

**CITY OF EVART
EMERGENCY SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
Friday, September 10, 2021 @ 7:30PM
Depot Community Room, 200 S. Main Street**

Mayor Chris Emerick led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Emerick at 7:30pm.

Present (via roll call): Dan Elliott, Mayor Emerick, Matt Hildebrand, Sandra Szeliga

Absent: Sean Duffy

Present (staff): Interim City Manager Richard Lewis (via telephone), Finance Director/Treasurer Pepper Lockhart, Director of Public Works Dustin Moma, City Clerk Kathy Fiebig

Guests: Shane Helmer (Evert Area Fire Chief), Randy Berger (RCB Contracting Services), John Bieri (Beaver Tree & Irrigation)

Citizens' Comments – *Jim Schwab hopes that council members will use all their good judgement and wisdom to make every effort to fund as needed to secure the safety and security of the community. (This comment submitted to and read into the record by Clerk Fiebig.)*

New Business

A. Discussion of funding for storm cleanup efforts

Mr. Moma updated council on the status of the cleanup effort: All electrical power has been restored; Spectrum and AT&T continue to work on their lines. All streets have been cleared but there are still dangerous situations with leaning trees. Crews continue to haul brush, tree limbs and trunks from City property, and with Mr. Lewis's previous authorization, Mr. Moma has contracted with RCB Contracting Services and Beaver Tree and Irrigation to assist with that effort. The Fire Department and city crews have been working alongside Consumers Energy and their contractors. Seven other fire departments responded as well.

Mr. Moma requested that council release \$75,000 to fund the cleanup effort and cautioned them that this may not be adequate to meet the need. Mr. Moma and Mr. Helmer both stressed that public safety is still very much an issue. Mr. Lewis recommended releasing \$50,000 initially and suggested that council reassess the situation after \$25,000 of those funds have been spent. Mr. Moma and Mr. Helmer will provide a total cost estimate to date of funds spent on Monday, September 13. Mr. Helmer stated that the threshold to apply for federal relief funding is \$3 million, and due to the surprisingly low amount of property damage, we will not be eligible to apply for that funding.

Mr. Lewis noted that his original funding authorization was intended to use contractors to clean up City parks and said that expense should not be included in this funding. Mr. Hildebrand noted that city crew overtime should also be excluded from the emergency funding, acknowledging that a budget amendment would be required.

Ms. Lockhart stated that the City's undesignated fund balance is roughly \$650,000, although this has not been confirmed by audit yet. She will keep a running spreadsheet tracking all expenses as invoices come in.


Chief Helmer asked if council believes the state of emergency should be extended, as that allows him more flexibility to make decisions. After discussion, it was agreed to keep the declaration in effect throughout the weekend, then discuss the matter with Mark Watkins, Osceola County Emergency Service Director. Any further extension will have to be authorized by the County Commissioners. Mr. Lewis will contact Mr. Watkins and hopes to set up a meeting on Monday.

Mr. Lewis requested that all staff and contractors track their costs carefully and reminded all that accurate record keeping is critical when seeking reimbursement from other agencies. He hopes to convene again next week in order to develop a recovery plan.

Motion by Mr. Elliott authorizing the Interim City Manager to spend up to \$50,000 to clean up storm damage with a reassessment when \$25,000 has been spent. Funding may be adjusted up or down at that point. Support by Mayor Emerick. Motion passed with all in favor.

Citizens' Comments – Randy Berger thanked council for releasing these funds and stated that it's good to know that their backs are covered as RCB and Beaver Tree have already spent many hours on the cleanup effort. He appreciates their support.

Motion by Mayor Emerick to adjourn. Support by Mr. Hildebrand. Motion passed with all in favor.



Kathy Fiebig
City Clerk