

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 12, 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, June 12th, 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

- Administrator Potter would like to add Resolution 2023-28 hiring MaKayla Gustafson as part time Public Works employee to the Consent Agenda as item 4h.
- **Motion** by Sebring to approve the agenda with the addition of item 4h. Resolution 2023-28 hiring MaKayla Gustafson as part time Public Works employee, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

3. Public Forum

- Laura Bunker, owner of Dance Bunker previously Miss Wendy's Dance Studio spoke about the Broadway Ave parking situation that has been discussed recently. Laura suggested painting lines for actual designated parking spots on the street so that the space can be utilized best. She also suggested possibly trying to mark the public parking lot better so that people are more aware that they can park there.
- Some residents were in attendance to talk about a possible golf cart ordinance. The biggest concern is golf carts driving on the highway. The deputy suggested that a more detailed ordinance would be best. Robert Lassanen stated that his golf cart qualifies as a low-speed vehicle because it goes more than 20 mph and it has all safety requirements of a low speed vehicle. Robert mentioned that he drives his golf cart from his home to the golf course everyday and he has talked with the state about their regulations and you can drive golfcarts on a city street where the speed limit is less than 35 mph, you can't drive down the US Highway but you are able to cross them. Ronald L spoke about buying a golf cart so that he can get around when he doesn't drive a regular car. Administrator Potter will look further into an ordinance and bring the topic back to the council in July to add clarity.

4. Consent Agenda Items

- a. **Approval of Minutes from May 8, 2023 City Council Meeting**
- b. **Resolution 2023-21 for the donation to the Fire Department fund from Fire Relief**
- c. **Resolution 2023-22 hiring Isiah Kalis as part time Public Works employee**
- d. **Resolution 2023-23 Additional temporary hires for Swimming Pools**
- e. **Resolution 2023-24 Accepting resignation of Jason Kalis**
- f. **Nick Vergin Wage Increase at 6 months**
- g. **Sheriff's Report**
- h. **Resolution 2023-28 hiring MaKayla Gustafson as part time Public Works employee**
 - **Motion** by Sebring to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

5. Mayors Report

a. Appearance Dan Bravinder Cokato Township CSAH 3 Detour

- Dan Bravinder spoke to the council about the detour on County Road 3 for the Industrial Park. Dan stated that he brought an invoice to council for the township having to dust coat 40th St from County Road 3 to County Road 4 and the cost was about \$4,800. The township does not normally dust coat that road because it is not normally a very heavily traveled road. People did not follow the detour signs that were placed and the city placed signs that said no through traffic. Dan would like the city to help pay for the dust coating. Councilmember Wilson stated that there was a valid request on 40th St East of County Road 3. Sebring mentioned that homeowners are benefiting from the dust control and pondered if

homeowners were given the option to have dust coating done. Sebring also mentioned that the city could look into how much of the road was dust coated that is normally done and paid for by the residents and see how much of the road remained to dust coat after that. The detour signs were posted and the city cannot control how traffic follows those signs. Council would like to offer to pay for \$2,400 of the dust control invoice.

- **Motion** by Wilson to offer the township \$2,400.00 to cover half of the expense of the invoice, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.

b. Appearance - 2022 Audit Presentation and Approval

- Marisa Austin from Conway, Deuth, & Schmiesing spoke on the 2022 audit. There was a decrease in the current assets and the decrease was primarily due to a decrease in the cash balances as a result of the 2021B bond proceeds that are continuing to be spent as the city continues on the Central City Phase 2 project. Current liabilities remained consistent with last year. There were no major changes. Net position looks healthy and the auditors have no concerns.

