

Nowthen City Council
February 8, 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 Council Members Alders, Blake, Greenberg, and Rainville

MOTION BY ALDERS SECOND BY BLAKE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA RELOCATING ITEM 2 G TO 8E. MOTION CARRIED. FIVE AYES.

Mayor Pilon stated that it is nice to see firefighters, families, and friends in the audience. These are the heroes of our community. Fire Chief David Schmidt will introduce each firefighter, provide their badge, and ask family members to do the pinning.

Fire Chief Schmidt indicated that this is a new and exciting tradition. The twelve original firefighters will be pinned tonight. Pictures will follow with snacks served at the fire station thereafter. Each of the firefighters present were recognized, pinned by a loved one, and applauded.

Fire Chief Schmidt recommended to the city council that Adam Schrag be officially appointed to the position of Assistant Fire Chief and a monthly stipend of \$700.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER RAINVILLE SECOND BY MAYOR PILON TO APPOINT ADAM SCHRAG AS ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF WITH A MONTHLY STIPEND OF \$700. MOTION CARRIED. FIVE AYES.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER RAINVILLE SECOND BY BLAKE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH THE EXCEPTION OF 2G WHICH IS MOVED TO 8E. MOTION CARRIED. FIVE AYES.

3. FLOOR ITEMS

None

4. SHERIFF'S REPORT

Commander Heath noted that his first report to the Nowthen City Council was on February 14, 2014, and tonight February 8, 2022 will be his last. He expressed his delight in working with the city. He outlined a couple calls including one where the driver had felony warrants, another involved drug materials in the vehicle. In one case a

neighbor observed the lurking and called in. In yet another incident a resident of Bar None was taken into custody because of serious frostbite. Commander Heath stated that Lieutenant Jacobson will do a wonderful job for the city. City council members thanked Commander Heath for his 8 years as liaison to the city.

5.PROSECUTOR'S REPORT

Prosecutor Kurt Glaser stated that it has been over a year since he addressed the city council. He stated the court system has been modified because of COVID 19. His work with Anoka County has been particularly good. There is a 50% reduction in on-premises court hearings. Since jails are full there has also been an increase in home monitoring and longer sentences go along with it. He said that he appreciated city council approval of the contracts. In response to the question of where do fines go, he indicated that it depends upon the fine. Lower-level fines like DUI and lower-level assaults go to St. Paul. Upper-level fines are parsed out to grants, victim advocates, and the like.

6.FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Department actions were addressed at the beginning of the meeting.

7.PLANNING AND ZONING

a). Consider Ordinance 2022-01 Relating to Accessory Structures and Summary Ordinance for Publication.

Planner Stockman explained that the city council originally considered this ordinance some time ago. Given the amount of time which has passed, the ordinance must be renumbered and published to be effective. The ordinance relates to riparian lots which are narrow and restricts the placement of accessory buildings. The city council discussed whether there should be more regulations or less. Adopting the 2022 Ordinance is seen as the least intrusive action.

MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER ALDERS SECOND BY BLAKE TO ADOPT ORDINANCE 2022-01. MOTION CARRIED. FIVE AYES.

b). Consider Approval of Development Review Matrix.

Planner Stockman indicated that the packet contained a draft development review matrix. The matrix will be revised if the city council desires and then sent out for comment from persons who have developed including Skogquist, Dryden, Cotes, Toft, McCallum, Haysman and Brown. Once input is received, the item will be placed upon a future city council meeting agenda for final consideration.

