

Nowthen City Council
January 11, 2022
Regular Meeting Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pilon Called the meeting to order at 7pm.

All present recited the pledge of allegiance

Present: Councilmembers Alders, Blake, Greenberg, and Rainville

Approve agenda:

Mayor Pilon added to the agenda a Letter from Fire Chief Schmidt, the addition of item 6c relating to annual cost of living adjustments and item 6d relating to ice rinks.

Councilmember Alders asked that consent item 2J be moved to discussion and Councilmember Blake asked the same for consent item 2d.

Councilmember Alders also asked to add the following to the end of the agenda: Status of internet, Timetable for removal of the mayor and councilmember Rainville from city offices, status of search for full time clerk or administrator, and status of lawsuits against the city.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER BLAKE, SECOND BY RAINVILLE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED. MOTION CARRIED FIVE AYES.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Pilon read the remaining consent agenda items

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER RAINVILLE SECOND BY GREENBERG TO APPROVE ALL CONSENT ITEMS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF 2D AND J. MOTION CARRIED FIVE AYES.

3. FLOOR ITEMS

None

4. SHERIFF'S REPORT

Commander Heath indicated there were 130 calls for service in the month of December. Total calls for the year were 1487. Detective Jacobson prepared statistics on businesses being burgled. Cameras have not been effective. Since the crimes take place at night the prospects of solving the crimes are low.

Commander Heath will be assuming other responsibilities soon and soon to be Lieutenant Jacobson will be the city's liaison. The sheriff's office is still seeking a location in Nowthen for an officer and vehicle. The fire station would work. They

will also look at the city offices together with the fire chief and interim city administrator.

Heath indicated that labor negotiations are on going and it is likely that personnel costs will increase next year given the level of inflation. The increase to the city would not be seen until the 2023 contract. The mayor and council members thanked Commander Heath for his 8 years of liaison services to the city and wished him well in his new endeavors.

5. **ENGINEERING**

a) Approval of a Proposed Process to prepare a Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for 2022 through 2026.

Mayor Pilon introduced the agenda item which proposed that he and Councilmember Alders serve as a subcommittee to lay out a Gantt Chart indicating how long and the content of a Capital Improvement Program. Council members indicated a desire for the entire council's participation. A preference was indicated for concentration in 2022 and that roads are a high priority. Alders expressed a preference to focus on 2022 with roads and transportation a top priority. Shane would need to provide input including a decision-making tool on which roads should be done. A secondary focus would be on Parks, buildings, and mobile equipment.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER ALDERS SECOND BY GREENBERG TO HAVE A SUBCOMMITTEE COMPOSED OF ALDERS AND THE MAYOR REVIEW THE 2022 CAPITAL NEEDS PRIMARILY FOCUSED UPON STREETS AND INCLUDING CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF WHICH ROADS TO DO. MOTION CARRIED FIVE AYES.

6. **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

a) Fire Chief Dave Schmidt's Open Letter to the City council

Mayor Pilon read a letter authored by the fire chief summarizing the progress the department made in 2021 and thanking the city council for their demonstrations of support. The city council decided to post the letter on the city website for the public.

7. **CITY COUNCIL**

a) Upper Rum River Water Management Organization Joint Powers Agreement Update Council Member Greenberg is the city's representative to the watershed management organization. He reported that at their recent meeting the members reviewed the joint powers agreement (JPA). He previously distributed copies of the proposed JPA changes which are intended to bring it in conformance with current statutory language and asked city council members to offer any comments they might have so he can communicate with WMO members. He also reported on the 2022

budget and projects anticipated this coming year and recognizing that the city has made its first half payment of just over \$4000. Greenberg reported that there is a proposal to merge water maintenance organizations. The general tenor was to support the status quo. No action was required or taken.

b) League of Minnesota Cities Leadership Training

Boyles indicated that the LMC has scheduled their annual training programs for elected officials in February. He encouraged all council members to attend even if they have done so recently. They will get useful information as well as the opportunity to network with elected officials facing the same challenges. Mayor Pilon stated he would like to attend the foundation training.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER ALDERS SECOND BY GREENBERG TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ATTEND THE ADVANCED CLASS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CITY POLICY. MOTION CARRIED FIVE AYES.

c) RCA Proposing Wage Adjustments for Certain Employees.

