

**REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS  
JANUARY 19, 2021**

The meeting of the Council of the City of Vadnais Heights was held on the above date and called to order by Mayor Gunderson at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Heidi Gunderson, and Council Members: Greg Urban, Patricia Youker, Steve Rogers and Erik Goebel.

The following members were absent: None.

Also present were: Kevin Watson, City Administrator; Tim Sandvik, Assistant City Administrator; Nolan Wall, Planning/Community Development Director; Jesse Farrell, Public Works Director; Chris Hearden, Fire Chief; Caroline Beckman, City Attorney; and Peggy Aho, Deputy Clerk.

Everyone present stood and said the Pledge of Allegiance.

City Administrator Watson provided several announcements.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon motion by Urban, seconded by Youker, it was

21-01-012      “RESOLVED that the January 19, 2021 Regular Meeting Agenda be approved as presented.”

Ayes – 5                      Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A.      January 5, 2021 Regular Workshop Meeting

Upon motion by Goebel, seconded by Urban, it was

21-01-013      “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the January 5, 2021 Regular Workshop Meeting minutes as presented.”

Ayes – 5                      Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

B.      January 5, 2021 Regular Council Meeting

Upon motion by Youker, seconded by Urban, it was

21-01-014 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the January 5, 2021 Regular Council Meeting minutes as presented.”

Ayes – 5                      Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Upon motion by Urban, seconded by Youker, it was

21-01-015 “RESOLVED, that the Council approves the Consent Agenda Items #7A through #7F for the January 19, 2021 meeting be approved as follows:

- A. Consider Approving Claims #80139 Through #80218 and Electronic Claims #1585 Through #1589 for Payment
  - 1. U.S. Bank payment in the amount of \$7,190.43
- B. Consider Recommendation to Hire an Assistant Fire Chief
- C. Consider Recommendation to Extend the Service Agreement with CivicPlus to include CivicRec
- D. Consider Authorizing the City Administrator to Execute a Contract for Facilitator Services to Conduct a Goals Session
- E. Consider Renewal of Optional 2 a.m. Liquor License for Jimmy’s Food/Drink/Conference Center/Catering
- F. Consider Contract with Stripe, Inc. for Online Payment Services.”

Ayes – 5                      Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mayor Gunderson opened the meeting to the public at 7:07 p.m. There being no one that wished to speak, Gunderson closed the meeting to the public at 7:07 p.m.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

None

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Consider Approving the Amended 2021 Compensation/Employee Recognition Plan

Assistant City Administrator Sandvik recalled that back in March 2020, the Council approved the language regarding the Community Health Emergency Leave for 2020 as part of the Employee Recognition Plan.

Council Member Urban asked if this policy is specific to the current virus or is it a permanent thing. Sandvik noted that this was written for COVID at that time the City put it in the Plan. The language did not get added to the recognition plan in December. He noted that some cities have it sunsetting in June. Urban asked if staff are suggesting to sunset it. Sandvik said there is no date on it but we could certainly set it to sunset. Sandvik noted that the federal language regarding this expired at the end of the 2020. Urban asked how this is different from standard sick leave. Sandvik replied that this language allows for hours required away from the office due to COVID.

Urban said he supports that if somebody had symptoms of COVID they would not have to come to work, he's just concerned that we are adding two weeks of sick time to the benefit package. City Administrator Watson said this is unique to COVID 19, and we are trying to give to the City employees the comfort that they would be able to stay home if affected by COVID, and that we don't want them to feel like they should decide whether to come to work or stay home.

Urban said he would recommend that it should have a sunset date, whether it is the end of this year or some other date, but there should be a sunset date. Mayor Gunderson said that she thinks that's probably a good idea and would be appropriate. Sandvik said it does expire at the end of the year and also that the Plan can be amended any time. Urban said he agrees it could be through the end of the year, and remind staff not to carry it forward to 2022. Council Member Rogers asked if the Council can decide anytime during the year to amend it, if the COVID environment changes. Sandvik replied yes.

Council Member Youker asked if the folks that have had to use this or are they working remotely if they can. Sandvik said that it has been working very well.

Upon motion by Youker, seconded by Goebel, it was

21-01-016 "RESOLVED, that the Council adopts by Resolution the amended 2021 Compensation/Employee Recognition Plan as presented."

Ayes – 5                      Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Consider Receiving the Feasibility Study on the 2021 Street Improvements and Ordering the Public Hearing and Plans and Specifications

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell and Scott Haupt with S.E.H gave a presentation on the proposed 2021 Street Improvements project. He noted that in the

packet is the Feasibility Report prepared by S.E.H. Farrell reviewed the Suzanne Ave neighborhood where the project is proposed.

