

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
AUGUST 14, 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, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 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**
  - **Motion** by Wilson to approve the agenda, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.
- 3. Public Forum**
  - None.
- 4. Consent Agenda Items**
  - a. Approval of Minutes from July 10, 2023 City Council Meeting**
  - b. Sheriff's Report**
  - c. Resolution 2023-29 for Donations to Fire and Ambulance**
  - d. Resolution 2023-30 Public Works employee MaKayla Gustafson regarding vacation time, etc.**
    - Consent agenda item 4c. Resolution 2023-29 for Donations to Fire and Ambulance pulled by Erickson.
    - **Motion** by Sebring to approve the consent agenda items 4a, b, and d, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.
    - Councilmember Erickson expressed gratitude to those who donated to the fire department and ambulance.
    - **Motion** by Erickson to approve consent agenda item 4c, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.
- 5. Mayors Report**
  - a. Reed Carlson – 260 Millard Avenue Parcel**
    - Administrator Potter told council that he spoke with the attorney office about the history of the parcel and they did put in a deed search for the parcel which he just received back the afternoon of the meeting. The city owned lot must remain a parking lot. Councilmember Wilson suggested that it would be nice to clear up the title for the four lots owned by Carlson. Mayor Harju mentioned that at a previous meeting Carlson had turned down purchasing the lot so the city decided to keep the lot. The city had received information from the lawyer that they could not sell the lot to Carlson with a clear title so Carlson said that he didn't want the property. Carlson stated that in the future if he finds somebody that would like to build an apartment on his lot he would like a guarantee of 14 parking spots if needed. Wilson asked Administrator Potter to send the most recent report from the attorney so that council can gain clarity.
  - b. Beverly G Irvin for approval of a lot split/lot configuration - 755 Johnson Avenue Southwest**
    - Planning and Zoning met to discuss this before the council meeting and they recommend approval. Irvin would like to sell the house but she would like for all buildings to be on the same lot. Engineer Halverson questioned if the city had considered recording a permanent easement for utilities at the time of the lot split.
    - **Motion** by Erickson to approve the lot split with the condition that the City retain an easement over the existing storm sewer which will be provided by the land surveyor. The motion was seconded by Wilson and all voted aye.
  - c. Randy Moe for a variance to construct a 34' x 56' detached accessory building adjacent to the property located at 590 3rd Street SE**
    - **Motion** by Wilson to allow Moe to construct a 34'x 56' detached garage on his property at 590 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE with the conditions.
      1. The building shall be stick frame and will have residential siding.
      2. No commercial uses within the garage will be allowed.

3. The property PINS (Parcel Identification Number System of 105024001010 and 105024001011 shall be combined into one lot PIN to allow the building to be constructed.

4. No access to the garage from Borg Road would be allowed.

The motion was seconded by Sebring and approved unanimously.

**d. Peter and Raina Wuollet for lot split/lot reconfiguration and a variance to allow an accessory building to be constructed on a lot before a house is constructed at 680 Johnson Avenue SW.**

- **Motion** by Erickson to approve the lot/split/reconfiguration, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

- **Motion** by Erickson to approve the variances to allow an accessory building to be constructed with the following conditions:

1. The building permit for the new house and accessory building shall be obtained at the same time.

2. The exterior finish of the house and accessory building shall match. The applicant has suggested board and batten exterior siding.

3. No commercial uses within the garage will be allowed.

The motion was seconded by Wilson and approved unanimously.

**e. Stockholm Township – Possible Solar Ordinance**

- Administrator Potter received a notice about a solar farm in Stockholm Township. They do their own zoning. The primary concern of planning and zoning was drainage into Sucker Creek. This will go to the township board at the end of August. Wilson expressed that a drainage study is needed because of businesses downstream from the solar farm.

**f. Ordinances amending the City Code concerning the Public use of Hemp and Cannabis Products.**

- This was also discussed last meeting and Potter ran it by the law enforcement agencies to get their thoughts. Currently there are many unknowns with the new law but this would be a starting point.

- **Motion** by Wilson to approve ordinance 2023-07 Amending the city code concerning the public use of hemp and cannabis products, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.

**g. Ordinance amending the City Code concerning Smoking Hemp and Cannabis in City Parks**

- Ordinance 2023-08 is an ordinance amending the Cokato city code concerning smoking in city parks. Mayor Harju suggests adding in No alcoholic beverages or cannabis products shall be consumed in city parks or playgrounds to 5c of the ordinance. Sebring stated that banning smoking in general may not be the right thing to do. Council would like to change letter g of the ordinance to the use of cannabis products being prohibited in public parks.