- **Motion** by Wilson to approve the audit, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

c. Appearance – Kathy Lund, Nuvera Broadband

- Kathy Lund from Nuvera Broadband spoke about having an interest in bringing fiber internet to Cokato. Nuvera is headquartered in New Ulm. In 2023 Nuvera started looking for other communities to provide services to, one of those areas being Dassel. Nuvera will not overbuild another internet provider. Nuvera has an interest in bringing fiber internet to Cokato. The initial plan would be to do a survey of residents and have engineers start planning for 2024. Council would like Kathy to continue forward with the customer survey to figure out the interest. Kathy will give an update after the survey is completed.

d. Variance – Jeremy and Gretchen Pearson Variance allowing a second driveway to their property at 590 3rd Street SW

- Administrator Potter stated that there was a planning and zoning meeting before the council meeting and there was also a neighborhood meeting on Wednesday June 7th. The issue is having a second driveway at 590 3rd St SW. The variance request is to have a second curb opening on the property. At first it was thought that the driveway would be closer than the 5 feet of the property line, but the applicant clarified that the driveway would in fact be 5 feet away from the property line. Primarily the second driveway would be used to access the backyard as currently there is not another access point. At the planning commission meeting a concern was brought up about the driveway which predominantly has been constructed but there is not a curb opening at this location. It was questioned whether there is 5 feet or 4 feet from the property line. The planning commission recommended approval of the variance if the driveway is at least 5 feet from the west property line and the driveway on the east property line needs to be brought into compliance too within 30 days as that driveway does not meet the current setbacks. Councilmember Wilson stated that the planning commission accepted the request for the variance for the second curb opening for the driveway to the west however the driveway will need to meet the 5 feet setbacks and any existing work that has been done needs to be corrected if it is closer than 5 feet or a variance needs to be requested. On the east side the layout of the previous driveway exceeded the width without a variance so that needs to either be corrected and returned to normal or have a variance requested. The corrections will need to be made to the temporary driveway that Jeremy put in before the curb opening can be done. Gretchen spoke and mentioned that on the east side of the property the existing garage was built on the property line. Martinson questioned if the back driveway coming out of the back of the garage will be removed or left there. Jeremy Pearson stated that the driveway out the back of the garage was temporary and will be removed as long as the variance passes. Currently the driveway out the back of the garage is the only access to the backyard. The neighbors to the West of the property wanted to make it known that they would be most affected by the variance and they are fine with it.
- **Motion** by Sebring to approve the variance for the second driveway, seconded by Erickson; 4 votes aye. Martinson abstained.

e. Variance -Daphne Schmitz - Variances - 4 lot subdivision - 430 and 440 Omer Avenue SE

- Administrator Potter stated that this variance had also been brought before the planning commission before the meeting. Several neighbors brought concerns that it would be too much. The planning commission recommended denying the request. Daphne Schmitz spoke about having a target market of seniors and all houses would be rentals at the current time. Councilmember Wilson stated that the planning commission had concerns with placing 4 units in the area because the area would get pretty condensed, and the neighbors also voiced concern. The planning commission recommended that Daphne look at building two homes rather than 4. Councilmember Erickson mentioned that Daphne would need 6 variances to complete the project that she was requesting.
- **Motion** by Wilson to deny the variance request, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

f. TIF District – Resolution 2023-25 Continuation and TIF Reports

- Administrator Potter mentioned that this had been discussed at the last council meeting and it had been tabled. He questioned if council wanted to pass the resolution or push it back to the next council meeting. Councilmember Wilson stated that it would be in the City's best interest to pass the resolution.
- **Motion** by Wilson to pass the resolution and move forward with the TIF District process, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.
- Potter also asked if council would like to continue using Ehlers to complete the yearly TIF reporting for the past districts or if they would like to move forward with David Drown Associates. Council would like Potter to move forward with David Drown Associates.

g. State Financing – Capital Project Funding 2024 Submittal Resolution 2023-26 Approving Project for Submittal