Haupt did a walk-through of the project area shortly after the project was authorized by the Council. They have received a lot of feedback from the area residents. Haupt noted that the improvement type recommended for the project is a bituminous removal and replacement with minor sanitary sewer and water main repairs, pipe lining and minor storm sewer improvement, spot curb and gutter repair, and pedestrian ramp improvements.

Farrell noted that the project cost estimate is \$1,206,300. He said that \$871,350 would be the City's contribution, and assessments to benefiting properties would total \$334,950.

He said staff are recommending a per unit assessment of \$5,075, if the Council approves. He said that setting a per unit assessment rate for this project makes sense because the lots are all similar sizes. He said that once they have the hard numbers on the project, he will work with the Council on how to fund the utility improvements. Farrell reviewed the special assessment summary and the project schedule. He then reviewed the requested action items before the Council which is to set the maximum assessment rate at \$5,075 per unit, accept the Feasibility Report, set the public and assessment hearings for February 16, 2021, order plan and spec preparations, and approve the S.E.H. proposal for design services.

Council Member Youker noted that in November 2020, the Council talked about a letter being sent to the residents to let them know that if they want camera shots of their sewer systems the City would help with the cost of that. Farrell said that it would be a reimbursement for residents having their sanitary sewer system camera'd. The letter he is going to send out will be a high level, basic letter. Farrell said it does not make sense to include the televising services in the City's construction contract so he would like to have people hire plumbers themselves to do the televising earlier.

Council Member Rogers asked what is the worst that could happen if Ramsey County came in later to do work in the area of Hodgson Road and Rice Street. Farrell said we know that something is coming and it has a potential to cause access issues to Martin Way.

Mayor Gunderson said that she likes the idea that the dollars that are going to repair utility service would come out of the utility fund.

Upon motion by Urban, seconded by Youker, it was

21-01-017      “RESOLVED, that the Council adopts a Resolution setting the assessment rates, accepting the Feasibility Report, and setting the Public Hearing and Assessment Hearing for the Improvement project for February 16, 2021 and ordering the Plans and Specifications.”

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

The resolution was adopted.

### **COUNCIL REPORTS:**

Fire Chief Hearden thanked the Council for its continued support with the action tonight to hire Mike Richter as the Assistant Fire Chief. Mayor Gunderson thanked all the Fire Department employees.

Assistant Administrator Sandvik thanked the Council for the approval of the contract for the software for Parks and Rec. He also thanked Ms. Everett for coming in and said that staff will be very appreciative of the new software. Sandvik noted that there are two openings on the Parks, Rec and Trails Commission and that the deadline for applying is February 7. He also noted that the Community Engagement Committee meeting will be on the 20<sup>th</sup> via zoom and that all are welcome to join the meeting.

Planning/Community Development Director Wall noted that they welcomed the new permit clerk, Kris Pechman, and said that the Permit Department is now fully staffed. He noted that the Planning Commission meets next week and the meeting agenda includes a code amendment for R-4 District for the Five Star Mobile Home Estates to accommodate moving in larger units. Wall noted that Council Member Rogers is the new liaison to the Planning Commission and Wall thanked Council Member Youker for her service on the Commission.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Farrell noted that there was a meeting last week to begin discussing the water tower project. He said they have to figure out how to move the telecommunication equipment and also how to deliver water to the City while that tower is out of service so they are starting the process with updates to the City's water distribution model. He also noted that Ms. Everett is working on logo designs. Farrell thanked the Council for the support of purchase of the new equipment last year, the trakless machine and Tool Cat.

Council Member Youker noted that she attended her first meeting with the Fire Relief Department and said she is excited to work with Fire Chief Hearden.

Council Member Rogers noted that he attended the Heritage Days Committee meeting as the Council liaison. They are looking at holding Heritage Days on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

City Administrator Watson noted that Ms. Moscatelli, VHEDC, arranged a couple of business meetings via Zoom with TCM and Top Ten Liquors. Watson thanked the Council for the approval to hire Phil Kern to facilitate a goals session with the Council. He noted that Ms. Aho will reach out to the Council to find a date/time in March to hold the session.

Mayor Gunderson encouraged residents to check out a set of snowshoes.

Motion to adjourn by Council Member Youker at 8:05 p.m., seconded by Council Member Rogers. Meeting adjourned.