

**CITY OF EVART
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
August 24, 2020
Riverside Park East Pavilion**

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

Since the United States flag was not on site, there was no Pledge of Allegiance.

Present (by roll call): Mr. Ralph Carlson, Mr. Dan Elliott, Mr. Matt Hildebrand, Mayor Joyce, Ms. Sandy Szeliga

Present: City Manager Sarah Dvoracek, Assistant City Manager Mark Wilson, Finance Director Pepper Lockhart, City Attorney James White, Police Chief John Beam, City Clerk Kathy Fiebig

Guests: Diane Carlson, Pete Kiewit, Victoria Martin, Travis Douglas, Jim Schwab, John and Angela Hunter, Christina Emerick, Roger Elkins, Cathie Crew

Citizens' Comments: none

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Mayor Joyce to approve the agenda as presented. Support by Mr. Elliott. Motion carried with a voice vote; all were in favor.

Consent Agenda

B. Virtual Council Minutes – August 10, 2020

C. Vendor's List - \$80,645.21

D. Budget Amendments – *Finance Director will email Friday (8/21)20*

Motion by Mayor Joyce to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Support by Mr. Hildebrand. Motion carried with a voice vote; all were in favor.

Unfinished Business

E. Evart Industrial Properties, LLC – expansion project

Ms. Dvoracek reported that negotiations with Evart Township were unsuccessful. Therefore, the developer has changed his site plan and the current expansion will be within city limits. This will require a variance as he cannot meet the setbacks on the south side of the building. The Planning Commission met on Monday, August 24, 2020 at 5 pm and reviewed the new plan and approved it with the condition that the variance be granted. The Zoning Board of Appeals will address this matter in a special meeting on September 11, 2020 at 7:30 pm at Riverside Park East.

New Business

Items for Action:

F. 2nd Request from Emerson Geophysical, LLC to conduct seismic survey in part of the City of Evart on behalf of Savoy Energy, Inc.

Mayor Joyce sees no benefit to the City but great potential for damage. Mr. Hildebrand and Mr. Elliott agreed.

Motion by Mr. Elliott to deny the second request. Support by Mr. Carlson. Motion carried with a voice vote; all were in favor.

G. Proposed policy changes for the Evert Police Department

Chief Beam sent the changes to City Attorney James White for review, and Mr. White has not had time to do so. Council members have some questions and concerns regarding the policies. It was agreed to table this item to allow Mr. White time to review the document. Council members will contact either Mr. White or Mr. Beam to discuss their concerns. No action taken.

H. Request to authorize temporary modification to benefit provisions for Municipal Employees' Retirement System (MERS)

Ms. Dvoracek has procured grant funding for pay bonuses to front line responders during the COVID-19 pandemic. She requested a temporary change to the plan so that employees will not have to pay 5 (five) percentage on the bonus.

Motion by Mr. Elliott to approve the temporary modification to benefit provisions to exclude the bonus from MERS reporting requirements. Support by Mr. Hildebrand. Motion carried with a voice vote; all were in favor.

Items for Discussion

Downtown Development Authority Report:

Ms. Dvoracek advised council that the DDA Board will meet tomorrow, Tuesday, August 25, at 5:00 pm on the Depot Stage. They will go into closed session to discuss contract negotiations.

The Farmers Market is doing very well this summer, with increased vendors as well as special events (music, magicians, etc.) taking place during market hours. Jake Slater will perform this Saturday (8/29) from 11-1. That evening (dusk) the Mecosta Osceola Substance Awareness Coalition will be hosting an outdoor movie showing of the Lion King on the Depot stage. Attendance will be limited to 100 people so tickets are required.

City of Evert was recently showcased in Bridge Magazine with interviews of several business owners and residents.

There is one seat available on the DDA Board.

Ms. Szeliga reminded council that the DDA Director position has been open for some time and that the Hunters have run the Farmers Market with very little support. She would like to see the DDA review Angela's salary and consider paying John, as well. Mr. Carlson pointed out that this is a matter for the DDA Board, not council, and Ms. Dvoracek will bring it to their attention.

Set meeting for Depot and Strategic Plan Update:

Council agreed to meet regarding this matter on September 11 at the Riverside East Pavilion, immediately following the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing. The hearing begins at 7:30 pm.

Department/Informational Reports (No Action Needed)

I. Accounts Payable Report (8/11/2020 – 8/24/2020)

J. Payroll Report (8/11/2020 – 8/24/2020)

K. Summary of all Funds – July 2020

L. Department of Public Works Monthly Report – July 2020

M. Police Department Monthly Report – July 2020

N. Fire Board Minutes – August 2020

Mr. Hildebrand asked if the Fire Board has made any decision regarding the green truck. Mr. Elliott explained that they are considering asking for another extension due to COVID-19 complications with getting the required work done that will fulfill the grant and enable the Department to keep it. Ms. Dvoracek noted that all municipalities belonging to the Evart Fire Board have approved placing the millage proposal on the November ballot. Mr. Elliott outlined some of the Board's plans to educate the public around the proposal.

O. FYI – Notification of New Drinking Water Requirements for Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Citizens' Comments:

Ms. Dvoracek requested that residents with questions or concerns about council decisions or any public matter call her directly rather than posting false or misleading information on social media.

Pete Kiewit of Emerson Geophysical, LLC expressed disappointment at council's decision to deny the second request for the seismic survey. He asked if council is willing to reconsider their decision. Mayor Joyce said that citizens comments is not the appropriate venue to discuss the matter, and Mr. Elliott stated that he did not see enough changes in the second proposal to justify supporting it. Mayor Joyce suggested that Mr. Kiewit contact Director of Public Works Mark Wilson to discuss further options.

Travis Douglas stated that he recently posted on social media about the water rate increases and the extension of the Republic contract with the change to wheeled carts. He is concerned about the added financial burdens on residents in an uncertain economy. He had also questioned the use of special assessments for items such as water meters instead of saving for these situations. He believes that his posts created some useful dialogue. Part of his purpose was to see where candidates for city office stand on these issues. Mayor Joyce asked Mr. Douglas to call Ms. Dvoracek to discuss these matters.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mayor Joyce to adjourn. Support by Ms. Szeliga. Motion carried with a voice vote; all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Kathy Fiebig
City Clerk