

**CITY OF EAGLE LAKE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 4, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

- Mayor Norton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

- Council Members present: Garrett Steinberg, Beth Rohrich, Anthony White, John Whittington, and Mayor Lisa Norton.
- Staff present: City Administrator Jennifer Bromeland, Public Works Director Andrew Hartman, and Deputy Clerk Kerry Rausch.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- None

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- **Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Steinberg, to approve the agenda. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.**

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- **Council Member Rohrich moved, seconded by Council Member Steinberg, to approve the February 5 and February 26, 2024 City Council minutes. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.**

CONSENT AGENDA

- Mayor Norton thanked Alliance Pipeline for their generous donation, pointed out the resignations of Ben Ehlert from the fire department and Tom Paulson from the Planning Commission, the appointment of Ben Metcalfe to the fire department reserves, and the disposal of city records.
- **Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Steinberg, to approve the consent agenda.**

Monthly Bills	Treasurer's Report	Public Works Report
Fire Report	BECSO Report	Gambling Report
Res. 2024-13 Donations for Park		
Res. 2024-14 Resignation of Ben Ehlert from Fire Department		
Res. 2024-15 Disposal of City Records		
Res. 2024-16 Resignation of Tom Paulson from Planning Commission		
Res. 2024-17 Appoint Ben Metcalfe to Active Fire Department Roster		

- **The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.**

OLD BUSINESS

1. Fire Department Recommendation for Pre-Design Service
 - Fire Chief Vern Simpson reviewed the process the fire department committee has taken to review all proposals. One proposal was substantially lower than the rest of them, however, the fire department

review committee was not comfortable with their experience. The Fire Department would like to work with a company NFPA compliance experience. The fire department is recommending Brunton Architect.

- Cory Bruton, Brunton Architect President and CEO and Jerry Streich who is on the public safety side, stated they have extensive experience in public safety. Mr. Brunton stated they have designed over fifty (50) fire halls and constructed over 30 of those. They look to create facilities with more than one function. The proposed study is one of the most important things they can do for the city and if they do the study and the city moves forward with them to design the building the study fees will be absorbed into the design fees, essentially making the study free of charge.
- Administrator Bromeland asked what the next step would be after the pre-design study. Mr. Brunton stated that a best value procurement process could be used, open bids are not required due to difficulty in getting apple to apple comparisons. The City would not be committed to utilizing Brunton in future stages of the project.
- Council Member Whittington asked what the Council could expect for deliverables from the pre-design work. Mr. Brunton stated the city would receive results of the feasibility studies, they would measure the existing building, look at deficiencies and opportunities to utilize the existing facilities and look at expansion possibilities. They would also look at other identified locations to ensure they would not be landlocked if future expansion was needed. They will look at several design criteria, cost per square foot, generate a cost estimate, and will include escalators for cost if construction is delayed a year or more. They need to make sure the design concepts are included, site analysis, safety and barriers, block diagrams. They will generate renderings, will help with open house discussions with the community, generate conceptual floor plans, and cost estimates. They will include a summary of their recommendation.
- Mayor Norton stated she attended the final interview and learned of the importance of utilize a firm with public safety experience to ensure the safety of the fire fighters.
- Administrator Bromeland reviewed that Brunton's bid is \$27,500 and there are funds budgeted for this.
- Chief Simpson stated issues with the existing fire bays and safety issues.
- **Council Member Rohrich moved, seconded by Council Member Whittington, to proceed with Brunton Architects and Engineers to perform the feasibility study of a new fire hall. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.**

NEW BUSINESS

1. Pricing for Automatic Locks at Lake Eagle Park Bathrooms and Warming House

- Administrator Bromeland stated that before the Council is the pricing of automatic locks for the bathrooms and warming house in Lake Eagle Park. She explained that previously the police department locked the doors in the evenings and that the public works department would unlock them in the mornings. Without a local police department Park Board members have volunteered to lock the doors in the evenings.
- Administrator Bromeland explained that City staff would have the ability to schedule times when the doors are locked and unlocked and that this is advantageous since the facilities have a set schedule of being open to the public and it would promote more consistent operations and efficient use of staff time. City staff would have remote access to adjust the times as needed. If someone is using the facilities when the door is set to lock, they would still be able to exit the facility.
- Pricing from Freedom Security came in at \$9,735.85 which includes an access control system and a wireless broadband link. The pricing from Master Electric came in at \$23,594.12.

