

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 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, September 11th, 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 requested adding item 5d Administrator Report to the agenda.**
- **Motion** by Wilson to approve the agenda with the addition of item 5d Administrator Report, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

3. Public Forum

- None.

4. Consent Agenda Items

a. Approval of Minutes from August 14, 2023 City Council Meeting

b. Sheriff's Report

c. Fire Mutual Aid Agreement - Amendment

d. Resolution 2023-31 Approving New Hires for Fire Department

e. Resolution 2023-32 Resignation of Isiah Kalis from Public Works

f. Approval of Purchase Agreements in Trailstone

- Consent agenda item 4c. Fire Mutual Aid Agreement – Amendment pulled by councilmember Erickson.
- **Motion** by Wilson to approve consent agenda items 4a, b, d, e, and f, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.
- Councilmember Erickson explained that the incorrect agreement was included in the council packet and would like to table the agreement until the correct document is sent.
- **Motion** by Erickson to table item 4c. Fire Mutual Aid Agreement – Amendment, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.

5. Mayors Report

a. Appearance - Darrin Lee CGMC City Visit

- Darin Lee from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities wanted to give a report on what happened in the last legislative session. CGMC is an organization that represents city governments outside of the seven-county metro. Local government aid is one of the main focuses of the organization. CGMC requested a \$150 million increase in local government aid. Legislation agreed upon an \$80 million increase in local government aid. Lee informed council that Cokato would be getting \$123,000 in public safety aid.

b. Resolution 2023-33 Preliminary Tax Levy Resolution

- Administrator Potter stated that our primary budget has stayed consistent. Market value for the city has gone up 86% over the 2016-2023 years. A couple of larger projects will be coming up for the Historical Society that will be costly. The preliminary levy needs to be submitted to the county no later than September 15th. Councilmember Erickson questioned if it would be better to be aggressive or fall behind. Councilmember Wilson mentioned that everyone is going to feel the effects of inflation and the cost of public safety went up 21% alone. Wilson suggested starting with Option 4 which is a 9% increase the amount can be decreased after the preliminary levy has been submitted but the percentage cannot be increased. Sebring mentioned that the 9% increase is a good idea because trying to play catch up is even worse in his opinion.
- **Motion** by Sebring to go with Option 4 the 9% increase, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

c. 2024 Sheriffs Agreement Adoption

- Councilmember Erickson said that the deputies in town do a great job and that the rate is not out of question but, just like any other contractor the city can choose whether or not to use the contractor at the rate they set and the city is not being given that option. Erickson mentioned that at the per capita rate of \$166 per hour Cokato is higher than any other city in the county. Erickson said that in his opinion not being able to negotiate the number of hours is not right. Sebring and Wilson expressed agreement with Erickson's opinion that the number of hours should be able to be negotiable. Per capita the City of Cokato is \$20.00 more per person than the other cities in the county with the suggested agreement. Erickson would like to be in the same range as the other cities in the county for per capita rates. Administrator Potter stated that the conversation with the Wright County Sheriff about hours should be discussed soon if the council would like to discuss the agreement further. Councilmember Erickson agreed to have a meeting with the Wright County Sheriff's Office and County Commissioners. Administrator Potter will set up a meeting.
- **Motion** by Erickson to table the 2024 Sheriffs Office contract, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

d. Commissioner Report

- Commissioner Kaczmarek wanted to give an update to council. The current budget for Wright County in 2024 is estimated to be around two hundred million dollars. Wright County officials are working on selling the prior government center as utilities alone are about ten thousand dollars per month. Kaczmarek mentioned that a meeting was going to be held on September 12th and the compost site was going to be a topic of discussion to see if there was a way that both the county and city would be able to reduce the costs of disposing of the materials.

6. Public Works Report

a. Projects - Pay Applications

- **Motion** by Martinson to approve Industrial Park Pay Application 4 for \$140,433.93, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.
- **Motion** by Martinson to approve Ailie Ave Pay Application 5 for \$30,757.20, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

b. Compost Site Update – Compost Site Gates

- Administrator Potter contacted the low bid to chip the pile and that should be happening within the next month. Two bids were received for the gate. Public works is still having issues with people dumping items that should not be dumped.
- **Motion** by Wilson to accept the gate quote for \$20,040.00 from Twin City Gate, seconded by Martinson; all voted aye.

c. 2024 City Mower

- Public Works Director Degrote received quotes for a new mower and the low bid was \$28,250.77. The 2018 mower would be traded in.
- **Motion** by Wilson to purchase the mower at the low bid, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

7. City Administrator Report

a. Industrial Park – CenterPoint Agreement

- Administrator Potter has been in contact with CenterPoint and will be having additional meetings. Loan opportunities are being investigated.

b. Property claims for City facilities due to Hailstorm from League of Minnesota Cities.

- The League of Minnesota Cities came out and looked at some of the buildings hit by hail. The League of Minnesota Cities said that most of the damage was cosmetic. Administrator Potter is having others investigate the damage to see what another company says. Councilmember Erickson mentioned that the fire truck that was damaged in the hailstorm was not included in the information that was sent by the League.

c. Possible Hotel Study

- The hotel study was last done approximately 10 years ago. Councilmember Wilson mentioned that in his opinion it would be beneficial for the city to have this done. Mayor Harju said that the city should be open to the possibility of using outside investors or developers.

- **Motion** by Harju to have the limited service field analysis completed, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

d. Administrator Report

- Tree Story is looking at building in the Ashwill Development. Councilmember Wilson stated that in his opinion the business meets the intent and requirements for the development.

8. Financial Reports

a. Approval of Claims - \$364,477.00

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

b. Cash and Budget Report


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

9. Adjournment

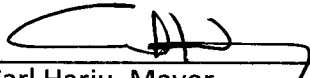
- **Motion** by Martinson to adjourn, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

ATTEST:

APPROVED BY:



Megan Gustafson, City Clerk



Carl Harju, Mayor