

**MINUTES**  
**BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**BUHL CITY HALL**  
**11/6/2024**

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

6:30 P.M.

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

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Councilors:     Hadrava     Kealy     Loeffler     Towner  
Mayor:         Carter

Administrator:         Jeffries  
Public Works Foreman:     Pink  
Attorney:                 Kearney  
Engineer:                 Jamnick  
Fire Chief:                Lehman  
Police Chief:              Manner

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:**

None.

**Motion by Kealy to approve the agenda as presented.**

**Supported by Loeffler.**

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**5. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

**City Engineer John Jamnick of JPJ Engineering, Inc.:**

No report – will address relevant matters during agenda items when appropriate-

**Administrator Jeffries:**

Noted a number of items, including:

1. Offered thanks and appreciation to all who chose to run for public office, and recognized all on behalf of the City for their interest in serving the community -
2. Provided an update on the mold issues in the basement of the EMS Hall, and summarized the findings and recommendations of a site visit report provided by Northeast Technical Services, Inc (NTS) –

An arrangement was made with NTS, with a site visit scheduled and conducted on November 6, 2024 – this visit was intended to assess the situation and take suitable samples to determine the presence or absence of (mold) spores –

Upon conducting the visual assessment, it was noted that, in a nutshell, the impacted area is covered with up to 4” of standing water, and mold is visually present in some areas of paper, cloth, and similar materials.

A determination was made not to not take any samples, but rather provide a recommended short term mitigation approach of “clean it up” – including:

Dry the area;  
Remove and dispose of the affected materials; and  
Keep the area dry and provide air movement on a regular basis.

N-95 masks, nitrile gloves, and rubber boots were recommended as personal protective equipment – no other specialty equipment was noted as required -

Look for the source of the water intrusion, and lack of draining, and rectify -

Clean the walls with TSP (trisodium phosphate) or similar substance –

Consider installing equipment to create air movement on the ground level in the garage area –

These mitigation measures appear to be easily manageable and easily rectifiable -

3. Reported that nominations for the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) Board of Directors membership nominations are due by December 9, 2024.

## 6. CITIZENS FORUM:

### Jim Matthews:

Reported that he participated in the smoke testing activities as an observer/monitor, and wanted to make sure that in discussing the findings of this exercise to include the discovery during the smoke testing of a large volume of water passing through the (sanitary wastewater) interceptor closest to the water tower – and that there was an immediate assumption (not yet investigated) that there is a leak somewhere – and was wondering if anyone has yet investigated the source of this water flowage –

Jeffries indicated that a constant flow was positively noticed at this location, that nothing has been looked into yet, and should definitely remain as a follow up item when further evaluating the results of these smoke testing activities.

### Ted Kivi:

Commented regarding water tower structural issues -

Commented that an associate of Mr. Kivi's (a structural engineer) had reviewed the AMI (structural analysis) report, and had a number of comments –

Mr. Kivi and his associate visually observed the water tower structure, and noted:

C-channels and the cross bracing that holds them together (on each leg) – all legs have bent diagonal braces that hold the C-channels together, and that the northwest leg has a definite bow in it –

Commented on feeling the tower moving under moderate winds -

Further commented on the potential of metal fatigue, and that this had not been investigated (nor did the AMI report include this) – a combination of the age of the structure and the downforce weight of the water in the tank could have/could be contributing to this noticeable bowing effect –

Recommended that a visible dye penetrant test be conducted on all noticeably affected areas (at minimum) –

(It was noted that you need to remove the existing coating(s) to conduct this properly) –

Commented that a magnaflux test could also be conducted to provide information on this -

Noted that he is not in favor of a refurbishment, but rather favors and supports a replacement -

Taunya Teska-Erickson:

Commented that she is not comfortable with the city crew or whomever going in the affected area at the EMS Hall with an N-95 mask and rubber gloves (the NTS mold mitigation recommendation for lower level of the EMS Hall) and supports much more protective measures than those proposed –

Indicated that it is a worse problem than just mold – it is black mold – which makes people sick -

**7. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Minutes:

- i. Regular City Council Meeting – October 15, 2024
- ii. City Council Working Session – October 17, 2024

B. Claims:

i. Payroll #21	\$ 12,232.10
Payroll #21.01	\$ 2,491.05
Payroll 10 (October 2024)	\$ 2,350.00
Payroll #22	\$ 15,028.66
ii. A/P #1	\$ 218.87
A/P #2	\$ 7,132.90
A/P #3	\$ <u>38,561.53</u>