Mayor Pilon proposed that the city's two maintenance employees receive a three percent wage adjustment effective the first period in 2022. He also suggested that the recycling center employee receive an increase from \$15 to \$16 hour. This is the amount contained in the 2022 budget.

MOTION BY MAYOR PILON SECOND BY RAINVILLE TO APPROVE THE PAY INCREASES AS DESCRIBED BY THE MAYOR ABOVE. MOTION CARRIED FIVE AYES.

d) Ice Rink Status

Mayor Pilon asked that the rinks be up and running this winter. He asked if council members wished to help and there was no response. The suggestion was to start with the pleasure rink.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER ALDERS SECOND BY BLAKE TO GET THE MAINTENANCE TEAM AND TEMP DRIVERS TO GET BOTH RINKS RUNNING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE INCLUDING ADAQUATE NOTIFICATION.MOTION CARRIED FIVE AYES.

2j Approval of Request by the Heritage Festival Volunteer Committee to Waive Rental Fees, Deposits, and Associated Costs Related to the 2022 Nowthen Heritage Festival. This item was removed from consent. Council member Alders asked what the city had historically done. Rainville reported that the request was the same as in previous years. No one receives payment for their work or time. The money is invested in future events if it exceeds costs. 400 to 500 people attend. Festival costs like fireworks have doubled.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER ALDERS SECOND BY GREENBERG TO APPROVE THE REQUEST AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED FIVE AYES.

2d) Approval of Appointment of Natalie Johnson and Frank Boyles to Serve as City Contacts to the 4M Fund Removed from consent. Council member Blake wanted to know why the mayor and council member Rainville would continue to serve as contacts. The response is the two are signatures for city check signing.

MOTION MADE BY BLAKE SECOND BY ALDERS TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF NATALIE JOHNSON AND FRANK BOYLES AS CITY CONTACTS TO THE 4M FUND.

7e) Status of Internet Council member Alders indicated that the city paid to have a survey done and he would like a status report. The survey has been complete, and the finding is that to serve the entire community typography, at least two towers would be required at about \$300,000 and supplemented by underground or telephone wiring. A meeting is scheduled with Arvig the last week of the year. They have a proposal to serve city facilities. There are other proposals that may include all eleven cities in Anoka County. A meeting is to be scheduled to discuss this possibility as well. Mayor Pilon and Boyles will work together on this topic and further brief the city council.

7f) Timetable for removing the Mayor and Council member Rainville from City Offices Boyles stated that the mayor is coming in the office to sign documents and that will continue. He is coming in less but when he does, it is required to understand history and status of city related items. Council member Rainville is invited into the office to assist no non repetitive work including collection of newsletter files, organization and standardization of city codes, organization of rentals and reservations, and collection and organization of city contracts/legal documents.

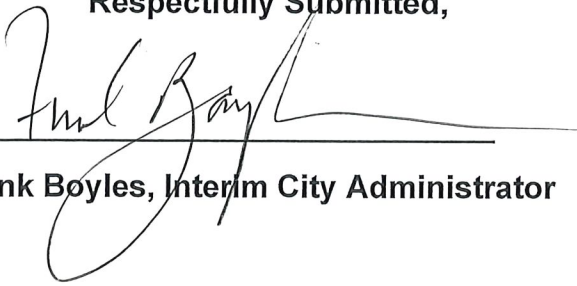
7g) Status of Search for Full Time Clerk or City Administrator Boyles stated that there has been no progress in this regard. He and the interim staff have been concentrating on identifying where items are, what has not been done, how to correct them and bring things up to date. This is consuming everyone's time in addition to keeping the city operating. The top things candidates will ask is the status of the office and the working relationship with the city council. Until both items are completely addressed, initiating the recruitment process would be non-productive.

7h) Status of Lawsuits Against the City Boyles stated that according to the city attorney there are no lawsuits presently against the city. There are two unemployment compensation claims that have been made by previous employees and hearings are scheduled or underway.

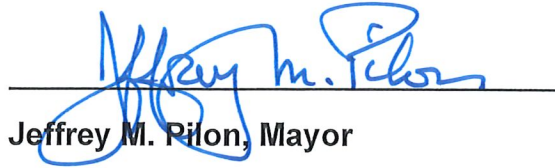
**MOTION BY ALDERS SECOND BY BLAKE TO ADJOURN MOTION
CARRIED FIVE AYES.**

The city council meeting was adjourned at 10:22pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Frank Boyles, Interim City Administrator



Jeffrey M. Pilon, Mayor