8.CITY COUNCIL

a). Internet Update

Mayor Pilon provided the city council with an update. He and the Interim City Administrator met with Anoka County economic development and ARVIG Representatives. The county has matching funds to help cities with internet in the amount of \$150,000. There is a possibility that cities which received funds will return them to the county to make them available for internet purposes. There has been talk about developing a coalition of eleven cities who would make improvements together. The county intends to launch a feasibility study on this topic. The county has considerable funding which could be dedicated to this end if the public will encourage its elected officials. Arvig representatives will be preparing information for use in an internet improvement grant application.

b). Representative Elkins/Housing First Minnesota Proposed Legislation

Mayor Pilon indicated for about two years now he has been passing along information about the Elkins Bill. It is of great concern to many cities for several reasons. In the case of Nowthen there is an important exemption from Metropolitan Council Policies the city would like to preserve. Elkin's bill is an attack on local control, particularly zoning. He recommended that the city council approve the resolution which is part of the packet. The resolution will be sent to the League of Minnesota Cities to be combined with those from other cities and provided to legislators to demonstrate solidarity.

MOTION BY COUNCILMEMBER GREENBERG SECOND BY RAINVILLE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2022-06 A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING HOUSING AND LOCAL DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY. MOTION CARRIED. FIVE AYES.

c). Unemployment Compensation Requests

Mayor Pilon gave a report to the city council. There are two unemployment cases underway. The time involved in completing the cases will be 16 to 18 hours. Both former employees resigned but are claiming the city is a hostile work environment which caused them to resign. The hearings take place by telephone reviewing almost five hundred pages of evidence and eight witnesses combined. Council members asked who authorized the city to proceed with the appeal. Boyles stated he did and may have exceeded his authority in doing so. Council members Blake and Alders believe that the decision should have been for the city council and not a staff to make. Boyles apologized to the city council.

d). State of the Office January 24, 2022

Mayor Pilon stated that the interim city administrator has included in the city council packet a four-page memorandum which identified seventeen areas where the interim staff found shortcomings in the work done by the previous staff. Consequently, the interim staff has not made the progress they had hoped to. Boyles asked if the city council wanted to refer these issues to the State Auditor's Office.

Council members discussed this issue and suggested that Boyles should find out which if any issues the State Auditor would look at, what is significant to receive an opinion about, how long it will take and what cost would be.

MOTION BY GREENBERG SECOND BY RAINVILLE TO DIRECT BOYLES TO REFER THE MEMO TO THE STATE AUDITOR TO DETERMINE WHICH ISSUES THEY WOULD REVIEW WHETHER THERE ARE ISSUES OTHERS WOULD REVIEW, WHAT IS THE APPROXIAMATE COST, AND HOW LONG WOULD IT TAKE WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT NO COST ITEMS MAY PROCEED. MOTION CARRIED. FIVE AYES.

2g). Approval of Extension of Employment Agreement for Interim City Administrator

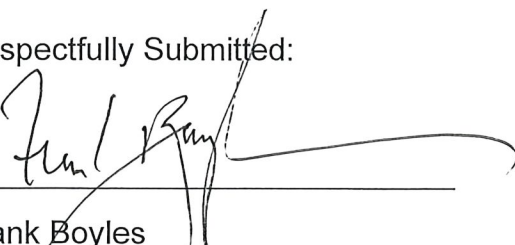
Mayor Pilon stated that the recommendation is to extend Boyles contract another two months subject to the same terms until July 1, 2022. The city council has just learned that there are matters which have been delayed. The city council discussed various matters including if work is done would the contract be terminated earlier. The answer was affirmative.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER RAINVILLE SECOND BY BLAKE TO EXTEND THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR CONTRACT UNTIL JULY 1, 2022, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF THE EXTENSION IS TO PROVIDE SOME OVERLAP TIME BETWEEN THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR AND THE NEWLY HIRED ADMINISTRATOR. MOTION CARRIED. FIVE AYES.

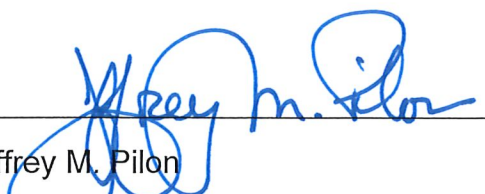
Motion by Blake second by Pilon to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted:



Frank Boyles
Interim City Administrator



Jeffrey M. Pilon
Mayor