- Administrator Potter would like to apply for capital project funding for either the historical society project or for the watermain extension to the high school. Administrator Potter would like to pass a resolution to apply for the capital funding project. Councilmember Wilson suggested adding the Akerlund Studio project to the application. Councilmember Martinson questioned why the city would apply for capital funding for the watermain extension project if it had already been included in the school levy. Mayor Harju stated that the watermain capacity could possibly be upgraded if the city could get the capital funding.
- **Motion** by Erickson to approve the resolution, seconded by Wilson; 4 votes aye. Martinson opposed.
- **Motion** by Sebring to approve a resolution to apply for capital project funding for Akerlund Studio project and the HVAC replacement, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.

h. Industrial Park Update

- Administrator Potter has remained in contact with CenterPoint energy. Engineer Halverson said that construction is going well and they are right on schedule.

i. Natural Gas Franchise Agreement and Franchise Fee Discussions

- Administrator Potter did a survey of cities and found that only a few cities had a franchise fee for natural gas. Wilson mentioned the possibility of splitting the cost of installing natural gas to Industrial Park with half going towards a franchise fee and the other half going to the development. The franchise fee would be a monthly fee added onto the utility bills. Councilmember Erickson expressed disinterest in the franchise fee because infrastructure should already be included in the utility bill and this would be just another fee added on. Council would like to think about it and discuss the options more in an upcoming work session.

j. Automatic Aid Agreement Fire Department

- Councilmember Erickson discussed setting up a new automatic aid agreement with both Dassel and Howard Lake. With equipment getting more expensive and personnel getting harder to find especially during the day. With the auto aid agreement rather than waiting for an officer to arrive on scene and then ask the county to page out another town for mutual aid the county would automatically page out either Howard Lake or Dassel depending on the location for certain calls. Assistant fire chief Martinson

has done a lot of research on the auto aid agreements and there are other towns around Cokato that also have these agreements.

- **Motion** by Sebring to move ahead with the auto aid agreements with both Dassel and Howard Lake Fire Departments, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

6. Public Works Report

a. Bids for Street Patching

- The city received 3 bids for street patching. The low bid was Diversified Paving. The bid came in under budget and there are a few more places that Jeff would like to add into the project.
- **Motion** by Wilson to approve the bid with Diversified Paving, seconded by Erickson. Motion withdrawn.
- **Motion** by Erickson to approve and award the bid to Diversified Paving and approve additional modifications up to \$120,000.00, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

b. Public Works Employee Hiring Update

- Seven applications were received, Degrote and Potter are in the process of interviewing 4 people. Potter asked if the council would like to wait to hire until it can be brought back to council to hire. Mayor Harju suggested bringing the suggestion back to the personnel committee.

c. Projects - Pay Applications

- **Trailstone 3rd Addition and Ailie Ave Extension**
 - Recently the curb and gutter was completed. The pay application is for \$26,376.28.
 - **Motion** by Martinson to approve the pay application, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.
- **Cokato Industrial Park**
 - The progress is going good, and Engineer Halverson recommends payment of \$157,346.16. By the end of the month the road should be mostly completed. The turn lanes will need to be completed sometime closer to October.
 - **Motion** by Martinson to approve the pay application, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

7. Financial Reports

a. Approval of Claims - \$184,088.16

- **Motion** by Sebring to approve the claims, seconded by Wilson; 4 votes aye. Martinson opposed.

b. Cash and Budget Report

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

8. City Administrator Report

a. 2024 Sheriffs Contract

- The cost for the Sheriffs contract in 2024 will be going up. This will be discussed further at an upcoming work session.

b. Downtown Signage Discussion

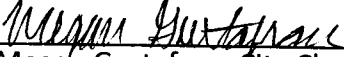
- Mayor Harju mentioned an idea on how to handle the signage issues. The suggestion was made to allow each business to have a sandwich board sign where they could request a parking spot. The business still would not be able to enforce the parking for their business only. The topic will be discussed again at the July meeting.

9. Adjournment

- **Motion** by Martinson to adjourn, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED BY:


Megan Gustafson, City Clerk


Carl Harju, Mayor