

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2/4/2025

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

6:30 P.M.

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

2. ROLL CALL:

Councilors: X Kealy X Loeffler X Teska-Erickson X Towner
Mayor: X Matthews

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

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

Motion by Kealy to approve the agenda as presented.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

City Engineer John Jamnick:

Deferred comments to individual agenda items, if appropriate -

Fire Chief Stuart Lehman:

Noted that:

Required maintenance and repair on the SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus) compressor was needed and the repair charges are anticipated to be approximately \$2,000 –

Any items located in the basement of the current EMS Hall (where there have been mold issues detected) are no longer of any value and may be disposed of rather than salvaged -

No fire calls have been received by the Department yet in 2025.

Administrator Jeffries:

1. Noted that an additional flyer is being included in this month's utility billings clarifying and summarizing the municipal solid waste "blue bag" policy and treatment in Buhl - noting that blue bags are no longer required (nor available) in Buhl any longer. A blue refuse bag which is placed outside the regular refuse collection container will be collected and managed as it has in the past until April 1, 2025. After that date, any bag placed outside of the refuse collection container (blue or not) up to a 30 gallon capacity, will have a \$5.00 per bag handling fee assessed moving forward.

It was also noted that bags larger than a size of 30 gallons will not be collected and will need to be managed by the property owner(s) themselves.

2. Provided an update on what is presently understood regarding the presidential pause on funding federal grants and loans and how this may impact the City of Buhl -

At this point, no impact is anticipated on the City of Buhl regarding funding allocations previously awarded from a federal level –

Staff will continue to monitor this item and report if anything changes -

3. Noted that proposals for mold abatement and remediation at the EMS Hall are being solicited and received -

Remediation activities are hoped to be addressed or underway by the end of March, 2025.

5. CITIZENS FORUM:

None.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

- i. Regular City Council Meeting – January 21, 2025

B. Claims:

i. Payroll #2	\$ 15,326.76
Payroll 1 (January 2025)	\$ 2,350.00
ii. A/P	<u>\$ 125,390.99</u>

TOTAL \$ 143,067.75

Motion by Teska-Erickson to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. BUSINESS:

A. Consider Approving Membership Dues for 2025 to the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS).

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.

Please note that membership dues for 2025 have been set at \$ 864.00, up from \$ 840.00 in 2024.

Recommendation is to approve membership in RAMS for 2025.

Motion by Kealy to approve membership in the Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) for 2025 in the amount of \$864.00.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consider Approving Public Works Foreman to Attend Minnesota Rural Water Association Technical Conference.

The City has enjoyed a relationship with the Minnesota Rural Water Association (MRWA), and has been a member of this association for a number of years.

The MRWA is a very key technical resource to the City as it correlates to water and wastewater-related matters.

There are several benefits of membership, including the opportunity to attend MRWA's annual water and wastewater technical conference.

The 2025 conference will be held March 4 – 6 in St. Cloud, Mn.

In addition to a myriad of exhibitors and technical sessions, there is opportunity to refresh or maintain current water and wastewater-related operator certifications.

It is appropriate that the Public Works Foreman attend this conference on behalf of the City.

City staff supports the attendance of the Public Works Foreman at this event.

Recommendation is for the City to approve the public Works Foreman to attend this conference on behalf of the City.

Motion by Loeffler to approve the Public Works Foreman, Trent Pink, to attend the 41st Annual Water & Wastewater Technical Conference of the Minnesota Rural Water Association, at a cost of \$350.00.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that if there are any educational sessions that are relevant or applicable to the City and/or the Public Works Foreman, it is hoped they would be attended -

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consider Filling BEDA Board Member Vacancies.

This item is a continuation of recent discussions of the City Council.

There are presently two (2) vacancies on the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) board of commissioners.

One (1) of these existing vacancies is currently required to be filled with a member of the City of Buhl City Council. The term of this vacancy will coincide with the term of office of the selected member of the City Council.

The other (at-large) vacancy will serve to fill a recently vacated seat on BEDA, and will have a term which expires on December 31, 2026.

Three (3) Buhl residents have currently expressed an interest in serving in this capacity on BEDA.

Recommendation is for the City to fill these available openings on the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA) board of commissioners as soon as practicable.

This matter was tabled at the request of the mayor; no motion received.

A Special City Council meeting will be convened to address this matter on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

D. Consider Amending City of Buhl Ordinance § 31.04 Regarding the Makeup of the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA).

This item is a continuation of recent discussions of the City Council.

Sections § 31.01 through § 31.05 of the Buhl, Minnesota, Code of Ordinances sets forth certain provisions guiding the establishment and operation of the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA).

Included in Section § 31.04 is the overall makeup of BEDA, as well as the terms and appointments authorized therein.

The current ordinance calls for a 7-commissioner (BEDA) board, with three (3) of these commissioners being members of the City Council.

A consideration has been initiated to review these provisions, and to potentially alter the current 3-commissioner City Council requirement.

A legal opinion is forthcoming regarding this consideration.

In order to alter these provisions, an amendment to Section § 31.04 would be necessary.

Recommendation is for the staff to City to begin the process of amending this ordinance, in conformance with the findings of the anticipated legal opinion and the direction of the City Council.

This matter was tabled at the request of the mayor; no motion received.

A Special City Council meeting will be convened to address this matter on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

E. Consider Approving Consultant Agreement with Costin Group Minnesota, Inc., for Government Relations Services for 2025 – 2026.

The City has enjoyed a relationship with Costin Group Minnesota, Inc., to serve as the City's government relations and public relations consultant for a number of years.

This relationship is renewed on a periodic basis through a consultant agreement between the parties.