**TOTAL           \$ 62,986.45**

**Motion by Towner to approve the consent agenda as presented.**

**Supported by Kealy.**

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Councilor Towner summarized the reasons for multiple A/P claims batches in this cycle -



**Motion carried unanimously.**

**8. BUSINESS:**

A. Update on City-Wide Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) Project Smoke Testing Activities.

The City, as a part of its wastewater Inflow and Infiltration (I & I) investigation activities, has recently conducted and concluded smoke testing on the sanitary sewer collectors in the city, as a portion of studying the deliverable flows to the City's wastewater treatment facility, the Central Iron Range Sanitary Sewer District wastewater treatment plant located in Balkan Township near Chisholm.

These smoke testing activities occurred throughout the City on Monday and Tuesday, October 21 and 22, 2024.

City staff has been investigating this issue for some time, and the Administrator believes that a summary report of these matters is appropriate, and informed the City Council on what has been learned and what is understood regarding the results of this smoke testing study at this time.

**Informational only.**

It was noted that Jim Matthews' participation as an observer/monitor and further assistance was greatly appreciated and valuable -

Jeffries noted:

Pretty much the whole town, excepting the area east of Highway 169, was addressed, with approximately 26 locations selected to be source contributors of smoke;

That no "smoking gun" or "low-hanging fruit" was found (that is to say no obviously noticeable areas which would indicate a breach or compromise of the City's sanitary wastewater collector system was observed);

That there are 5-7 areas which reasonably warrant additional investigation;

That a sewer lateral ordinance would very reasonably be in order and suggested moving forward with this – requiring that privately owned sewer laterals be required to be checked upon sale of a property (although measurable benefits of this may not be noticed for a lengthy period); and

Suggested that televising of the entire wastewater collection system (at the same time) should be considered.

Jeffries also noted that the project went very smoothly, and recognized and expressed thanks for the efforts of the City crew and all others (including the Minnesota Rural Water Association and independent observers) in this activity.

Further conversation regarding the flat roofs in town (there are approximately 15 of them -), and potential effects from, occurred.

B. Consider Scheduling City Council Meeting for Canvassing Election Results for November 8, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

The City is the administrator of the State General Election, which was conducted and held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

As such, state statute requires that the City meet as a canvassing board and declare the results of the state and municipal general election between three (3) and ten (10) days following open voting.

**Recommendation is to schedule a special City Council meeting for 9:30 a.m. on Friday, November 8, 2024, to canvass the result of the 2024 State General Election.**

**Motion by Towner to authorize scheduling a special City Council meeting for 9:30 a.m. on Friday, November 8, 2024, in the council Chambers of the Buhl City Hall, for the purposes of canvassing and declaring the results of the 2024 State General Election.**

**Supported by Loeffler.**

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

C. Update on IRRR City of Buhl CIRSSD Wastewater Conveyance System Grant.

The City is a participating member of the Central Iron Range Sanitary Sewer District (CIRSSD).

As such, the City relies and is dependent on the CIRSSD for the lawful and conforming treatment and discharge of its municipal sanitary sewage delivered to CIRSSD facilities under provisions applicable to it as a Member of the CIRSSD.

The City was made aware of CIRSSD plans to upgrade and improve its wastewater conveyance facilities, including those which service the City of Buhl. In part, these initiatives include upgrading the City of Buhl's (CIRSSD)

lift station capabilities to better manage instantaneous peak wastewater flows as well as to provide for additional capacity to serve future development needs.

Staff has been working with the IRRR, who had suggested that it may be more appropriate for the City of Buhl to apply for potential grant funding for these facilities, especially with regard to the portion of the planned upgrades which will directly impact Buhl.

The City supports the CIRSSD and its facilities, and had approved authorizing the Administrator of the City of Buhl to apply for and accept funding from the Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation (IRRR) Public Works Grant Program for improvements and upgrades to its wastewater conveyance facilities.

The IRRR has been in communication with city staff regarding this grant application and its present status.

The Administrator made a summary report of this grant application status as it has been related by the IRRR.

**Informational only.**

The Administrator noted:

That the relevant application has been submitted;

That that the IRRR has been back in touch with the City and indicated that, at the present time, they are not going to move forward with providing the requested funding;

That the IRRR is interested in sitting down with all affected parties to better understand the background, the present situation, and the impact these proposed improvements are anticipated to have; and

That a part of this appears to be related to CIRSSD's project list and how this relates to the City of Buhl.

