

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 8, 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, May 8th, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers. Members present were Mayor Harju, Council Members Erickson, Martinson, and Sebring. Councilmember Wilson was absent. Also present were members of the Public and Staff.

2. Approval of Agenda

- **Motion** by Erickson to approve the agenda, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

3. Public Forum

- None.

4. Consent Agenda Items

- a. **Approval of Minutes from April 10, 2023 City Council Meeting**
- b. **Res 2023-15 Resignations of Firefighters from Cokato Fire Department**
- c. **Sheriff's Report**

- **Motion** by Sebring to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

5. Mayors Report

a. Ordinance 2023-06 – Business Signage for City Sidewalks

- Signage had been discussed at the May 8, 2023 meeting and was tabled. Kala Larios from Four-way Liquors spoke about parking issues and would like to have a reserved parking spot in front of the liquor store that shows 5-minute parking for the liquor store. Ricky Larios mentioned that during dance the dance studio takes up most of the street parking and that there is no handicap parking by the store. Lori Heinz the owner of Double Shot stated that she has talked to the other businesses on Broadway Ave and nobody had any complaints about the signage. One issue has been that Broadway is a county road. When brought to the county they did not seem concerned about the signs. However, Wright County did mention that the signs would be more of a suggestion that the parking spot be reserved for the specific business customers. The parking spot would not be policed and people parking in front of the sign cannot be told that they cannot park there. Council questioned where to draw the line at signage and how many businesses will want signs. Additional signs in front of other businesses were mentioned that the council was not aware of. Mayor Harju suggested that the sign ordinance be looked into further and be discussed at the next meeting.

- **Motion** by Martinson to pass the sign ordinance, no second.

- **Motion** by Harju to table the sign ordinance, seconded by Erickson; majority voted aye with Martinson opposed.

b. Appearance – Kathy Lund, Nuvera Broadband

- Kathy was not at the meeting. Council suggested that administrator potter invite Kathy to the next meeting.

c. Resolution 23-20 - Cokato Museum Grant Options

- Museum Director Ellison. Gave an update on the possible grant options. Ellison spoke with the architect that created the previous estimate. The architect said that there would be no charge to update the estimate and if there was it would be included in the advisement section of the grant. Previously the council agreed to match 15% and the historical society agreed to add \$3,000.00 to

help with the grant match. The total match offered between the city and the historical society was \$21,000. Ellison requested that a resolution be made to agree to a 15% match for the grant again.

- **Motion** by Sebring to approve resolution 23-20 with a 15% match, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

d. Res 2023-16 Public Hearing – TIF District Resolution Cokato Industrial Park

- Shannon Sweeney spoke about starting the process to create a TIF district for the Industrial Park. The intent would be to capture property taxes. The intention would be to help reduce the cost of purchasing the lot by reducing the cost of the public infrastructure that needs to be installed. This would capture the city, county, and a bit of the school district tax. The plan establishes the boundaries, budget for the collection, and a duration of 9 years. In order to avoid going through the process to amend the TIF District again the estimate is high. The intent is to delay certification to the county for 1.5 years so that the first collection would be in 2026 and a large increment can be captured to help reimburse the costs. The city is required to adopt a resolution that provides for the terms of repayment for an interfund loan. Martinson questioned if a resolution had already been adopted for the TIF District in July of 2022. Sweeney stated that he had come to the council meeting to discuss the process but that no action was taken. Lots need to be purchased and built on to create the revenue to recapture. Harju suggested waiting to make a decision until hearing the Industrial Park update to be discussed later in the meeting.

e. Resolution 23-17 Waiver of Statutory Limits

- Administrator Potter mentioned that property insurance renewal comes up in June and that the state statute has limitations on the amount of money that a city can be sued for. Rates are lower by not waiving the statutory limits and this is something that is done yearly.
- **Motion** by Martinson to approve resolution 23-17, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

f. Resolution 23-18 - Hiring of part time summer workers Public Works

- Administrator Potter suggested that the position be readvertised, and the age be lowered to 16 to apply for the position. So far only one person has applied who would just like to water the flowers. Martinson stated that he would like to see bigger flower pots, Degrote stated that he would look into it further.
- **Motion** by Sebring to approve resolution 23-18, along with readvertising the part time summer position and lowering the age to 16. Seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

g. Resolution 23-19 - Hiring of part time summer workers - Swimming Pool

- Administrator Potter gave requested wages for the 2023 season. Martinson questioned if the wage step scale was ever approved. Mayor Harju replied that he believes that the wage step scale was approved in 2021. The personnel committee is still looking into adjustments and revisions of the wage step scale.
- **Motion** by Sebring to approve the resolution 23-19 along with readvertising for workers, seconded by Harju; all voted aye.