The most recent consultant agreement term expired on December 31, 2024.

Costin Group Minnesota, Inc., is interested in continuing this relationship and providing these services for 2025 and 2026, and has forwarded a Consultant Agreement for this period to the City for its consideration.

No change in compensation is considered for the new term of this agreement.

City staff supports continuing engaging Costin Group Minnesota, Inc., to provide these services.

Costs associated with this agreement have traditionally been borne by the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA), rather than the City General Fund.

Recommendation is for the City to continue with Costin Group Minnesota, Inc., as the City of Buhl's government relations and public relations consultant for 2025 – 2026 and to approve the consultant agreement for this period.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to approve the Consultant Agreement between the City of Buhl and Costin Group Minnesota, Inc., for 2025 - 2026, at a cost of \$ 1,500 per month.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

The question was raised as to why this is being treated as City business and not BEDA business; answer is that the Agreement is for services to and with the City – the matter of who is funding the arrangement (BEDA, or the City through its General Fund) is internal and not related to the agreement for services -

Motion carried; Matthews voting nay.

F. Consider Hiring of Rink Attendant.

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 continues to remain open until sufficient personnel are sourced to cover the needs of the City.

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

This applicant has not 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 Kealy to approve the hiring of Kyle Gibson as a 2024-25 Rink Attendant contingent upon the successful completion of all employment and pre-employment requirements.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Consider Appointing Councilors to the Internal Audit Committee for the Period of January 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025.

At the May 21, 2024 City Council meeting, the City Council established the Internal Audit Committee to review all bills/invoices/checks at times other than at a City Council meeting, and to allow for city council members to meet with staff periodically to review bank activity and any other relevant accounting activities, and compile summary briefs on these findings

Two (2) councilors were initially named to this committee, Randy Towner and Denise Kealy, for the remainder of 2024.

Moving forward, the intent was to rotate councilors through this committee on a six-month basis.

Establishing and employing this committee has been met favorably, and it is the desire of the City Council to continue this initiative.

It is now time to name an additional councilor to this committee; Councilor Towner will be stepping away from this role effective immediately.

Staff also supports and is firm that checks-and-balances are welcome and encouraged to provide residents and the public with greater transparency in all business affairs.

Recommendation is to continue the Internal Audit Committee and name an additional councilor to the committee until June 30, 2005.

Motion by Matthews to continue the Internal Audit Committee through 2025 and to name Councilor Loeffler as a member of this committee until June 30, 2025.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

H. Approval of Buhl Kinney Honor Guard to Sign Up Lakeview Cemetery to Participate in Wreaths Across America.

The Buhl Kinney Honor Guard would like to participate in the 2025 Wreaths Across America activities.

Wreaths Across America is an American nonprofit organization established in 2007 by wreath producer Morrill Worcester, assisted by veterans and truckers. Its primary activity is distributing wreaths for placement on veterans' graves in military cemeteries.

The mission of Wreaths Across America is to Remember the fallen, Honor those who serve, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom.

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on Saturday, December 13, 2025, where more than two million volunteers and supporters will gather to Remember, Honor and Teach at more than 4,600 participating locations in all 50 states, at sea and abroad.

This day will honor veterans, active-duty military, and their families.

The Buhl Kinney Honor Guard would like to place wreaths on the graves of veterans in Lakeview Cemetery and to plan and coordinate a wreath laying ceremony in December.

Recommendation is for the City to approve this worthwhile request.

Motion by Teska-Erickson to approve authorizing submitting Lakeview Cemetery as a ceremony location for the 2025 National Wreaths Across America Day and to participate in National Wreaths Across America Day, to be held on December 13, 2025.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

I. Update on Water Quality Testing at State Street Apartments.

The water quality at State Street Apartments, located at 212 State Street, had been called into question recently.

The Water supply to this facility had been reported as poor quality, cloudy and milky, with an odor.

As a result, the City Council directed that water testing be performed to determine whether any bacteriological conditions may be present in the water supply to that facility.

Sampling and water quality analysis was conducted the week of January 9, 2025.

Pace Analytical Services, LLC. performed water quality testing for total coliforms and E. coli.

The results of this analysis indicate that neither of these substances were detected in the samples provided from the State Street Apartments.

No further follow-up is anticipated for this matter at this time.

Discussion:

A letter/flyer communicating these testing results will be posted on the bulletin board at the State Street Apartments.

Informational only.

J. Other Business.

None.

K. Councilor's Comments.

Councilor Towner –

Requested that a discussion element be included subsequent to all motions received by the City Council prior to calling for a vote on any item –

Councilor Loeffler –

Commented that the recent Winter Frolic was a very successful event and was great for the community, and that the Recreation Board did a wonderful job planning and executing this event –

Noted that a Cupcake Decorating event will be held at Cornerstone Villa on Sunday, February 9, 2025 beginning at 1:00 p.m., and encouraged all to sign-up with the youth center (buhlteencenter@gmail.com) -

Councilor Teska-Erickson -

Noted that the Fire Department is looking to build-back up their roster if not expand it, and encouraged all to apply and sign-up to be on the Buhl (Volunteer) Fire Department –

Interested individuals should go to City Hall to receive an application -

L. Mayor's Comments.

Thanked the City Council for agreeing to conduct a Special City Council meeting (February 11 @ 6:00 p.m.) to discuss the status and direction of the water tower project and the structure and composition of the BEDA Board of Commissioners – it is anticipated that this will be a very productive meeting -

8. ADJOURN:

Motion by Loeffler to adjourn.

Supported by Teska-Erickson.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.


James Matthews, Mayor

ATTEST:


Tony Jeffries, City Clerk