

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
BUHL/KINNEY SENIORS' CENTER
12/3/2024

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

6:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER by Mayor Carter at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

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

Administrator: X Jeffries
Public Works Foreman: X 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 Towner to approve the agenda as presented.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. PUBLIC HEARING (Truth-In-Taxation)

A. Public Hearing (Truth-In-Taxation) for the City to Receive Comments on the 2025 Proposed Property Tax Assessments for the City of Buhl.

Public Hearing opened by Mayor Carter at 6:02 p.m.

Staff presented as follows:

The State of Minnesota requires that all organized governmental units and taxing authorities conduct a session where the public is entitled to weigh-in and comment on proposed property tax assessments for the ensuing year. This session is typically known as the “Truth in Taxation” hearing.

It was noted that these proposed assessments are based on the preliminary budget and levy numbers arrived at and approved in September 2024.

The City approved a preliminary 2025 levy at \$466,000 on September 26, 2024 – this is the basis of the proposed property tax assessments -

After several working sessions, much discussion, and intensive work with all departments across the city, staff will be proposing a final budget and levy later in this meeting –

No residents requested testifying to the City Council at this Public Hearing, and no public comment on this matter was received.

by Kealy to close the Public Hearing.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing closed at 6:09 p.m.

6. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Administrator Jeffries:

Noted that:

1. That City Engineer John Jamnick of JPJ Engineering, Inc. was unable to make it to this meeting due to scheduling conflicts –

7. CITIZENS FORUM:

None.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

- i. Regular City Council Meeting – November 19, 2024
- ii. City Council Working Session – November 20, 2024
- iii. Special City Council Meeting – November 25, 2024

B. Claims:

i. Payroll #24	\$ 14,969.29
Payroll 11 (November 2024)	\$ 2,600.00
ii. A/P #1	\$ 30,088.27
A/P #2	\$ 100.00
A/P #3	\$ <u>44.98</u>
TOTAL	\$ 47,802.54

Motion by Towner to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Supported by Hadrava.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. BUSINESS:

A. Consider Approving Extension to Law Enforcement Services Agreement with the City of Chisholm.

The City of Chisholm, through its Police Department, provides public safety and law enforcement services to the City of Buhl through an Agreement with a term commencing January 1, 2022 and expiring December 31, 2024.

Staff has previously communicated that going forward the City is best served through this agreement rather than by other alternatives, and it is in the City's best interests to continue to desire these services from the City of Chisholm Police Department.

The City of Chisholm has indicated a willingness to continue providing these services through a new agreement, and, on behalf of its Police Department, has issued a new agreement for the City's consideration, with a three-year (3-year) term beginning January 1, 2025.

This new agreement contains an escalation factor of 3% from the current agreement, and a 3% adjustment in years 2 and 3 of the new agreement.

Recommendation is to approve and execute this new agreement.

Motion by Towner to approve law enforcement services through the Police Department of the City of Chisholm for the period of January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2027, and to execute the associated City of Chisholm/City of Buhl Law Enforcement Services Agreement effective for this same period of time.

Supported by Hadrava.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Questions were raised regarding the scope of services by Councilor Towner, including:

1. Would the Chisholm Police Department perform (annual) inspection services of cannabis related businesses should the City adopt a cannabis ordinance, and
2. Could the Chisholm Police Department, in their monthly reporting to the City of Buhl, include the number of citations issued in the previous month -

The Administrator reported that more study needs to be done as to whether the City of Buhl would administrate the cannabis provisions or whether that could be performed by St. Louis County – if the County would, then the Chisholm Police Department would likely not perform these services; if the County will not, then the Chisholm Police Department likely would be asked to provide these services – and

That requesting the Chisholm Police Department to include the number of citations issued in the previous month would be reasonable.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consider Approving Extension to Refuse Services Agreement with WM.

The City of Buhl receives refuse collection and disposal services through an Agreement with WM of Wisconsin Minnesota, formerly Waste Management, with a term commencing January 1, 2020 and expiring December 31, 2024.

Staff has previously communicated that going forward the City is best served through extending this agreement rather than by other alternatives, and it is in the City's best interests to continue to desire these services from WM of Wisconsin Minnesota.

WM of Wisconsin Minnesota has indicated a willingness to continue providing these services through a new agreement or agreement extension, and has provided a 5-Year Extension Proposal for the City's consideration, with a new term beginning January 1, 2025 and expiring on December 31, 2029.

This agreement extension contains modest escalation factors of 5% from the current agreement, and fuel surcharges similar to what is presently in place.

Adjustments to the price for services has been deferred until January 1, 2026.

Recommendation is to approve and execute this new agreement extension.

