

Nowthen City Council
June 13, 2023
Regular Meeting Minutes

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Pilon called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.
All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Mayor Pilon, Council Members Rainville, Fladebo, and Breyen

Absent: Council Member Alders

Also Present: Administrator Lehner, Deputy Clerk Johnson, Lieutenant Jacobson, Fire Chief Schmidt.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER BREYEN, SECONDED BY FLADEBO TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED. 4 AYES.

2. **FLOOR ITEMS**

None

3. **CONSENT AGENDA**

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER RAINVILLE, SECONDED BY BREYEN TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED. 4 AYES.

4. **ENGINEERING**

None

5. **FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Presented by Fire Chief Schmidt:

For the month of May 2023, the Fire Department responded to 24 incidents (same as the previous month) with an average response time of 11 minutes and 24 seconds (2 minute and 1 second increase from April). The average number of firefighters attending calls for service was 5. The Fire Department reports a \$300,000 dollar loss from fires during the month of May.

Noteworthy Calls:

On May 1st, the Fire Department along with ACSO Deputies responded to a reported cardiac arrest on the 7400 block of Norris Lake Rd. Upon arrival, an adult male was found in cardiac arrest on the front porch of the home. This was an unwitnessed arrest with an unknown down time. Despite lifesaving interventions including deployment of the Lucas Device, the patient was pronounced dead on scene.

On May 10th, the Fire Department responded to a reported structure fire on the 19900 block of Iguana St. NW. Upon arrival, responders found a row of storage units on fire. Assistance was received from St. Francis, Oak Grove, Bethel, Andover, Ramsey, and Elk River Fire Departments. Damage estimates from the fire are \$300,000.00. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

On May 12th, the Fire Department was dispatched to a reported grass fire on 18300 Erkiem St. NW. Upon arrival, the crew found a large illegal burn. The homeowner was required to extinguish the fire and warning was issued. During the spring, the Fire Department has seen an increase in illegal burning throughout the city.

On May 27th, the Fire Department assisted St. Francis on a large grass fire on the 22800 block on Nightingale St. NW.

On May 24th, the Fire Department hosted a recruitment open house. Approximately 12 potential applicants attended the open house where staff provided information on the hiring process, training, and department expectations. Thank you to all staff involved in this process and thanks to Administrator Lehner and Mayor Pilon for attending and offering their support.

The Nowthen Fire Department has been selected to receive the Center Point Public Safety Grant of \$2,500 to use on a RAD 57 Monitor (special CO2 Detection devices), and an \$8,000 grant from the Department of Safety to purchase a Turn Out Gear Dryer.

Council Member Fladebo had questions regarding illegal burns and types of fires. Fire Chief Schmidt explained that residents may have a 3' x 3' "recreational fire." Burning permits are required for larger fires up to 15' x 15' of brush, trees, and/or debris. Fires burning trash, furniture, tires, plastics, etc. are considered illegal burns. There was clarification that burning is only allowed from 6pm to 8am – even if you have a three-day permit. It is not continuous.

6. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT REPORT

Sheriff's Deputies responded to 167 calls for service.

May 2023 calls for service included:

0 to Bar None

2 Alarms

20 Medicals

18 Animal Complaints

Bar None – No calls this month.

Noteworthy Calls for Service:

On 05/01/2023 at 2:13 PM deputies responded to the 7400 block of Norris Lake Road NW on a report of a 60s-year-old male not breathing. Deputies, Nowthen FD, and Allina EMS provided emergency care, but the victim could not be revived. The male was pronounced deceased at the scene. On 05/01/2023 at 6:38 AM deputies responded to Nowthen Blvd. NW at 201st Ave. NW on

a report of a crash with injuries involving three vehicles. Three drivers suffered minor injuries. The investigation revealed that a 2010 Dodge Grand Caravan was northbound on Nowthen Blvd. NW when it struck the back of a stopped vehicle that was waiting to turn left onto 201st Ave. NW. The driver of the Grand Caravan, an adult male, reported he had looked down to set his coffee down and traffic was stopped in front of him when he looked up. He was cited for failure to drive with due care and driving on a revoked license.

