

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
BUHL CITY HALL
11/21/2023

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

6:30 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER by Mayor Carter at 6:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL:

Councilors: X Hadrava X Kealy X Loeffler X Towner
Mayor: X Carter

Administrator: X Jeffries
Public Works Foreman: Pink
Attorney: X Kearney
Engineer: X Jamnick

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None.

Motion by Towner to approve the agenda as amended.

Supported by Hadrava.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

City Engineer John Jamnick:

Noted that although there had been some decent weather in the recent past, unfortunately it was not enough to allow for the completion of outstanding paving items on the current construction open items ledger – this will have to be accomplished in the spring of 2024.

Administrator Jeffries:

Indicated and noted that the next City Council meeting (December 5, 2023; 6:30 p.m.) will be at the Buhl-Kinney Senior Center (302 Frantz St., in Buhl) –

- And that will also be the date and time of the 2023 Truth-In-Taxation public hearing, where the 2024 municipal budget and proposed tax levy will be presented and discussed –

Wished a Happy Thanksgiving to everybody, and reminded all to be safe and to be kind and to enjoy time with their families and friends;

Gave a heads up that there are two (2) potential opportunities coming up in early 2024 that have to do with elected leaders informational sessions; he will provide reminders and additional information in the near future.

6. CITIZENS FORUM:

None.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

- i. Regular City Council Meeting – November 6, 2023
- ii. City Council Working Session – September 28, 2023
- iii. City Council Working Session – August 1, 2023
- iv. City Council Working Session – April 4, 2023

B. Claims

i. Payroll #11	\$ 2,475.00
Payroll #23	\$ 14,322.64
ii. A/P #1	\$ 85,011.60
A/P #2	<u>\$ 1.65</u>

TOTAL \$ 101,810.89

Motion by Towner to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Question raised on what item A/P #2 is/was – Deed tax to St. Louis County Auditor to complete conveyance of properties in State Addition from City of Buhl to Mark & Karen LaMourea.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. CORRESPONDENCE:

A. Letter from Mary Markus, November 15, 2023

Motion by Towner that all correspondence received be placed on file except that which needs to be taken up under Other Business.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. BUSINESS:

A. Approval of Invoice for Professional Services (Invoice #25) for City Wide Infrastructure Improvements project (19-599) to JPJ Engineering, Inc.

The City has been invoiced for Construction Management services performed by JPJ Engineering, Inc., for services related to the City Wide Infrastructure Improvements project (JPJ Project No. 19-599).

This invoice is related to services rendered for the Invoice Period of September through October 6, 2023, and includes services related to the project punch list, USDA (loan) closeout, and Alley F reconstruction.

Specifically, these charges are identified as an Extra under “Alley F – Change Order/RPR”.

City Engineer John Jamnick, P.E., of JPJ Engineering, Inc., was in attendance and available to answer any questions that may arise with regard to these services and the associated invoicing.

Recommendation is to pay JPJ Engineering, Inc., invoice No. 25 for professional services related to Project No. 19-599 in the amount of \$ 847.50 upon validation of the services performed.

Motion by Hadrava to approve payment of Invoice No. 25 for Project No. 19-599 to JPJ Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$ 847.50.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Comment that since this was completed, there had not been any real rain to test out whether the construction will perform as designed -

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Processing and Issuance of Liquor Licenses for 2024.

Three (3) locations in the city conduct business activities which require a liquor license to be issued by the State of Minnesota and the City of Buhl –

Billy's Pit Stop Pub 'n Grub;
Buhl Curling Club; and
The Hydeaway.

These licenses have a one-year term and are issued annually.

The City has received relicensing information from all of the locations noted above.

All required information regarding renewal of license has been received from all entities.

There have been no issues identified with provisions of these licenses that would impair or prevent the issuance of licenses for any of these locations for the 2024 calendar year.

Recommendation is to approve processing and issuance of these licenses for the 2024 calendar year.

Motion by Hadrava to approve renewal and issuance of Liquor, Wine, Club or 3.2% Licenses for Billy's Pit Stop Pub 'n Grub, Buhl Curling Club, and The Hydeaway for a successive annual term.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Comment was made that 3.2% licensing is not offered nor available any longer; staff noted that this still appears on the State registration card -

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Approval of Processing and Issuance of Retail Sales of Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products license for 2024 to C and B Warehouse Distributing, Inc.

C and B Warehouse Distributing, Inc., offers over-counter retail sales of cigarettes and other tobacco products in the course of its normal business activities for the Short Stop located at 1001 Forest St. near US Highway 169.