The Administrator will continue to work with the IRRR and be the point person on this project.

D. Consider Approving Resolution 24-26 for the City to Accept Various Donations for the City of Buhl 2024 Halloween Event.

The City has received a number of donations from local businesses and anonymous donors who have offered goods or currency to the City's Recreation Board as a financial contribution to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl Halloween events and other related recreational activities.



Specifically, the City has received the following donations:

- Mt. Iron Grill & Chill DQ - 10 free sundae coupons;
- Mt. Iron CEC Theatre - 8 free movie ticket coupons;
- Frito-Lay - 4 boxes of chips;
- Walmart - \$50 gift card;
- L & M Supply - 12 boxes popcorn/3 salts;
- Sue LeTendre - 2 containers of lemonade & cups;
- C & B Warehouse - Boxes of candy;
- Amanda Zakrajshek - \$14 cash; and
- Fraboni's - 10 lbs. of cookie dough.

The City wishes to recognize all those who have contributed in continuing to make this important civic celebration a popular success.

**Recommendation is for the City to accept these donations.**

**Motion by Loeffler to authorize the City to accept donations from several area businesses and anonymous donors to the City and its Recreation Board as financial contributions to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl Halloween events and other recreation related activities, to execute Resolution 24-26 concerning the same, and to acknowledge these donations with appreciation.**

**Supported by Kealy.**

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

**Roll Call Vote: Councilors Hadrava - Absent, Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Towner - Aye; Mayor Carter - Aye.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**E. Consider Approving Resolution 24-27 for the City to Accept Various Donations for the Recreation Board.**

The City has received a number of donations from local businesses and anonymous donors who have offered goods or currency to the City's Recreation Board as a financial contribution to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl civic events and other related recreational activities.

Specifically, the City has received monetary donations from the following:

- Zgonc Company - \$ 100.00; and
- Michael Jugovich - \$ 50.00.

The City wishes to recognize all those who have contributed in continuing to make the City's important civic and recreational initiatives a popular success.



**Recommendation is for the City to accept these donations.**

**Motion by Kealy to authorize the City to accept donations from the Zgonc Company and Michael Jugovich to the City and its Recreation Board as financial contributions to help offset costs related to the City of Buhl civic and recreational programs, events, and other recreation related activities, to execute Resolution 24-27 concerning the same, and to acknowledge these donations with appreciation.**

**Supported by Towner.**

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

**Roll Call Vote: Councilors Hadrava - Absent, Kealy - Aye, Loeffler - Aye, Towner - Aye; Mayor Carter - Aye.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**F. Update on Civil Defense Siren Status.**

The City has been observing and monitoring the status and operational behavior of the civil defense siren located at the intersection of Forest Street/Memorial Drive and Whiteside Avenue for the better part of 2024.

It has been noted that this siren is not announcing – that is, there is no sound emanating from this device –

It has been ascertained that a test signal should be being sent to this device at 1:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month; no audible siren sounds have been observed during these testing periods.

City staff has been investigating this issue for some time, and has acquired substantial information with regard to the operation and management of this siren.

The Administrator believes that a summary report of these matters is appropriate, and informed the City Council on what has been learned and what is understood regarding the performance of this siren at this time.

**Informational only.**

The Administrator noted:

That individuals with knowledge of the Buhl installation have been located, although none are in proximity of this area;

That the installation occurred some 10-11 years ago;

That the installation was a part of a regional installation of approximately thirteen (13) services in the area;

That some, but not all, of the devices may have been under ongoing periodic preventative maintenance agreements (it does not appear that the Buhl installation was a part of this);

That the device now rotate (which it did not di initially), but does not announce (make a sound);

That a necessary fuse on the Buhl installation was found to be blown, replaced, and blew again – indicating a potential electrical open (short) somewhere in the system – (possibly created by a lightning strike);

That the chopper motor located at the top of the pole may have received damage or shorted out;

That there is a battery backup on this system (although it does not seem to be providing any services at this time); and

That there does not appear to be a State of Minnesota statutory requirement for the City to provide this device (or similar).

The Administrator also noted that the installing company will be back in this area in the spring of 2025, and will continue to work with the City of Virginia Fire Department (the current siren alert system administrator) and other sources regarding this project.

G. Consider Joining the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The City has received communication from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that a revision to the countywide Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report and Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) has recently been completed.

Although Buhl is unaffected by the updated flood hazard information presented in the FIS report and FIRM, the City does lie on one or more of the revised FIRM panels.