On 05/10/2023 at 7:12 PM deputies responded to a road and driving complaint. The reporting party, an adult male, reported seeing a red Chevrolet Corvette driving at a very high rate of speed in the 19500 block of Nowthen Blvd. NW. The reporting party advised he later found the vehicle parked in the area, so he called the sheriff's office. A deputy spoke with the driver of the Corvette, but he denied he was speeding. He was found to have a suspended driver's license and was cited for driving after suspension.

On 05/15/2023 at 2:51 PM, deputies responded to the 7700 block of 188th Lane NW regarding a dog that attacked and killed a chicken. The dog was identified as a neighbor's dog via video of the incident. The owner of the dog was cited for dog at large and for the dog killing domestic livestock.

Questions and discussion regarding how does the city respond to dog attacks? It is suggested to put a reminder in the Fall newsletter for residents to control their dogs and keep them on their property.

Discussion regarding false alarms for residents and businesses. These calls take two deputies off the street.

7. PLANNING AND ZONING

- a) CONSIDER APPROVAL OF AN INTERIM USE PERMIT TO ALLOW USED AUTO SALES AT 20088 FERRET STREET NW.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER BREYEN, SECONDED BY RAINVILLE TO APPROVE AN INTERIM USE PERMIT FOR NEWPORT CARDENS LLC LOCATED AT 20088 FERRET STREET NW TO ALLOW USED AUTO SALES TO OCCUR FROM THIS PROPERTY AND PART NO MORE THAN FIVE (5) USED VEHICLES FOR SALE AT ANY GIVEN TIME PER THE CITY COUNCIL FINDINGS AND DECISION, AS MAY BE AMENDED. MOTION CARRIED. 4 AYES.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

- a) Dust Control Update: The project is completed and all the roads in the city's plan were done. Administrator Lehner was impressed with the results.

We continue to have ongoing issues with residents tearing up the newly sprayed or graded roads with ATV vehicles. Residents: Please talk to your children about keeping off the gravel roads. It is a shame to waste the city resources and time. If you see anyone doing it, please call 763-427-1212 – the Sheriff's Office non-emergency number.

Discussion about what the deputies can do. If caught, they can approach parents; have a “stern” talking to the people tearing up the roads. Help them understand it costs the city approximately \$4800 per mile for the calcium chloride. The roads completed will be graded less as each time it is graded, it degrades the product. It will last longer if residents drive slower, and it does decrease dust with decreased speeds.

Note: This was completed much earlier than last year.

- b) 2008 Ford Sale Update
The truck has been sold for \$6,500. The same buyer also wanted the old tanker truck for use to turn into a traveling pizza oven.
- c) Independence Day
The city offices and Recycling Center will be closed July 3rd and July 4th in observance of Independence Day. All full-time staff will be using a PTO day for July 3rd.
- d) Mowing and Baling of City Property
Cully House has paid a small stipend to mow and bale the city property two times this year. Once this spring and again before the Heritage Festival.

9. CITY COUNCIL

- a) Old Business – NONE
- b) New Business
 - 1. Juneteenth Holiday

MN Legislation moved up approval of the Juneteenth Holiday from 2024 to 2023. The date is June 19th, 2023.

This is technically not required to be a paid holiday for city employees eligible for holiday pay; however, the legislation has made it clear that no city business may be conducted on this day. The state Attorney General states all cities will be closed, and no work shall be performed. It is recommended to pay eligible employees for June 19, 2023, and it shall be considered a Holiday by the City of Nowthen.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER RAINVILLE, SECONDED BY BREYEN TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2023-32 RECOGNIZING JUNETEENTH AS A STATE HOLIDAY AND REQUEST FULL-TIME STAFF BE PAID FOR THIS DAY OFF. MOTION CARRIED. 4 AYES.

- 2. Work Session Request to review city ordinances regarding the use of off-road vehicles on public roadways and right-of ways.

Council Member Fladebo requested to schedule a work session to discuss the ordinance because of a call and concern she has received from a resident. She thanked Lieutenant Jacobson for getting the accident reports to the council for review.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER FLADEBO, SECONDED BY BREYEN TO HAVE STAFF SET A WORK SESSION TO DISCUSS OTHER CITIES’ POLICIES THAT ARE RURAL AND IN SIMILAR SIZE AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Discussion ensued regarding other ordinances that also need to be addressed. Council Member Breyen amended the motion to review many of the ordinances and set up work sessions to go through additional ordinances. It will not be possible to schedule this work session until later in the year after the budget work sessions are completed.