Sales of these products are annually licensed by the State of Minnesota and the City of Buhl.

The City has received relicensing information from C and B Warehouse Distributing, Inc., regarding the same.

There have been no issues identified with provisions of this license that would impair or prevent the issuance of a license for the 2024 calendar year.

Recommendation is to approve processing and issuance of this license for the 2024 calendar year.

Motion by Kealy to approve issuing a Retail Sales of Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products license for 2024 to C and B Warehouse Distributing, Inc., for its Short Stop location at 1001 Forest St. in Buhl, MN.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

- D. Resolution 23-68 Authorizing the City of Buhl to Make Application to and Accept Funds Through the State of Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Community Development Infrastructure Grant Program.

City staff previously introduced and presented a 2024 Strategic Initiatives Plan, referred to as the "**Buhl BIIG '24 Project**" (Blueprint for Infrastructure Improvements and Gains").

This plan includes activities and initiatives designed and intended to improve and enhance the City of Buhl and the quality of life it can provide, and continue to provide, for its residents, visitors, guests, shareholders, stakeholders, and investors, into the near- and long-term future.

A major element of this plan includes Business and Economic Development, Retention, and Growth, with a focus on developing the Buhl Business Block located south of US Highway 169 (formerly referred to as the South Industrial Park).

Staff has identified a potential funding opportunity with the State of Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR)

Community Development Infrastructure Grant Program, and seeks approval to apply for said funding to assist in developing the Buhl Business Block infrastructure.

Recommendation is to authorize application to IRRR for this potential funding.

Motion by Hadrava to authorize the Administrator to Make Application to and Accept Funds Through the State of Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Community Development Infrastructure Grant Program for Buhl Business Block development initiatives.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Administrator indicated that there may be an IRRR Board meeting on December 6, 2023, and that there was a possibility that this item might be placed on that agenda.

Question was raised as to whether these would be grant dollars – Administrator indicated that this is the hope –

Engineer Jamnick discussed the proposal in some greater detail – and highlighted that this will increase redundancy in the providing of services as well as provide additional fire protection capabilities –

Administrator noted that the request to the IRRR is for \$300,000, that the project cost estimate is \$1,149,500, and that the project is preliminarily planned to be completed by the end of October 2024 (weather pending).

Question raised as to coordination with planned county (and/or) state future road improvements as it may impact these initiatives – Administrator indicated that these agencies will certainly be in-the-loop with regard to this project, and at this time it is too early to know anything specific -

Question raised by resident Mary Markus as to whether there will be a cost to the people of the City of Buhl – and to whether this will need to be bonded – or whether this is totally 100% funded – or what is the plan (where is the money coming from -)

-it was requested that these types of questions be directed to City staff

**Roll call vote: Hadrava – Aye, Kealy – Aye, Loeffler – Aye, Towner – Aye;
Carter – Aye.**

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Approval of Submitting 2023 Certificates to the County Auditor on Special Assessments for Municipal Improvements Which Remain Unpaid.

The City compiles and maintains information on (special) assessments levied for street improvements which remain unpaid, typically as a result of a pro-rated assessment spread out over a number of years.

The City certifies these improvements assessments to the County Auditor annually prior to December 1.

There are three (3) separate and distinct Assessment Rolls for 2023 certification, which will be applied by St. Louis County for collection with 2024 property tax assessments.

These certificates/assessment rolls are attached to this item.

Recommendation is to approve the certificates and distribute this information to the St. Louis County Auditor.

Motion by Kealy to approve the Certificates for (Special) Street Assessments for 2023 and to Distribute this Information to the St. Louis County Auditor for Inclusion in Affected 2024 Property Tax Statements.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Administrator explained that this is an annual activity, and that assessments are typically collected on a 10-year basis; these will continue to be certified annually in November as long as the assessment roll(s) still have balances and until the assessment amounts are satisfied.

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consider Letter of Support for Iron Range Brownfields Program EPA FY24 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant Application.

The City recently received a request to support an Iron Range Brownfields application for an EPA FY24 Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment grant.

Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial properties where financing expansion or redevelopment is complicated by actual or suspected environmental contamination as a result of past uses.

Iron Range Brownfields is comprised of the cities Aurora, Babbitt, Biwabik, Buhl, Chisholm, Cook, Ely, Eveleth, Gilbert, Hibbing, Hoyt Lakes, and Virginia. The city of Virginia will submit the application on behalf of the communities, and if awarded, funding will be utilized for assessment, investigation, and planning for brownfield properties within the geographical area of these cities.

