

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
BUHL CITY HALL
1/16/2024

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

6:30 P.M.

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

2. 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: Jamnick

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None.

Motion by Towner to approve the agenda as presented.

Supported by Hadrava.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Administrator:

Noted that it is REALLY cold out, so – stay warm, stay safe, and if you see anyone in need of assistance, please go help them!

Reminder that it is an election year, and the City is looking for Election Judges! (optimally 4 or 5) – Please call or go to City Hall to sign up!

Noted that the video file of the January 2, 2024 City Council meeting is unfortunately corrupted, and cannot be restored. Therefore, no video exists nor will exist for this meeting -

6. CITIZENS FORUM:

Mark LaMourea – 500 Wanless St.; Buhl, MN

Commented that the water coming out of his home faucets is discolored and stained, and has been since he constructed his home three (3) years ago; he has flushed his lines according to instructions provided by City public works personnel –

Administrator suggests obtaining a sample of the LaMourea’s water and subjecting it to chemical analysis to determine what may be causing this staining –

Discussion of whether this home is fed from a dead-end line (uncertain); questions regarding whether anyone else has this issue (none known of).

Discussion regarding that this is very likely not an issue with the municipal water tower, as this seems to be an isolated incident.

Staff will discuss the matter with public works personnel and advise next steps.

Motion by Towner to approve obtaining a sample of Mark & Karen LaMourea’s water source and to submit and subject it to chemical analysis.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Administrator will coordinate this initiative and activity in the near future.

Motion carried unanimously.

Robert Bassing – 617 Woodbridge Ave.; Buhl, MN

Commented on, and addressed in general terms, that good government should have clarity, and that funds that have been dedicated for certain projects should stay with those projects, particularly if those funds have been granted by another governmental agency;

Further commented that a lot of times short-term thinking about saving money on a project (such as a water tower) doesn't always turn out in the long term – the best idea is to fix something for the long-term –

Commented that the demographics are changing with regard to housing (that as people age they start to look toward something they can afford), and that small inner-city lots may not yield a large tax base and doesn't necessarily allow the opportunity to build an affordable home – discussed the current pricing of a 40' x 15' 1-bedroom manufactured home (they run between \$50,000 – 100,000) – and suggested that the City Council consider changing the "building code" to allow for these smaller structures on these inner-city smaller lots -

Also commented and suggested to keep government transparent and keep (to) the budget(s) in order to elevate the public's trust in their government -

Nate Siem – 201 Forest St.; Buhl, MN

Nate Siem, of Essentia EMS, gave a summary of 2023 activity, including:

190 911 calls responded to; 487 total call-outs responded to; staff continues to grow, with (6) new people recently added, should be operating two (2) EMS vans on a full-time basis; and that the building at 201 Forest Street is working out well.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

- i. Regular City Council Meeting – January 2, 2024

B. Claims:

- i. Payroll #1 \$ 13,814.87
- Payroll #1.01 \$ 920.13

- ii. A/P \$ 165,608.38

TOTAL \$ 180,343.38

Motion by Hadrava to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Administrator commented that approximately \$65,000 of the claims are for General Obligation (G.O.) Bond payments – these are annually (principal) and semi-annually (interest) -

Motion carried unanimously.

8. BUSINESS:

A. Resolution 24-12 for the City to Accept a Donation to the City of Buhl Public Library.

The City has received an offer of donation related to operations at the Buhl Public Library.

Donald Sells, of Park Rapids, MN, has offered a donation of \$1,000.00 “In Memory of Nancy (Gorsha) Most” to the City as a financial contribution toward the library’s collection of books, most notably mystery and historical books.

Recommendation is for the City to accept this donation.

Motion by Loeffler to authorize the City to accept a donation from Donald Sells “In Memory of Nancy Most” in the amount of \$1,000.00 for additions to the Buhl Public Library book collection, to execute Resolution 24-12 concerning the same, and to acknowledge this donation with appreciation.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Resolution 24-13 Authorizing the City to Apply for a Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) Rural Capacity Program Grant.

Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) works with cities, counties, organizations, and small businesses to help them be proactive and strategic about their development aspirations.

CEDA was established in 1986 as a private, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization called the Southeastern Minnesota Development Corporation.

In 2010, the agency responded to strong interest in its services beyond the original service territory and changed its name to CEDA to reflect a

commitment to all of rural America. CEDA serves regions of Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

CEDA's current Rural Capacity Program includes initiatives with potential grant funds available for eligible projects related to several economic development areas.