- Administrator Bromeland stated that per an inquiry to the City's legal counsel the one-time public safety funds cannot be used to pay for the automatic locks for the bathrooms and warming house at the park since the primary purpose is to protect the facility from vandalism. However, it was advised that budgeted public safety funds could be used for this purpose. This means that funds budgeted for contracting with the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office could be used to pay for the automatic locks with the one-time public safety funds being used to pay for police protection.
- Administrator Bromeland and Public Works Director Hartman met and reviewed pricing. Meetings were held with both vendors to discuss the City's need for automatic locks at the park prior to obtaining pricing.
- Mike Bales with Freedom Security was present to answer questions. He explained that his bid is an aggressive bid and that his system includes wireless access between the two buildings and that a network is not needed and that no wires need to be pulled. Public Works Director Hartman stated that there is internet at the well house. This system would not be affected by a power outage.
- Administrator Bromeland stated that at this time consideration is being given to Lake Eagle Park due to limited funding available and that City Hall could be equipped later.
- **Council Member Whittington moved, seconded by Council Member Rohrich, to accept the bid from Freedom Security in the amount of \$9,735.85 to purchase and install automatic locks in Lake Eagle Park's restrooms and warming house. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.**

2. Pricing for Video Surveillance at Lake Eagle Park

- Administrator Bromeland explained that bids were received from Freedom Security (\$20,725) and Master Electric (\$10,490.21) to install video surveillance at Lake Eagle Park and City Hall. Per an inquiry to the City's legal counsel, one-time public safety funds can be used to monitor activities at the park and skating rink due to there being a public safety purpose to reduce violence in the community. Legal counsel further advised that installing cameras at City Hall would be a permissible use of the public safety funds since the main purpose is the safety of employees. However, legal counsel does not advise using the public safety funds to install a camera at the Public Works Building if the intent is to deter theft.
- Administrator Bromeland also explained that meetings were held with both vendors to discuss the City's need for surveillance cameras. There is a sizable cost difference which appears to be attributed to the amount of megapixels per camera. The more pixels, the better the resolution.
- Blue Earth County Lieutenant Gahler stated camera quality is very important with investigations to be able to read license plates and provide facial recognition. He also asked if the coverage area being recorded would be able to zoom in after the fact, which it is capable of doing. Lt. Gahler stated that the city may want to look to interlink facilities at city hall to disperse to all sites.
- Council discussion included the distance the cameras would be able to pick up. Cameras are to be placed at the ice rink warming house and pavilion area at the park.
- Mike Bales with Freedom Security explained that once the foundation for surveillance cameras is laid expansion is possible.
- Discussion took place about installing cameras inside City Hall. Administrator Bromeland stated that bullet proof glass should be a priority for inside City Hall to ensure the safety of employees working at the front counter.
- Council discussion included that surveillance cameras is to protect city assets and people. The locations were deemed appropriate.

- **Council Member White moved, seconded by Council Member Steinberg, to accept the bid from Freedom Security in the amount of \$20,725 to install surveillance cameras in Lake Eagle Park and at City Hall utilizing the one-time public safety funds. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.**