Motion by Towner to approve refuse collection and disposal services for the City of Buhl through WM of Wisconsin Minnesota, for the period of January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2029, and to execute the associated City of Buhl 5-Year Extension Proposal with WM of Wisconsin Minnesota effective for this same period of time.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Randy Ott of WM of Wisconsin Minnesota was in attendance and able to answer questions.

Other service providers were included in the evaluation of the continuation of these services, and staff firmly recommends, for several reasons, continuing with WM of Wisconsin Minnesota as the desired service provider as being in the best interests of the City.

A question was raised by the public regarding whether refuse collection charges would not be applied if a resident does not put their refuse cart out on any individual week – no, there is no altering of the monthly refuse collection charge for any account in this regard –

Comment was received regarding the (\$5) additional bag charge – it was clarified that this applies only for additional filled bags that cannot fit in the refuse cart and must be manually collected and placed in the collection vehicle by hand –

Additional conversation and comment ensued regarding the further (required) use of Buhl refuse bags -

The Administrator questioned the recycling component, especially cardboard, and the need to break down cardboard boxes prior to

collection – WM of Wisconsin Minnesota will work with the City in this regard –

Conversation ensued regarding how to “police” others placing their waste bags in other people’s collection carts –

It was clarified that the “blue” bags are not related to the collection company in any way –

Comments were received regarding the (5% minimum) escalation factor in years 2-5; WM of Wisconsin Minnesota indicated this is a standard escalation formula that other municipalities have in their refuse collection agreements -

Comments were received regarding the possibility of providing larger waste containers should residents want them – WM of Wisconsin Minnesota will look into this –

Comments were received regarding municipal collection sites that WM of Wisconsin Minnesota gives (Buhl) a preferential rate for – these municipal sites are being re-evaluated and the City and WM of Wisconsin Minnesota will work through –

It was noted that, as a result of these activities, a certain limited number of refuse collection accounts may realize higher collection charges than previously -

Staff will circulate information to residents about these matters which will/would impact residents in the next month or so –

It was recommended by WM of Wisconsin Minnesota to have residents put their carts out every week regardless of the amount of waste or number of bags in the cart -

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consider Approving 2024 General Fund Budget Amendments.

Finance Manager Dianna Thronson presented information regarding recommending proposed amendments to the 2024 General Fund budget, on both a revenue side as well as from an expenditure side -

Recommendation is to approve those budget amendments contained in the Finance Manager’s memorandum.

Motion by Kealy to approve certain amendments to the 2024 General Fund budget as presented by the Finance Manager, consistent with advice received from the City Auditor.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that the city Auditor recommends making budget amendments for budget line items that deviate ten percent (10%) or more from budget; the Administrator noted that this is what this item does –

It was additionally noted that the Audit Committee had met regarding this item, and is in agreement with the proposed amendments -

Motion carried unanimously.

- D. Consider Using the Remaining Balance of 2024 Mining Effects Monies for the Damian Addition Phase 3/East Woodbridge/Seville/Jefferson Project.

Finance Manager Dianna Thronson presented information regarding recommended utilization of the balance of 2024 Mining Effects monies received – additional monies (\$7,970) were received in excess of that originally anticipated -

Recommendation is to approve using the remaining balance of 2024 Mining Effects monies for the Damian Addition Phase 3/East Woodbridge/Seville/Jefferson Project as contained in the Finance Manager’s memorandum.

Motion by Loeffler to approve using the remaining balance of \$7,970 from 2024 Mining Effects monies received for the Damian Addition Phase 3/East Woodbridge/Seville/Jefferson Project.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that these monies are not included in the 2025 budget, since it has to be utilized toward (potential) infrastructure expenses – (and should not be included here, as it is not General Fund monies)

Motion carried unanimously.

- E. Consider Adopting City of Buhl Cannabis Ordinance.

The operation of cannabis related businesses will become effective in the State of Minnesota effective as of January 1, 2025.

To prepare for this, the City of Buhl is considering establishing a cannabis ordinance to govern these potential operations.

Staff has prepared a draft ordinance for consideration by the City Council –

Recommendation is to adopt a City of Buhl cannabis ordinance to become effective January 1, 2025.

Motion by Kealy to adopt the City of Buhl cannabis ordinance to govern cannabis use and business operations, with an effective date of January 1, 2025.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Questions were raised regarding who will be responsible for business registration – it was noted that if St. Louis County would administrate this then the City may not need to –

Conversation ensued regarding where fees for this program would go to –

The Administrator reminded all that Buhl is required to allow one (1) cannabis related business, at a minimum -

Further conversation ensued regarding desired hours of operation, and clarifying these, as well as whether or not the City should be more restrictive than state law (it cannot be less restrictive -)

It was commented that allowed hours of operation should mimic allowable operating hours of alcohol-related business operations -

Question was raised regarding compliance checks – the Administrator indicated that the City of Buhl may not be in a position to perform this, and that staff will continue to look into what agency should appropriately perform these checks -

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consider Approval of Hiring 2024-25 Seasonal Winter Labor.