Council Member Breyen withdrew his amendment request at this time.

VOTING ENSUED. MOTION CARRIED. 4 AYES.

3. Approval of Resolution 2023-33 authorizing Administrator Lehner to begin a search for a Project Manager to handle multiple projects for the city.

Currently, we have several projects that require more thorough dedicated research and documentation to bring projects to completion than staff can accomplish in a timely manner.

The type of projects would be one-off and completed by a contract vendor. The estimated time frame for this contracted Project Manager would be approximately six months.

Currently, Administrator Lehner is acting as Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer with day-to-day operations of the city with public works, administration, professional contractors, and residents' concerns.

Deputy Clerk Johnson just finished an audit and is transitioning into the 2024 budget & Capital Improvement Plan along with day-to-day financial duties along with the new extensive election requirements coming.

Administrative Assistant Ogdahl is new and 50% of her time is spent on the Recycling Center tracking and assisting residents, along with building permits.

Madeline Greenberg is a back-up for Donna, processes building permits and is continuing to scan property files into the system so they will all be electronic.

This contracted position would be funded by the existing budget.

Administrator Lehner will put together a "Priority List" for the council to determine which projects should be completed first and an "Action Register" to keep it current and track progress.

Discussion if this person doesn't complete the projects in six months. The city had budgeted for a full-time position that has not yet been filled. The position would be posted as soon as Administrator Lehner can put together a job description and required qualifications.

If a candidate is found, Administrator Lehner will notify the council and request a special meeting to introduce and discuss the candidate.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER BREYEN, SECONDED BY RAINVILLE TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2023-33 AUTHORIZING ADMINISTRATOR LEHNER TO BEGIN A SEARCH FOR A PROJECT MANAGER TO HANDLE MULTIPLE PROJECTS FOR THE CITY UNTIL THE PROJECTS ARE COMPLETED. MOTION CARRIED. 4 AYES.

4. Approval of Resolution 2023-34 authorizing Mayor Pilon and Administrator Lehner to enter into contract with Midwest Goat Mitigation Service, LLC to eliminate or considerably reduce the buckthorn and poison ivy in portions of Twin Lakes Park dedicated to the Frisbee Golf Course.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER BREYEN, SECONDED BY FLADEBO AUTHORIZING MAYOR PILON AND ADMINISTRATOR LEHNER TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH MIDWEST GOAT MITIGATION SERVICE, LLC TO ELIMINATE OR CONSIDERLY REDUCE THE BUCKTHORN AND POISON IVY IN PORTIONS OF TWIN LAKES PARK DEDICATED TO THE FRISBEE GOLF COURSE.

Discussion: Do we need to have regular goat maintenance? Goats don't eat grass, so the grass takes over the space and greatly reduces the unwanted plants. The goats will be there twice this year. Completely ridding the area of unwanted plants may be a 2 to 3-year process.

VOTING ENSUED. MOTION CARRIED. 4 AYES.

5. Representative Novotny is here tonight – the council welcomed him and thanked him for coming. He introduced himself and spoke about the completed legislative session. He discussed the new cannabis bill. What does the city want to do? He stated that school boards will now be able to pass levies without going to taxpayers and that was concerning. Representative Novotny remarked that this legislative session “Passed the laws to see what’s in the laws.” There is cleanup to be completed on each passed bill that will take most of the summer.

Representative Novotny additionally discussed tax increases across the metro area: A 0.75% transportation sales tax increase to offset gas tax due to more use of electric vehicles, and a 0.25% for housing – 1 percent total metro-wide. A new tax imposed on Minnesota residents is a “delivery tax” for all packages delivered. This tax will be \$0.50 on deliveries valued over 100 dollars. He stated that the state went through the huge surplus, plus an additional 17.5 billion dollars, increasing the state budget by 40% and Nowthen will see very little of it.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER BREYEN, SECONDED BY FLADEBO TO ADJOURN.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Scott Lehner, City Administrator



Jeffrey M. Pilon, Mayor



SIGN - IN SHEET

Meeting: Regular mtg Date: 6/13/23

PLEASE PRINT

	NAME	ADDRESS
1.	ALVIN HARNELL	7263 181ST AVE NW NOWTHEN
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