

**MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 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, November 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers. Members present were Mayor Harju, Council Members Erickson, Sebring, and Wilson. Also present were members of the Public and Staff, City Clerk Megan Gustafson; Public Works Director Jeff Degrote; and City Administrator, Brad Potter; Jimmy Martinson, Ambulance Director

2. Approval of Agenda

- Member Erickson wanted to add item 5I with Reed Carlson development parcel which the Council agreed.
- Motion by Erickson to approve the agenda, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

3. Public Forum – No one spoke at the public hearing

4. Consent Agenda Items - Motion by Wilson to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Sebring; all voted aye.

- a. **Approval of Minutes from October 9, 2023 City Council Meeting Minutes**
- b. **Sheriff's Report**
- c. **Resolution 2023-35 LRIP Grant Resolution**
- d. **Joint Powers Agreement – Fire Department**
- e. **Nick Vergin – Raise for Class D Water License**

5. Mayors Report

a. Health Employee Insurance 2024 Rates

There is a projected 9.5% increase in Health Insurance costs. Wilson thought this was an important benefit for employees. Erickson moved to approve the Health Insurance increase with the City paying for the increased amount, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.

b. Capital Improvement Plan - Draft

Potter explained the Draft Capital Improvement plan which looked at improvements that are over \$10,000 in valuation. It was discussed that the large expenses such as fire trucks would have to be discussed with the Townships since costs of fire trucks have increased significantly. Jimmy Martinson was present at the meeting and stated that the cost for ambulances have gone up to which a new ambulance could be near \$300,000. There was discussion on additional funding resources will be sought for fire vehicles, plus also the option leasing vs buying. Mayor Harju thought a workshop may be to discuss possible funding as well since it was stated that there would be additional emissions requirements in 2027.

No action was taken by the City Council.

c. Resolution 2023-36 Accepting Resignation of Phil Martinson and Declaring Open City Council Seat/ Appointment Process

There was discussion around accepting applications until November 28, 2023 and then interviews will be completed on December 4, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. The Council agreed to these timelines. Wilson made a motion to accept Phil Martinson's resignation and declare an open Council Seat, seconded by Erickson; all voted aye.

d. Ambulance Service Billing service

The City has been with Expert Billing for about 3 years, however there are issues that cannot be resolved so the City would like to use EMS Management and Consultants, Inc starting in January 2024. Potter recommended this change. Wilson moved to end the contract with Expert Billing and contract with EMS Management and Consultants, Inc starting January 2024. The motion was seconded by Sebring and passed unanimously.

e. Sheriff Contract Update

The City (Potter, Erickson and Harju) had a meeting with the County Sheriff's office about the Sheriff's contract and not much progress was made. There was conversation that negotiations should be completed sooner and a reflection that the process was not a negotiation since the County told the City what the cost would be. There was discussion to reject the offer, but to Councilmembers stressed the Council does not have an issue with the cost per hour or the professionalism of the Sheriff's office, the issue was the number of patrol hours required. Wilson made a motion to approve the contract, Harju seconded. Wilson and Harju voted in favor and Erickson and Sebring voted against. The motion failed because of a 2-2 tie. It was suggested that Potter reach out to the County to see how they come up with the number of hours allocated to the City.

f. Resolution 2023-37 Resolution appointing Jenni Wolff Deputy Clerk

The City interviewed 5 people for the position. The new hire was recommended by Potter to the Personnel Committee which agreed to the hire of Jenni Wolff as Deputy Clerk. Wilson made a motion to approve hiring Jenni Wolff as Deputy Clerk. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sebring and passed unanimously.

g. Possible Personnel Changes – City Holidays

There was discussion over what holidays should be assigned to City employees. With Juneteenth being observed in 2023 the City decided to keep the holidays as its and look at the policy next year. 4 hours for Christmas Eve will be given if it occurs on a weekday.

h. SnowPlowing Policy – Downtown

There was a discussion of the snowplowing policy downtown. The City Public Works staff can spend a lot of time with the John Deere mowers (with snow brooms) removing snowfalls less than 2 inches. This is a lot of wear and tear on the City equipment for snowfalls less than 2 inches. It was agreed to that Public Works would only do snow removal when it snows more than 2 inches in the downtown areas. It was also agreed to that the City would no longer remove snow on the public sidewalks along Broadway Avenue north of the railroad tracks to Highway 12. Property owners along Broadway Avenue north of the railroad will be notified.

i. Reed Carlson Millard Avenue – Planning and Zoning met and discussed the lots that he would like to look at building multi-family building(s) on. Ownership of the City parking lot was discussed, and the City Council would like to see if a variance to reduce the parking by 8 spots could be sought. The information will be forwarded to the City Attorney for review.

6. Public Works

Resolution 2023-38 Southwest Stormwater Pond-

The project was projected to be bid out for an early 2024 to construct a larger holding pond on a property that the City has a one acre storm water pond. Wilson moved to be the stormwater pond project, the motion was seconded by Sebring and passed unanimously.

8. Financial Reports

- a. **Approval of Claims** – Sebring moved to approve the approval of claims which was seconded by Erickson. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. **Cash and Budget Reports** – Sebring moved to approve the Cash and Budget Reports which was seconded by Erickson which was passed unanimously.

9. Adjournment

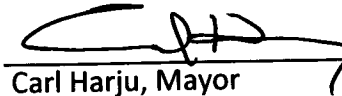
- Motion by Erickson to adjourn, seconded by Wilson; all voted aye.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.

ATTEST:



Megan Gustafson, City Clerk
Brad Potter, City Administrator

APPROVED BY:



Carl Harju, Mayor