A draft Letter Of Support is included with this item.

Recommendation is to support the initiatives of Iron Ranger Brownfields and to offer a Letter Of Support for US EPA grant funding regarding the same.

Motion by Towner for the City of Buhl to participate as a member of the Iron Range Brownfields Program, and to offer a Letter Of Support to the City of Virginia regarding application for a Community-Wide Assessment Grant to the US Environmental Protection Agency for assessment funding.

Supported by Hadrava.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Administrator explained in more detail what brownfields are, and noted that it is uncertain as to how much total funding may be available, and how that funding may be apportioned within the member group.

Motion carried unanimously.

- G. Approve Posting of Notice of 2024 Vacancies on City of Buhl:
1. Recreation Commission (5 positions);
 2. Library Board (3 positions);
 3. Long-Range Planning & Zoning Commission (2 positions); and
 4. Buhl Economic Development Authority (1 position).

The City will realize vacancies on several of its Authorities, Boards, Committees, and Commissions effective January 1, 2024, including specifically:

Recreation Board -	5 vacancies;
Library Board -	3 vacancies;
Long-Range Planning and Zoning Commission -	2 vacancies; and
Economic Development Authority -	1 vacancy.

It is the City Council's practice to notify the public with regard to vacancies or upcoming vacancies on authorities, boards, committees, commissions, and

similar bodies, and to receive and accept solicitations from interested individuals.

The public is hereby notified of these vacancies.

Notices regarding these vacancies will be posted in the usual City notice locations.

Anyone interested in serving in any of these capacities should contact City Hall before December 29, 2023, for potential consideration.

Recommendation is to approve posting of these vacancies in all locations.

Motion by Kealy to provide and post notice regarding vacancies on all affected City authorities, boards, committees, and commissions.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Question as to why there are so many vacancies for the Recreation Board – when this was re-established a few years ago, all members were appointed for the same term length; now terms will be on a staggered (3-year) basis.

Motion carried unanimously.

H. Accept Expressions of Interest for City of Buhl Recreation Commission.

The City of Buhl Recreation Commission (Board) will have five (5) vacancies as of January 1, 2024.

Available seats on that Commission are to be filled for three (3) year staggered terms, and City has expressed a desire to fill all available positions.

To date, Expressions of Interest have been received from three (3) individuals, with two (2) of these desiring a three-year term, and one (1) expressing no preference toward a term length.

These Expressions of Interest have been placed on file for potential consideration.

Notice of these vacancies is anticipated to be posted, with anyone interested in serving on the Recreation Board requested to contact City Hall by December 29, 2023, for potential consideration.

Appointments to these vacancies are anticipated to be named in January 2024.

Informational only.

I. Schedule Working Session for 2024 Budget Initiatives.

The preliminary City budget for fiscal year 2024 was introduced at the September 19, 2023 City Council meeting.

Dedicated fiscal year 2024 budget working sessions were held by the City Council on September 28, 2023 and October 19, 2023.

The final budget, and associated tax levy, will need to be prepared and completed by the end of December 2023.

Additional dedicated time for further evaluation and review is warranted in order to achieve a workable fiscal year 2024 budget that is acceptable to the City Council.

Staff preliminarily proposes Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. for an additional dedicated fiscal year 2024 budget working session, in the City Council chambers in City Hall.

Informational only.

J. Other Business.

None.

K. Councilor's Comments.

Councilor Hadrava –

Wished everybody a Happy Thanksgiving!

Councilor Kealy –

Noted that the Buhl Holiday Shop at the Senior Center will be open Saturday, November 25 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.!

Wished all a Happy Thanksgiving!

Councilor Loeffler –

Noted that the Porch Pops creation event December 3 at the Community Center (email buhlteencenter@gmail.com to register) is filled but that

there may still be an opportunity to participate (although there presently is a waiting list) –

Councilor Towner -

Noted that the Mt. Iron Library Holiday Lighting Contest has been extended to include the entire Mountain Iron-Buhl school district and community area-wide, and encouraged people to participate – judging will be on December 15th and 16th – more details to follow!

Contact City Hall for more details, to submit a donation, or to sign up -

L. Mayor's Comments.

Commented that Turkey Bingo at the Senior Center was a lot of fun! – and that it was great to see so many folks there participating –


Encouraged everybody to enjoy their Thanksgiving; to eat lots!; to be safe!; and to enjoy the no snow yet!

10. ADJOURN:

Motion by Kealy to adjourn. Supported by Towner. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.


Brandin Carter, Mayor

ATTEST:


Tony Jeffries, City Clerk