

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 13, 2023**

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

- Mayor Harju called the Cokato City Council to order Monday, March 13th, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers. Members present were Mayor Harju, Council Members Erickson, Martinson, Sebring, and Wilson. Also present were members of the Public and Staff.

2. Approval of Agenda

- Mayor Harju would like to add to the mayor's report. Item 5g. City of Dassel meeting report
- **Motion** by Erickson to approve the agenda with the addition of item 5g. City of Dassel meeting report, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

3. Public Forum

- None.

4. Consent Agenda Items

a. Approval of Minutes from February 13, 2023 City Council Meeting

b. Sheriff's Report

c. Resolution 2023-10 accepting Donations to Cokato Fire and Cokato Ambulance

- Item 4c. Resolution 2023-10 accepting Donations to Cokato Fire and Cokato Ambulance pulled for further discussion by councilmember Erickson.
- **Motion** by Wilson to approve the consent agenda items 4a and 4b, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.
- Councilmember Erickson thanked the public and local businesses for their donations.
- **Motion** by Erickson to approve item 4c, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

5. Mayors Report

a. Wright County Radon Prevention – Presentation

- Gavin from Wright County Public Health gave a presentation on radon. Radon is a radioactive gas and is the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer. There are kits to test for radon in homes. Kits can be purchased at the Government Center, online at mn.radon.com, and most hardware stores. There are programs available to aid with radon reduction. Residents can reach out to the Wright County Public Health Department with any questions.

b. DC Schools – Community Education Annual Report – Presentation

- Abbey Lang gave the annual Community Education report. Lang wanted to inform community members that they can stay connected with community education by downloading the online app Pocket Brochure. The community education program is helping to serve many students with early childhood education and many other programs. Charger Kids Club continues to grow every year. There will be a Little Chargers Childcare program starting soon. The youth recreation programs rely heavily on parent volunteers to help coach.

c. Proposed Tax Increment Financing District 4-9 – North Industrial Park Resolution 2023-11

- This needs to be completed before a building permit is issued. There will be a public hearing on May 8th.
- **Motion** by Wilson to approve resolution 2023-11, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.

d. Oliver Street Closing at Railroad Overpass

- The BNSF Railroad approached Administrator Potter to discuss permanently closing the Oliver Avenue underpass and possibly creating a cul-de-sac instead. The underpass is in Cokato Township. There has been discussion between the BNSF, Dan Bravinder from Cokato Township, and Administrator Potter. The discussion had been put on hold to discuss options with the council. Councilmember Wilson stated that many people that are going to the city compost site drive down Oliver Avenue to try to stay off the highway. Also, the turn onto County Road 4 coming from the East is sharp and additional traffic and trailers hauling brush down the highway could be dangerous. This would also be a good underpass to keep open for potential growth of the city. Councilmembers would like Administrator Potter to inform the BNSF that they would prefer to keep the underpass open.

e. Christmas Lights Update

- The public works director Jeff Degrote is going to try to refurbish one of the current decorations to see if we can do that rather than buy new. He will bring a completed decoration to council to decide if council would like to proceed with that option.

f. Amending City Ordinance for City fees for Snow Removal for Fee Schedule and an increase in Ambulance Fees

- The current charge for snow removal is only \$50 and snow removal is much more expensive for the city. The city has had an issue with people not removing their snow from the sidewalks this year. Councilmember Erickson suggested that the fee be for one hour minimum and also asked what the city would choose to do about snowbirds. Administrator Potter said that people who plan to leave for the winter would have to make accommodations for sidewalk snow removal before leaving. Sebring asked if an independent contractor would be asked to clear the sidewalks when needed. Administrator Potter stated that an independent contractor would be hired. Fees will be assessed to the property taxes and the homeowner will receive a letter in advance so that they have a chance to pay before that happens. Erickson questioned if the \$75 would be enough to cover the costs and time for staff to assess to taxes. The topic was tabled for further research and discussion.
- Ambulance Director Jimmy Martinson talked with Administrator Potter about the sharp increase in supplies. Director Martinson checked with other ambulance services to see what they are charging. After discussion it was decided that an increase in the fees would be needed due to inflation. The new fees suggested are Basic Life Service \$1,100, Advanced Life Support \$1,900, and \$27 per loaded mile. A new first responder fee of \$200 was also suggested to be added. This fee would be charged to ALS services if a patient is transported into the ALS rig to continue transport. Councilmember Martinson questioned the fee increases. Councilmember Erickson stated that the ambulance service is not looking to make a profit but the city has to try to cover our costs. After discussion the council decided to raise the fees.
- **Motion** by Erickson to amend the fee schedule to the suggested fees, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

g. City of Dassel Meeting Report

- Mayor Harju informed council that Administrator Potter, Terri Boese, and himself had a meeting. They discussed the possibility of working together more and sharing some of our equipment. Mayor Harju suggested that the City Council of Dassel and Cokato get together to discuss this opportunity.

6. Public Works/Parks

a. Sealcoating in 2023 - Confirm Scope of Work

- Public Works Director Degrote put together a highlighted map of streets that he suggested seal coating this spring. The sections highlighted were last done in 2015. He said that for Klyva Road the city may need to consider doing a mill and overlay project. Engineer Josh Halverson informed the council that he could look into a pavement management plan. It may be helpful for budgeting

purposes to have a pavement management plan. Councilmember Wilson asked if Borg Road would be included in the sealcoating bid. That is not currently on the list of streets to sealcoat.

- **Motion** by Wilson to look into the cost of a pavement management plan with the engineer, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.

7. City Administrator Report

a. Community Beautification - Property Cleanup and Improvements

- Administrator Potter shared an idea of encouraging homeowners and businesses to clean their properties up. The citywide clean-up day is Saturday May 6th. Potter would like to start a yard of the month program to recognize people that are taking good care of their yards. A paint it grant could be looked into to help freshen up buildings that need painting. A letter would be sent to certain places informing them that the property needs to be cleaned up by a certain date. If they don't clean up we could bring it to the attorney. It would be good to have very good ordinances so that at times the Wright County Sheriffs Office could help to enforce the ordinance. Councilmember Wilson suggested sending out a flyer to property owners to create positivity and make them aware of the yard of the month program. Council would like to consider this idea and hear more information from Administrator Potter.

8. Financial Reports

a. Approval of Claims - \$84,676.91

- **Motion** by Sebring to approve the claims, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.


b. Approval of Cash and Budget Reports

- **Motion** by Sebring to approve the cash and budget reports, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

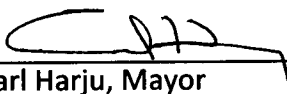
9. Adjournment

- **Motion** by Martinson to adjourn, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.

ATTEST:


Megan Gustafson, City Clerk

APPROVED BY:


Carl Harju, Mayor