- **Motion** by Martinson to approve ordinance 2023-08 with the modification of letter g to the use of cannabis products being prohibited in public parks, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

**h. 2024 Sheriffs Agreement Adoption**

- Wilson questioned what the \$25,338.46 amount is for in the contract. Administrator Potter replied that he would check his email and get back to council with the additional information. The contract is for \$461,160 and an additional \$25,338.46. Council would like to table the discussion until further information is provided about what the additional \$25,338.46 is for.

**i. Dassel Cokato Trail Expansion Discussion**

- The DC Trail committee would like to expand the trail from Dassel to Darwin Hill. The committee would like to approach Meeker County about grant possibilities. There are many questions on who will maintain the trail when issues arise.

**j. Personnel Policy Amendment – Work Week Time**

- Public works has requested to go to four 9-hour days and a half day Friday. Currently the City pays OT for over 8 hours in a day and will need to be changed to over 40 hours worked in a work week. The museum has a bit of a different work week because their days off are Sunday and Monday. Administrator Potter questioned if the four 9-hour days and a half day Friday would be a year-round thing or only during certain seasons. PW Director DeGrote mentioned that if the employee that is on call over the Friday afternoon and weekend has a day off during the week the employee will still need to put in 40 working hours before the time is counted as overtime. Councilmember Wilson stated that the paragraph "For full-time, regular employees, hours worked on a weekend a day that is not a regularly scheduled workday (i.e. the employee's 'weekend') shall be compensated at the rate of time-and-one-half for all hours worked

constitute overtime hours for full time employees whose normal work week is Monday through Friday, regardless of the number of hours worked during the regularly scheduled work week.” contradicts the 40 hours. Councilmember Sebring said that it would be better to define the 40-hour work week.

Councilmembers discussed that it will be anything over 40 hours worked in a week will be overtime.

Working hours do not include sick time, vacation time, holidays, or comp time. Councilmember Wilson questioned if the four 9 hour days and a half day Friday schedule would be for all staff. Mayor Harju responded that each department must have somebody for the hours that they are open so the schedule would only be for public works.

- **Motion** by Wilson to switch to overtime after 40 hours, seconded by Martinson. Further discussion by councilmember Erickson that coming in for two hours in the middle of the night to clean streets is a huge inconvenience and if that is not part of the schedule now staff will not get paid overtime unless they have over 40 hours by the time they get to Friday. Councilmember Sebring mentioned that if the employee does need to come in at night they will still need to come in on Friday and they will still get overtime for their hours worked over 40. After further discussion all voted aye.
- **Motion** by Councilmember Wilson to try the four 9-hour days and a half day Friday schedule for the public works department for 3 months and then getting feedback. Seconded by Martinson; all voted aye. This will go into effect starting August 21<sup>st</sup>.

## 6. Public Works Report

### a. **Projects - Pay Applications**

- **Motion** by Wilson to approve Industrial Park Pay Application 3 for \$120,084.47, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

### b. **2024 City Mower**

- Administrator Potter informed council that staff would be looking into a new mower and trading in one of the older ones.

### c. **Compost Site Update**

- Administrator Potter would like to discuss possible gates for the compost site. Public works will need at least a 24-foot gate to get through with all of their equipment. One option would be a chained cattle gate. Another option would be a key fob gate that is automated, and Potter is looking into the cost of that system. GuidancePoint looked into our camera systems to better identify vehicles going into the compost site. Two quotes were received for chipping the brush pile. Council would like to look into an automated gate system further.
- **Motion** by Wilson to get the pile chipped by Dakota Wood Grinding, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.

## 7. City Administrator Report

### a. **2024 Budget Update**

### b. **Industrial Park Turning Lanes – Possible Grant Funding**

- County Highway Department is giving a timeline to get the turn lanes done by June of 2024. They are now willing to push off the date to September of 2021. Wright County wanted a bond for \$300,000 but the city attorney said not to do that. Engineer Halverson suggested going for the grant.
- **Motion** by Martinson to apply for the grant and to ask the contractor to extend the project, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

### c. **Possible Hotel Study**

- Hotel study was last done about ten years ago. Wilson suggested that it would be good to look into having the study done. Council would like to table the study until the city knows more about the fees and what information is included.

## 8. Financial Reports

### a. **Approval of Claims - \$1,378,388.11**

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

### b. **Cash and Budget Report**

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

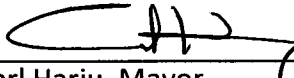
9. Adjournment

- Motion by Erickson to adjourn, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED BY:

  
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Megan Gustafson, City Clerk

  
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Carl Harju, Mayor