

**City of Gem Lake
City Council Meeting – April 16, 2024
Meeting Minutes**

Mayor Gretchen Artig-Swomley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers Len Cacioppo, Jim Lindner, Ben Johnson, and Laurel Amlee were present. Also present: City Attorney Kevin Beck, City Treasurer Tom Kelly, City Engineer Justin Gese, SEH Project Planner and Community Development David Krueger, Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence, and Gem Lake residents Jim and JoAnne Wilson and Jon Reigstad.

April 16, 2024, Agenda

A motion was introduced by Councilmember Linder to accept the agenda, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, agenda accepted.

Minutes

A motion was introduced by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Amlee to approve the March 20, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes. Voice vote taken, 4 in favor, Councilmember Cacioppo abstained because he was not present at the March meeting, motion carried.

Special Presentations/Public Hearings

None

Consent Agenda

**Resolution #2024-006 April 2024 Donation to White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf
Monthly Financial Reports(s)
Claims**

All items on the consent agenda were reviewed by the Council. Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve all the items listed on the consent agenda as is, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Committee Reports

None

Old Business

Newsletter Updates / Topics / Suggestions

Mayor Artig-Swomley presented ideas for the next edition of the City Newsletter to include pieces such as the results of the city clean-up day, the progress on the city funding requests, scholarship recipients, memorials to Kathy Robins and Larry Kuehn and an MS4 requirement story.

Municipal Water Funding Request – David Krueger, SEH Project Planner and Community Development

David Krueger, SEH Project Planner and Community Development gave the Council and those in attendance an update on the City's municipal water funding request. Gem Lake was recently awarded \$959,757 in federal funding through support from Congresswoman Betty McCollum which is roughly 14% of the total estimated project cost. The original request was for \$5,488,000, which is 80% of the estimated project cost. The funds are very competitive, and many projects receive less than the initial request.

Mr. Krueger shared some additional funding strategies available. A Bonding bill request was submitted in June of 2023 and is currently being considered by the legislature. The original request was for full funding of \$6,860,000 and outcomes are typically known by the end of May. Mr. Krueger suggests reapplying for Community Project Funding in the amount of \$4,528,243, which if awarded, the combined federal amount would be 80% of the estimated project cost, which is the maximum. If Minnesota bonding bill funds are awarded, they will be part of the required non-federal match.

Mr. Krueger suggested the city await the next steps from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff assigned to oversee funding. This will allow the city time to find out the results of the Minnesota bonding bill and whether a funding gap remains. Also suggested was that the city apply for another round of earmarks expected to open very soon. Mr. Krueger is seeking permission from the Council to apply for another round when it opens.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to give SEH permission to apply for all sources of funding available when it becomes available, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

White Bear Montessori School Conduit Debt Update

A public hearing will be scheduled for the May City Council meeting on May 21. White Bear Montessori Schools attorney is putting together a notice that they will send to the White Bear Press for publication on April 24. City Engineer Justin Gese asked that any future communication regarding the project be shared with the City of Vadnais Heights as the building is on Vadnais Heights city water. Mr. Gese has shared everything he knows about the project with Vadnais Heights to inform them.

City Clerk Compensation Study Results

The City contracted MRA to complete a compensation study for the Administrative Assistant / City Clerk role, who recently completed one for White Bear Township. The job matches used were Administrative Assistant II (Senior), Secretary/Administrative Assistant – Experienced, Administrative Assistant (Experienced) and Administrative Services – Intermediate (Business Support). While these job matches covered the Administrative Assistant role, the mayor didn't feel like it captured the City Clerk role, so more information was requested before the meeting from MRA. White Bear Townships market data from last year was used to help develop a table that could be used as an incentive through the clerk certification process. See attached documents that explain the market base salary and incentive table or the Administrative Assistant / City Clerk role.

Gem Lake Travel and Reimbursement Policy Review

While this topic is considered new business, the mayor wanted to discuss it before the next topic on the agenda as it relates to it. Mayor Artig-Swomley feels that the current policy in place is a good one and no major changes need to be made. The one section that is being revised is on meals. Changes were made to the allowance for meals to now be based on the U.S. General Services Administration Minneapolis / St. Paul rates. The allowance changes for breakfast went from \$12.00 to \$18.00, lunch remained the same at \$20.00, and dinner went from \$25.00 to \$36.00. Councilmember Johnson shared that this allowance per meal is better than what the state currently allows those working in his department.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the suggested changes to the meal section of the Travel and Reimbursement Policy, seconded by Councilmember Johnson. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

2024 Minnesota Municipal Clerks Institute (MMCI) – Year 1 – May 6 – 10

Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence will be attending her first year at the Clerks Academy held in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Mrs. Lawrence has already secured a hotel room for Sunday, May 5, 2024 – Thursday, May 9, 2024. Training will take place at the Holiday Inn & Suites, St. Cloud and training is being delivered through St. Cloud State University. Mrs. Lawrence applied for a grant to be used towards the registration fee for the Institute and was awarded \$100.00. The total for registration minus the grant came to \$460.00 and the hotel stay for the duration of the event is estimated to be \$615.20, which includes tax that the city will be exempt from.