FEMA wishes to stress that floods larger than the 1-percent-annual-chance do occur, and there is some indication that this is occurring with increasing frequency.

As such, FEMA urges exercising care in evaluating new development with an eye on activities which could aggravate or create flooding problems.

Additionally, FEMA notes that, to date, Buhl has not joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and encourages the City's consideration of the same.

Since the City is unaffected by these revisions, it is unclear what benefit, if any, the City would receive by joining the NFIP.

The Administrator will continue to research this item, and if it is determined that there would be no cost to the City to join the NFIP, that this matter be reconsidered in the future.

**Recommendation is that the city not join the National Flood Insurance Program at this time.**

**Motion by \_\_\_\_\_ for the City of Buhl to not join the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) at this time.**

**Supported by \_\_\_\_\_.**

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Comments were received regarding:

- 1) More research is needed to come to a final decision;
- 2) Whether there would be any cost; and
- 3) Whether this is a requirement for the City of Buhl (the Administrator indicated that if the City were a member that it would make flood insurance available on a voluntary basis to citizens in the community).

**This matter was tabled due to lack of a motion.**

H. Update on Community Center/Curling Club Building Issues.

The City is the owner of the structure which serves as the Curling Club in the winter months, and the Community Center throughout the year.

As this building continues to age, staff and curling club personnel have met and discussed a number of items which may be needed, required, or would be useful in maintaining and/or improving the building now and well into the future.

It should be noted that there have been a number of items and initiatives which have been (recently) attended to, including, but not limited to, working on the performance and efficiency of the ice plant, establishing the regulatory climate and framework the ammonia based plant is guided by, looking into re-lamping of the building with LED fixtures and seeking funding regarding the same, keeping building and kitchen appliances in a functioning state, replacing deteriorated doors, replacing faulty heaters, maintaining installed heaters, providing a moisture barrier to aide in keeping outside water from encroaching onto the ice surfaces, and more.



In an attempt to keep current with building needs, a “short term” repair list has been generated and was distributed to the City Council for information. This listing is comprehensive in nature at the present time.

The list is intended to serve as a road map for the near and foreseeable future.

**Informational only.**

Councilor Kealy suggested that, over time, this structure has become a sort of “forgotten” building –

Additional items identified to be added to the list included:

- Look into replacing the restroom doors;
- Repair plumbing traps;
- Look into dehumidification (or fix existing?);
- Look into why this has not been previously used;
- Coating the ice surface to prevent summer condensation;
- Identifying better ventilation; and
- Mostly - insure it is safe for all users.

I. Notice of Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) Annual Dinner.

The Range Association of Municipalities & Schools (RAMS) was created in 1939 by the joining together of the Range Civic Association and the Range Municipalities Committee to promote legislation beneficial to its membership.

The main function of RAMS is to monitor proposed State and Federal legislation and determine how it may affect Association member units of government. The Range Association of Municipalities & Schools (RAMS) works closely with the Iron Range Delegation, the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB), and area economic development entities to further community development and quality of life for all member units.

The City is a long-time member of this organization, as are most cities, townships, and school districts throughout the Iron Range.

RAMS has announced notice of its 2024 Annual Meeting - Please note the following:

The meeting will be December 19, 2024, beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the Iron Trail Motors Event Center located in Virginia.

Members, sponsors, and invited guests are welcome at this meeting.

Dr. Rolf Weberg, of the Natural Resources Research Institute, will deliver the keynote address - "Telling our Story – The Role of the Iron Range in Minnesota's Bright Future".

RSVP is required by December 9, 2024 for this event.

**Informational only.**

Councilors Kealy and Loeffler indicated an expression of interest in attending this event.

J. Other Business.

None.

K. Councilor's Comments.

Councilor Kealy:

Thanked all election judges and all else who helped in the General Election -

Offered congratulations to all winners in the election contests -

Noted recognition and appreciation to City staff for their "behind the scenes" efforts in and throughout this process.

L. Mayor's Comments.

Offered congratulations all around to winners in the election -

Talked about serving the community by running for office and thanking those who do – and offered congratulations to those as well -

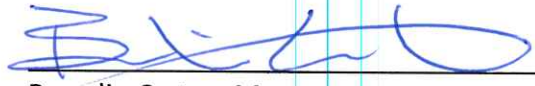
Noted that we – together – wrote history on November 5, 2024!

**9. ADJOURN:**

**Motion by Kealy to adjourn.**

**Supported by Loeffler.**

**Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.**



Brandin Carter, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

Tony Jeffries, City Clerk