3. Pets at Work Policy

- Administrator Bromeland explained that discussion took place at the February 5, 2024 City Council meeting about whether pets should be allowed in the workplace. It was explained at that time that an employee recently brought a puppy to work and that there is not a policy in place addressing pets in the workplace. Per an inquiry to legal counsel, there is not a law that states that an employer cannot allow pets in the workplace but if it does allow them, then it was advised that a policy be put in place. If an employee is allowed to bring a pet to work without a policy, precedent is being set that any employee can bring their pet to work, and that might not be manageable. City Council directed staff to bring a draft policy to the March meeting for review and consideration.
- Administrator Bromeland also stated there are benefits of allowing pets in the workplace and there are reasons why an employer may choose to not allow pets in the workplace. These might include employees having allergies or a fear of animals, too much of a distraction, there could be increased liability if someone gets bit or hurt by a pet, damage to property, and other reasons.
- Administrator Bromeland reviewed two draft policies, one allowing pets at work and the other not allowing pets at work.
- Council discussion included both pros and cons to allowing pets at work.
- **Council Member White moved to adopt the policy presented which would allow pets at work. The motion died for the lack of a second.**
- **Council Member Whittington moved, seconded by Council Member Steinberg, to adopt the policy presented which would not allow pets at work. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor. Council Members Rohrich and White voted in opposition.**

4. Resolution Supporting Grant Application for Regional Trail Program

- Administrator Bromeland stated that before Council is a resolution supporting a grant application made to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the Regional Trail Program. The application is to construct approximately 5,000 feet of paved trail for the Eagle Lake sidewalk and trail network.
- Administrator Bromeland explained that the City was awarded \$475,982 in federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds for this project. To help offset the local share portion, additional grant funding is being sought. Approved at the February 5th meeting was a grant in the amount of \$4,200 from the League of Minnesota Cities Grant Navigator Program to hire Bolton and Menk to assist with the DNR Regional Trail Program grant application.
- **Council Member White moved, Council Member Steinberg seconded, to approve Resolution 2024-18 A resolution Supporting a Grant Application. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.**

5. Memorandum of Agreement with First Children's Finance for the Rural Child Care Innovation Program

- Administrator Bromeland stated that Community Development Coordinator (CDC) Olivia Adomabea applied for the Rural Child Care Innovation Program funding, which was approved. Before Council is the request to authorize Ms. Adomabea to sign the memorandum of agreement.

- **Council Member Steinberg moved, seconded by Council Member White, to authorize CDC Adomabea to sign the memorandum of agreement. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.**

OTHER

1. Rural Service District Concept

- Administrator Bromeland explained that a meeting was held with property owners of land (approximately 150 acres) that was annexed into City limits but has not yet been developed. The landowners inquired about the possibility of establishing a rural taxing district with the effect of lowering taxes until which time the property is developed and becomes urban in nature. Legal counsel has advised that the City would need to pass an ordinance creating a rural service district.
- Council Member Whittington disclosed that the property owner who made this request is a personal friend and that he will abstain from voting on this matter. Councilor Whittington also stated that the City has spent thousands of dollars to annex this land and that eventually it should be a part of Eagle Lake and that this request seems reasonable.
- Mayor Norton stated she feels this request should be explored.
- Council Member Steinberg moved, seconded by Council Member White, directing staff to draft ordinance creating a rural service district and to bring before council for consideration.
- **A roll call vote was taken with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, and Mayor Norton voting in favor. Council Member Whittington abstained from the vote. The motion carried.**

2. Notice of Impound Agreement Cancellation

- Administrator Bromeland explained that the City received a notice from All Pets as required by the current impound agreement that they will no longer accept animals for impound as of March 31, 2024. The Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office is aware of the situation and is assisting Eagle Lake with identifying an alternative option for impounding animals.
- BENCHS is not interested in providing impound services to Eagle Lake and indicated that they currently provide impounding services to the cities of Mankato and North Mankato in very limited situations. BENCHS staff conveyed that a challenge with offering impound services is that an on-site vet is required.
- Lt. Gahler stated that the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office is looking at options and that it would help if residents licensed their dogs.
- Discussion also included incentives to encourage dog owners to get their dogs licensed with the City.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

1. Spring Curbside Cleanup Information

- A modified spring cleanup has been scheduled for Saturday, May 11th. Some items previously accepted are no longer acceptable due to modifications made by LJP Waste Solutions to ensure the health and safety of their workers and prevent damage to trucks.

2. YTD Revenue and Expenditure Report

- This report was included in the Council packet for information purposes. The council was encouraged to contact the City Administrators with any questions.