h. Use of 6th Street SW by DC Schools during the daytime

- TJ Anderson the principal at Cokato Elementary is requesting permission to block off part of the road to allow kids to play there for recess if there is an abnormally wet spring. Council is okay with the road being temporarily blocked off for part of the day as long as the homeowners are able to get in and out of the driveway without issues.

i. One year review – City Clerk – Megan Gustafson

- When hired the resolution for hire had an agreed upon increase of wages after one year of employment and a favorable review.
- **Motion** by Sebring to approve the wage increase, seconded by Erickson; majority voted aye, Martinson abstained.

6. Public Works/Parks

a. Water Study – City of Cokato to DC High School

- Engineer Halverson spoke about the report on feasibility for extending water to the high school. Currently the whole facility except the Rec Center is serviced by well #1. Currently the pool is used as fire suppression. The current facility is not fully covered by the fire suppression system. They use on average 16,000 gallons of water per day. The demand would impact the entire system. The current connection point would be near Jacks gas station. Potential future development was also discussed. Two routes were considered. One would match the existing sanitary sewer alignment. The other route would remain in the right of way for highway 12. A few scenarios were considered. Engineer Halverson recommended going with a minimum 12-inch water main and suggested scenario 1, which includes potable and fire protection and using the North route through the field. Further discussion will be needed. At the very earliest plans and specs could be done by October of 2023. Bid openings could be done in November and the project could possibly be completed by September of 2024. Sebring suggested asking Dassel to help with the fire suppression costs. Currently the project is based on the referendum by the school. The current sewer line can be used for future development. Administrator Potter suggested having a meeting with both council and the school board to discuss the options. Council would suggest that the school go with the North route and a 12-inch main. A meeting will be scheduled.

b. Street Maintenance 2023 Bids

- Engineer Halverson said that the streets have been reviewed and suggested streets that need to be worked on first with the budget of approximately \$120,000. Currently patching needs to be done before preservation can be done. Halverson suggested looking into the pavement management plan. Council asked Halverson to bring back more information about completing a pavement management plan.
- **Motion** by Erickson to approve the suggested street repairs, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

c. Phase II Reconstruction Project Closeout

- Halverson spoke about the final payment application with the remaining 2% retainage. However, the check should be held until a few more punch list items have been completed. The final payment is \$49,029.32 and the approximate completion date is June 30, 2023.
- **Motion** by Erickson to approve the final payment application, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.

d. Industrial Park Update

- Administrator Potter and Engineer Halverson had an initial construction meeting with LaTour Construction. They also met with CenterPoint Energy after the meeting and the cost is going to be around \$600,000 to extend interruptible gas service to Industrial Park. Potter has tried to communicate with other cities, state senators, US Reps, the Public Utilities Commission, and a few others. The Public Utilities Commission did not give much assistance. Potter has also been talking with a private mechanical engineer to try to get a basis of what is feasible. LP Gas has been looked at as well. The cost is not shared by the State of MN grant. CenterPoint would like to know approximate load amounts. A large portion of the Industrial Park is tied to the DEED money. CenterPoint may not be able to do the implementation until 2024-2025. CenterPoint said that the City of Cokato is asking for a very large amount of gas and they would like to see a report on the predicted amount of gas. Brent Minkinen a potential business owner interested in the Industrial Park said that LP gas will not be an option for him. Brent has looked at a different location and CenterPoint said that they could hook him up to gas there with no problems. Council would like to continue to move ahead with the project. Sweeney spoke and let council know that he has had businesses pull out on the grant before and DEED did not ask for the money back. Council would like to table resolution 2023-16 and discuss it again at the June meeting.

7. Financial Reports

a. Approval of Claims - \$201,184.65

b. **Motion** by Sebring to approve the claims, seconded by Erickson; majority vote aye. Martinson Opposed.

c. **Cash and Budget Reports**

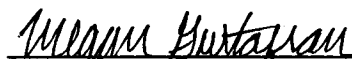
d. **Motion** by Sebring to approve the cash and budget reports, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

8. **Adjournment**

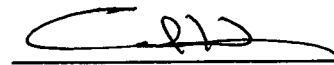
- **Motion** by Martinson to adjourn, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:33 pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED BY:



Megan Gustafson, City Clerk



Carl Harju, Mayor