTS is blaming BNG that it's on their end. Ceiling tiles were removed at the storage building next door, and new lights and switches were installed. Fools in the Alley event will take place April 1st.
- D) Police Report – Overn provided the report on the police activities for the month of February. Calls / incidents handled 130, miles patrolled 1738, 7 arrests from citations, call / incidents are down 31% from 2023.
- E) Public Works Report - Steinborn reported the following:
- City wide clean up June 15th 8am to Noon
 - The wood chip pile at West Park was hauled away.
 - Steinborn has been soliciting quotes for our 2024 chip seal project which should be ready by the next council meeting.
- F) Le Sueur Co. Commissioner Updates – Dave Preisler presented the following:
- County made a request for Congressionally Directed Spending for a records management system and broadband. The House just passed 1 million in broadband and \$500,000 in records management. House Rep. Angie Graig has been carrying this bill for the County.
 - Courthouse remodel is ahead of schedule by a few weeks.
 - County Rd. 11 bids have not been opened yet.

9. OLD BUSINESS

- A) The council reviewed the survey results for the new logo design. The survey was posted on the local “Le Center MN Happenings” Facebook page and Le Sueur County News had an article on the topic in one of their recent publications. A total of 100 people participated in the survey. #1 logo had 27 votes, #2 logo had 17 votes, #3 logo had 24 votes, #4 logo had 16 votes and 16 votes to keep the current logo. #1,3 are very similar styles and #1 could be used for formal documents and the website and #3 could be used for clothing and decals for city equipment. There was a consensus to follow the results of the survey and choose #1,3 designs for the new city logo. Evans indicated that he will prepare a Resolution for next month's meeting to officially claim these designs as the new city logo.
- B) Motion by Scott, seconded by Ruiz-Mendez to approve the Foundation Drain Variance Policy. All in favor, motion carried.

10. NEW BUSINESS

- A) Evans indicated that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was drafted by Attorney

Moran between the City and Le Sueur County for the placement of a new retaining wall. Historically the current courthouse retaining wall along the western side of the property was built inside the Lexington Ave right-of-way which is maintained by the City. With the reconstruction of that parking lot the County wished to rebuild a taller retaining wall within the same location. Evans said this MOU was drafted to grant the placement and ownership of the wall. The County will be responsible for all future maintenance and repairs if necessary. Motion by Steffen, seconded by Hintz to approve the MOU between the City and Le Sueur County. All in favor, motion carried.

- B) Evans and Overn drafted a memo to the city council asking for the consideration of the relocation of the police department to our city-owned building at 200 East Bowler Street. Overn indicated that the proposed location was an old medical clinic and would fit the needs of the department. Overn stated that there was a secure room for evidence and processing. Overn said the current police department is lacking proper room to conduct interviews with victims, suspects or witnesses and the proposed building would have adequate space to conduct those interviews. The building is already owned by the city and would be a good long-term solution for the police department. Evans indicated that the largest cost to this relocation would be to get a secure IT network in the building. Motion by Hintz, seconded by Scott to approve the forward movement to the relocation of the police department. All in favor, motion carried.
- C) Harmeyer read his remarks for the loss of a city employee Larry Schmidt. Larry was the lead refuse/recycling center worker for the city. Larry was a very dedicated employee, and he will be missed very much. With Larry's passing, public works staff will be working overtime hours to fill in at the recycling center on Saturday mornings and Wednesday evening. Evans and Steinborn drafted a memo to the council asking for their consideration to transition the recycling center to an unmanned operation and have it accessible 7 days a week. Steinborn said there would be cost savings to the transition. The city would limit its liability for staff injuries. We would reduce overtime pay for full-time staff if a replacement lead worker was not found. Steinborn indicated that a camera system would be needed to reduce illegal dumping complaints. Evans indicated they could transition from 3 large roll-off containers to 10, 8yrd containers with lids. This transition would aid in the ease of use for residents to unload their recyclables into these ground level containers. The cost of having LJP service these containers would increase our expenses by \$200 per month and go from an average of \$2255 a month to \$2436. Evans indicated that roughly \$25,000 in 2023 was spent on part-time staff wages for the refuse/recycling center. If we were to transition to an unmanned operation the savings would be approximately \$22,600 for the refuse fund. One known potential issue would be the collection of blue garbage bags on the weekend. With no one to man the garbage truck an auxiliary container might need to be placed onsite to collect garbage bags. Evans stated that staff might have to have a predetermined block of time scheduled to assist the elderly folks with dropping of their recyclables. Motion by Steffen, seconded by Ruiz-Mendez to transition to unmanned refuse and recycling center.
- D) Steinborn requested a quote from CTS for the purchase of a two-camera system for the public works building that would face the refuse/recycling center. Quote for hardware

and installation is \$8,749 with no recurring monthly fees as this records to a local server. Motion by Hintz, seconded by Scott to approve the purchase of the system.

- E) Evans advised the importance of having a master parks plan in place. This would be a tool to map the future of our parks and recreational amenities. Evans indicated that he met with a senior planner from Bolten & Menk, who also indicated the importance of planning these endeavors, as there might be funding/grant opportunities available but would need a parks plan in place to typically be eligible to receive funds. A parks committee consisting of Evans, Steinborn, Ruiz-Mendez, Harmeyer was tasked to start laying the foundation to a master parks plan.
- F) Harmeyer mentioned a dog park has been brought up several times throughout his tenure on the council. Harmeyer indicated the city owns a piece of land near the water tower that might make for a suitable location for a dog park. The parks committee will discuss this option further to find a potential location that would work the best.
- G) Harmeyer and Evans indicated the need for an interior remodel for the clerk's office. Currently the office assistant is across the lobby in a cubical and it's not ideal for helping residents when they come into city hall if the deputy clerk was away from her desk. This proposed remodel would remove the storage/shelter room and add a workspace for the office assistant. The remodel would also abate the floor tile that has known asbestos in it. The council generally agreed to have Evans move forward with the request. Evans indicated that he would prepare some parameters for the project and likely be drafting a request-for-proposal to be sent to contractors.

11. ADMINISTRATION & MISC.

- A) Evans discussed some proposed agenda layout with the council. The new structure will place all reports toward the end of the meeting. Evans also introduced the idea of having an administrators report to keep the council updated on items and things the administrator is working on.
- B) Evans indicated that he visited the Capitol on March 7th as part of any event for the League of MN Cities. Evans indicated that he had an opportunity to meet with both Rep. Brian Pfarr and Sen. Rich Draheim about proposed bills in this legislative session. Evans indicated that there are several zoning preemption bills that have been introduced in both the House and Senate. These bills by in large are designed to take away local zoning control and apply a one-size-fits-all approach to local zoning. Many of these bills would eliminate the need to have a public hearing, so homeowners would no longer get a voice if they approved or disapproved of a zoning matter. HF4009 states that a duplex with an accessory dwelling unit could be constructed in a residential district without the need for a public hearing. These bills are being introduced in the name of affordable housing by creating higher density and eliminating local zoning control. Evans provided a joint letter signed by the Le Center Mayor and many other cities that the City of New Prague drafted in opposition of HF4009.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business; Motion by Steffen, seconded by Scott, for Mayor Harmeyer to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

Dan Evans, Administrator