New Business

Fee Schedule Updates

Slight updates were made to the 2024 adopted fee schedule. Peddlers, Solicitors and Transient Merchants license fees were updated as well as removing one (1) contractor's license and fee of one (1). Administrative offenses were added for Alcohol and Tobacco Sales to follow White Bear Lakes fines.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the fee schedule updates, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Gem Lake Villas – Seeking Permission to Place Bird Houses and Duck Houses on Public Land

On Tuesday, April 16, 2024, the City Council discussed a request brought to them by members of the HOA Board and Architectural Control Committee (ACC), Jim and JoAnne Wilson, to put up a couple small bird houses on city property and a couple duck houses near the pond on city property. For residents to put personal items on city property the City must first give permission to do so. Councilmember Johnson asked if the HOA and ACC would be the ones to maintain these bird and duck houses, and the response was yes.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the placement of bird and duck houses on the public land with maintenance handled through the HOA and ACC, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Gem Lake Trail Reseeding / Tree Planting

White Bear Township Public Works is working on getting the city some quotes for reseeded and tree planting along the north and west areas of the Villas on the public land. At this time, no quotes have been received and the Council would like to table the discussion for the May and or June meeting.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to table the discussion on reseeded and tree planting until the city obtains quotes to review, seconded by Mayor Artig-Swomley. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Heritage Hall Maintenance

Spring Window Cleaning Quote

Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence requested a quote from Squeegee Magic for inside and outside window cleaning. The Council doesn't recall the windows ever being professionally cleaned. The spring cleaning would include all windows inside and outside and all interior windows for a total of \$378.23.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the spring window cleaning quote in the amount of \$378.23, seconded by Councilmember Amlee. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Fall Window Cleaning Quote

Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence requested a quote from Squeegee Magic for outside window cleaning. The fall cleaning would include all windows outside for a total of \$200.70.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the fall window cleaning quote in the amount of \$200.70, seconded by Councilmember Amlee. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Holiday Lights Quote

Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence requested a quote from Squeegee Magic for holiday lights. The holiday lights would include lights being placed on the front of the building and around the two entry poles for a total of \$812.50. The lights on the side of the building were requested to be removed by the Council and they were deemed unnecessary.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the holiday lights quote in the amount of \$812.50, seconded by Councilmember Amlee. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Janitorial service Quotes

The city received two quotes for janitorial services of Heritage Hall. The city's current contracted janitorial service just hasn't seemed up to par lately, so Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence requested quotes from Team Clean and Coverall. Team Clean is based out of Minneapolis, MN

and includes many weekly and monthly services at a quoted price of \$800.00 per month. Coverall is based out of Bloomington, MN and includes many weekly and monthly services at a quoted price of \$320.00 per month. White Bear Township currently uses Coverall as their janitorial service and has had no complaints.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the quote from Coverall in the amount of \$320 per month, seconded by Councilmember Johnson. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Service Window Quote

To make the main office more secure, a quote was requested from Polar Glass & Mirror to replace the existing in-swing service window with a more secure one-piece tempered glass with a pass thru service window. The quote was for a total of \$960.00.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the quote in the amount of \$960.00, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Clerk's Office Door Keypad Quote

In another attempt to make the office more secure, a quote was requested from White Bear Locksmith to install a digital keypad lock on the door leading into the office and one for the mayor's office. The quote was for a total of \$1,605.00.

Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve the quote in the amount of \$1,605.00, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all in favor, motion carried.

Future Charitable Gambling Donations

White Bear Lake Emergency Food Shelf

Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested that the Council make a donation in May in the amount of \$1,500.00 to the White Bear Lake Emergency Food Shelf. Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to request a donation in the amount of \$1,500.00 for the White Bear Lake Emergency Food Shelf, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion carried.

Community Outreach to Other Cities and Government Bodies

The joint clean-up day with White Bear Township is scheduled for May 18. The Council is very appreciative of their willingness to let the city be a part of the event for a low cost of \$10.00 per Gem Lake resident participation. Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence will provide the Township Public Works with an updated list of all Gem Lake residents.

City Attorney Kevin Beck shared with the Council his progress on the letter that was sent to White Bear Lake regarding the increased debt service fee. To summarize, The City doesn't think it should be responsible for this debt, White Bear Lake's lawyer believes Gem Lake is wrong and the failure to make any payments toward it is causing White Bear Lake to move it to their Council for further action. Gem Lake was never asked for feedback regarding the construction plan and was not given an opportunity to dispute it. Mr. Beck will have an update at the May Council meeting.

City Attorney Kevin Beck shared with the Council that there has still been no progress with Vadnais Heights as they are still not settled with the DNR, should hopefully have more information to share at the May Council meeting.

Mayor Artig-Swomley shared with the Council about a recent accident that took place along Labore Road and Little Fox Lane. Vadnais Heights culvert was damaged, Ramsey County's stop sign was knocked down and Gem Lake's street sign was knocked down.

Councilmember Johnson shared that the County Road E corridor team will be meeting with the contractor they have chosen some time in May to discuss a lot of the behind-the-scenes action and will hope to have more to report on at the June Council meeting.

Councilmember Lindner shared that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has said the city has satisfied all the environmental requirements allegedly violated on the city's MS4 report and no further action is needed.

Presentations from the Public, 2 Minutes Maximum

Resident Jim Wilson was curious about the signs being replaced at the entrances of the Gem Lake Trail regarding dog waste and if they could be reused elsewhere in the Villas. The ideal location would be in the northern area near the cul-de-sac and one over by the mailboxes. The city doesn't see any issue with that but would like Public Works to handle the installation to ensure the proper processes are being followed.

Resident Jon Reigstad was curious about the water funding situation and where the city is at with those plans. Mayor Artig-Swomley shared that no decision has been made or will be made without obtaining the public's feedback and that the city is only in the funding phase working to obtain funds to make it possible for the municipal water plan to even have a chance or being an option. Residents shouldn't expect any immediate action and it could be a couple more years before any action is taken.

Future Council Meetings

City Council, Tuesday, May 21, 2024. City Council Workshop, Monday, May 13, 2024, is CANCELED.

Attendance Inquiry

At this time all Councilmembers in attendance will be at the May meeting.

Adjournment

Being there no further business, following a motion from Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo, the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Melissa Lawrence