Staff has identified a potential need regarding Childcare Incentive Programs, and proposes applying for a Rural Capacity Program Grant to assist in exploring siting a childcare facility in the community.

Recommendation is to authorize application to CEDA for potential funding.

Motion by Towner to authorize the Administrator to Make Application to and Accept Funds Through the Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) Rural Capacity Program for Buhl childcare facilities initiatives.

Supported by Hadrava.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

This grant could be for up to \$15,000 plus up to 150 hours of technical assistance from CEDA staff.

Administrator described more fully CEDA's incentives related to childcare programs.

This funding would be/could be used by the city to work with private childcare parties to determine whether a Buhl-located childcare facility could be established.

There are no present ongoing initiatives with regard to this.

Comment that there definitely is a need for these services.

Administrator indicated that out of the five (5) main areas of eligibility identified by CEDA, that the childcare item fit best with current needs.

Question raised as to who would administer this initiative from a city staff perspective; comments that CEDA may become involved in this in the future.

It was noted that this is in a grant application, and that no funds nor commitments are being made beyond that -

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

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consider Filling Recreation Board Member Vacancies.

The City of Buhl Recreation Commission (Board) currently has 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.

Recommendation is for the City to appoint Colleen Port, Sheila LaBarge, and Al Flaschberger to these positions.

Motion by Kealy to appoint Colleen Port, Sheila LaBarge, and Al Flaschberger to serve on the City of Buhl Recreation Board, with terms as follows:

Colleen Port -	3-year term expiring December 31, 2026;
Sheila LaBarge -	2-year term expiring December 31, 2025;
Al Flaschberger -	1-year term expiring December 31, 2024.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Councilor Towner explained that when the Recreation Board was re-instituted a couple of years ago, that all commissioners' terms were identical, and now this action will re-create a staggered term limit for all future commissioners.

Two (2) seats remain open on this Board at this time.

A big thank-you to all commissioners was extended by the entire City Council.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Consider Club Mesabi Request to Host 2024 Great River Energy Mesabi Trail™ (Bike) Tour.

The City has been in contact and communication with Club Mesabi and has received a request to consider hosting a portion of their 2024 Great River Energy Mesabi Trail™ (Bike) Tour.

The date has been set for Saturday, August 10, 2024, and would seek to highlight Buhl and its amenities to the approximately 700 riders who annually enjoy this event.

There are some needs and desires of the event, including space for overnight tent camping and the use of a storm shelter, if needed.

Many activities are being considered, including watersports activities, disc golf, and live entertainment.

The event would be at no cost to the City, with the exception of making facilities available to the riders and Club Mesabi personnel.

This is a family-oriented event, and the Recreation Board is invited to consider partnering with the Tour for potential youth activities, should approval be obtained.

Recommendation is for the City to approve hosting this worthwhile event.

Motion by Loeffler to approve hosting the 2024 Great River Energy Mesabi Trail™ (Bike) Tour for Club Mesabi on August 10, 2024, and to work with Club Mesabi to provide public facilities necessary for its success.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

There is a small possibility that there could be some revenue re-capture realized, however no details are available at this time.

General discussion regarding the relationship between Club Mesabi and the Mesabi Trail ensued.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Other Business.

None.

F. Councilor's Comments.

Councilor Loeffler –

Noted that the wine bottle decorating event was wonderful!
Great turnout!

Noted that there will be a Cookie Decorating event at the Senior Center on Sunday, February 4, at 1:00 p.m. – sign up at buhlteencenter@gmail.com –

Councilor Kealy –

Noted that there is a curling bonspiel hosted by the HydeAway on Saturday, January 20, starting at 10:00 a.m.;

Commented that the Curling Club is working with another bonspiel to raise money for local EMTs – more information and details will be forthcoming as they become available.

G. Mayor's Comments.

It is freezing cold outside, and there are a lot of people who struggle to meet their heat bills, and have a hard time making it through the cold season –

IF YOU NEED HELP WITH UTILITY BILLS, stop into City Hall and visit with the City staff – they will do whatever they can to point people in the right direction for assistance –

DON'T BE AFRAID TO LOOK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT!

9. ADJOURN:

Motion by Towner to adjourn.

Supported by Kealy.

Motion carried Unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.



Brandin Carter, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tony Jeffries, City Clerk