The City has previously publicly posted and published advertisements for 2024-25 City of Buhl Seasonal Winter Labor (Rink Attendants).

Posting and eligibility for these positions will remain open until sufficient personnel are sourced to cover the needs of the City.

One (1) application has been received to date for seasonal winter labor; this applicant has fulfilled pre-employment paperwork requirements.

This applicant has previously been employed by the City as temporary seasonal labor in the past.

Recommendation is to approve the hiring of the applicant as a 2024-25 Rink Attendant.

Motion by Towner to approve the hiring of Skylar Ronner as a 2024-25 Rink Attendants contingent upon the successful completion of all employment and pre-employment requirements.

Supported by Hadrava.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was suggested that rink attendants be “uniformed” – either with a shirt, or a hat, or both – to distinguish themselves from non-staff patrons -

It was commented that Mr. Ronner did a good job last time he was in this role –

It was also noted that additional applications are expected to be forthcoming -

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Update on Granting Ingress/Egress Easement for 99 Jones Avenue.

On November 25, 2024, the City Council voted to grant an access easement for ingress/egress to the owners of properties located at 99 and 101 Jones Avenue in Buhl. Please note that this action will not include permanent parking provisions.

This was necessitated by the actions of Gabriel LaBarge, the owner of certain real properties located at 99 Jones Avenue, during the process of selling and conveying these properties to another private purchaser.

First American Title company had noted and indicated that the only way to access the rear yard and an associated detached garage on Mr. LaBarge’s properties is by crossing City of Buhl property. No developed or established road or road right-of-way exists in this area, nor do any other specific permissions.

To rectify this situation, an easement needs to be granted allowing traversing over City property to access this address.

There are similar access issues regarding the properties located at 101 Jones Avenue, owned and held by Ms. Julia Joyal, which are also included in this action.

The City Attorney is in the process of drafting these easements, and the City Engineer is in the process of reviewing property descriptions for inclusion into these easements.

It is anticipated that easements may be available for review and consideration by the end of the year.

Informational only.

H. Notice of League of Minnesota Cities Elected Leaders Institute.

Each year, the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) offers the Elected Leaders Institute, which provides elected city officials the core knowledge they need to succeed and become a city leader who can meet challenges, act as stewards of city resources, and advocate on behalf of residents.

Programming is educational, non-partisan, and packed with opportunities to network with other city officials, LMC staff, and subject matter experts.

Two different programs are offered, depending upon an individual's level of experience -

The Foundational Program is designed and is ideal for newly elected city officials who have served for less than two (2) years - this program provides essential skills and knowledge to help new city leaders understand local government and succeed in their new role.

The Advanced Program is designed for experienced elected officials with over two years of experience - this program focuses on enhancing leadership abilities and advancing expertise while focusing on topical leadership skills for elected officials who are mastering teamwork, communication, and community impact.

Additional information on each program was provided to the City Council.

Informational only.

I. Notice of Available Board of Appeal and Equalization Training.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue has issued notice that Board of Appeal and Equalization Training is now live and available for **all voting** local elected officials.

At least one (1) voting local board member (City Councilor) is required to successfully complete this training once every four (4) years.

However, it is highly recommended and encouraged that all local elected officials (City Councilors and Mayor) take this training and obtain certification from the Department of Revenue.

Training is available throughout the year and can be taken at any time, however to qualify for the 2025 board year, this training must be completed by February 1, 2025.

An information handout from the Minnesota Department of Revenue was attached for information and training access information.

Informational only.

J. Reminder of Notice of Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) Annual Dinner and Board Member Nominations for 2025.

The Range Association of Municipalities & Schools (RAMS), of which the City is a long-time member (as are most cities, townships, and school districts throughout the Iron Range), has announced notice of its 2024 Annual Meeting and Dinner - Please note the following:

The meeting/dinner 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/dinner.

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.

Additionally, each year, certain members of the RAMS Board of Directors rotates board seats through expiration of individual board members' terms. This process results in vacancies on the RAMS Board of Directors.

Each member unit (including the City of Buhl) has the right to submit one nominee to be placed on the ballot, which will be voted on in-person at the RAMS Annual Meeting on December 19, 2024.

A minimum of eleven (11) vacancies exist for 2025, each with a 2-year term commencing January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2026. Nominees must hold a current, valid election certificate at the time of their nomination.

Nominations are due by December 9, 2024.

Informational only.

K. Other Business.

None.

L. Councilor's Comments.

None.

M. Mayor's Comments.

We now have ice! But it is dangerous! Be very careful of it, or – better yet - Stay off of it!

10. ADJOURN:


Motion by Towner to adjourn.

Supported by Loeffler.

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

Brandin Carter, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tony Jeffries, City Clerk