3. Notice of Stormwater, Wastewater, and Community Resilience Planning Grant Award and Next Steps

- Notice was recently received informing the City that Eagle Lake has been selected for an SWC Planning Grant totaling \$48,680. It is anticipated that a grant award agreement will be included on the April 1st agenda for approval.
4. Status of Empower Small Communities Program Proposal Submitted and Next Steps
 - A proposal was submitted for the Empowering Small Minnesota Communities (ESMC) Program application. The ESMC program is funded by the Minnesota Legislature and run by University of Minnesota partners. The program aims to support small Minnesota communities in conceptualizing, designing, and finding paths to fund resilient, comprehensive infrastructure interventions. Eagle Lake's application is moving on to the next phase of the intake process which consists of a 45-minute interview. The purpose of the interview is to learn more about Eagle Lake's needs and determine if the city is good fit for the program.
 5. Upcoming Work Session to Discuss Capital Outlay Planning
 - City staff has been in conversation with Mankato Area Public Schools staff about childcare challenges in Eagle Lake and ways that MAPS might be able to help fill gaps. A meeting will be held in April with childcare providers and MAPS representatives to allow MAPS an opportunity to talk about their plans to use space at Eagle Lake Elementary to fill childcare gaps and address any misinformation in the community about their intentions along with serving as a listening session for staff to learn more about challenges unique to Eagle Lake.
 6. Upcoming Work Session to Discuss Capital Outlay Planning
 - City staff have been working with the City's engineer and finance advisor to talk about upcoming capital outlay needs and financing. A work session should be scheduled in April to review information compiled.
 7. Summer Rec Planning Update
 - City staff recently met with Community Education partners to brainstorm summer rec programming for Eagle Lake. In recent years, Community Ed has assisted with an outdoor movie night and Rec on the Go. Discussion took place about adding new programming so that there is an offering for all age groups in the community in lieu of just offering Rec on the Go. Ideas included a sand volleyball tournament, cards and puzzles at City Hall, limited Rec on the Go offerings, event at the park with music and foam, a corn on the cob feed at the park, and more.
 8. Upcoming LMC Day on the Hill and Update on Water Treatment Project Lobbying Efforts
 - Council Member Rohrich and Administrator Bromeland will be attending the League of Minnesota Cities Day on the Hill in St. Paul on March 7th. An online petition was recently added to the website that has been receiving a good response from community members. A meeting was held last week with a representative from Senator Amy Klobuchar's office to talk about Eagle Lake's project. City staff will submit a request for congressionally directed spending to Senator Klobuchar's office and Senator Tina Smith's office when the application period opens. A funding request has already been submitted to Congressman Brad Finstad's office.

COUNCIL REPORTS

1. Council Member Rohrich stated that Community Ed and Rec are now fully staff and being very creative.

2. Council Member Rohrich requested that Public Works gather street sweeping bids to have included for the April City Council Meeting.
3. Mayor Norton stated that the lobbyists have been hard at work for the City as have Council Member Whittington and City Administrator Bromeland relating to the water treatment facility funding request. They along with Mayor Norton spent a day at the state capital lobbying on behalf of the City of Eagle Lake.
4. Mayor Norton stated that the children present at the water treatment facility open house really enjoyed the mock city council meeting. She stated it would be good to go into the school and hold a mock council meeting there with the students participating.
5. Mayor Norton stated that she and Administrator Bromeland will be traveling to Washington DC to a conference later this week and will be meeting with Senator Finstad and Senator Smith.

Council Member Steinberg moved to enter into a closed meeting for the purpose of completing the annual performance evaluation of the city administrator, Jennifer Bromeland. Council Member White seconded the motion. The motion carried with Council Member Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.

Council Member Steinberg moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn the closed meeting and move back into open session. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Steinberg moved, seconded by Council Member White, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried with Council Members Steinberg, Rohrich, White, Whittington, and Mayor Norton voting in favor.

Lisa Norton, Mayor

Kerry Rausch, Deputy Clerk