

**CITY OF EVART  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
November 22, 2022 @ 7:30PM  
Community Room at the Depot, 200 S. Main Street**

Mayor Chris Emerick called the meeting to order at 7:30pm, then led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Present (via roll call):** Sean Duffy, Jim Schwab, Chris Emerick, Matt Hildebrand, Sandra Szeliga

**Present (staff):** City Manager Pepper Lockhart, Finance Director/Treasurer Jennie Duncan, Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Director Todd Bruggema, Director of Public Works (DPW) Don Duncan, Chief of Police John Beam, City Attorney James White, DPW Executive Administrative Assistant Chris Mulkerns

**Guests:** None.

**Citizens' Comments:** None.

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Mayor Emerick to approve the agenda as presented. Support by Mr. Hildebrand.  
Motion passed with all in favor.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

**A.** Regular Council Minutes – November 1, 2022

**B.** Vendor's List - \$296,137.63

Motion by Mr. Hildebrand to approve the consent agenda as presented. Support by Ms. Szeliga.  
Motion passed with all in favor.

**Unfinished Business**

None.

**New Business**

**C.** Request to approve Disposal of Assets

Mr. Duncan commented that he would like approval to dispose of the 1990 Federal E-One fire truck. It is inoperable and only has scrap value. He is working on logistics, but the first step would be approval to dispose of it. Motion by Mr. Hildebrand authorizing the disposal of the 1990 Federal E-One fire truck (VIN 46JDBBA81L1003347) by whatever means staff deems appropriate. Support by Mayor Emerick. Motion passed with all in favor.

**D.** Appointment of Council Members to Boards, Commissions and Committees

Ms. Lockhart noted that all of the boards, commissions and committees in question were provided to council in the packet with the exception of the Fire Board. She stated she had a request from Shane Helmer to keep Mr. Elliott on that board and she also noted that it does not require a council member be appointed to that board. Ms. Lockhart advised council to take the information provided and bring back suggestions for appointments. Mr. Hildebrand commented that he would like to look for a second person serve with him on the Water/Sewer/Street committee. Ms. Lockhart noted that they should be filling these appointments sooner rather

than later. Motion by Mr. Hildebrand to reappoint Dan Elliott to the Fire Board to serve a two-year term. Support by Mayor Emerick. Motion passed with all in favor. Second motion by Mr. Hildebrand to appoint Jim Schwab to serve on the Water/Sewer/Street Committee. Support by Mayor Emerick. Mr. Schwab abstained from the vote. Motion passed with all others in favor.

#### **E. Council Meeting Dates/Times & Mayor Pro Tem**

There was discussion about reverting to the first and third Mondays of the month with the meeting time staying the same (7:00 and 7:30). Ms. Lockhart commented that would make it easier for her to attend other meetings that were falling on Tuesdays. Ms. Szeliga commented that she has senior citizen friends who have asked for meetings to be held earlier in the day – 6:30 or 7:00pm. She stated she would like the community to be more involved and earlier meeting times may help. Mr. Duffy wasn't convinced that an earlier meeting time would make a difference. Mr. Hildebrand suggested putting the meeting agenda on the City Facebook page with a link to the packet on the city website. Ms. Lockhart noted that she has started doing the "Did you know?" on the city Facebook page as suggested by Mayor. She also commented she will be starting up the "Coffee" gatherings soon with the public. Mayor suggested that those dates and times be rotated to allow everyone an opportunity to gather. There was also discussion about possibly live streaming council meetings to reach more people. Ms. Lockhart asked if there would be a need for a resolution approving that form of meeting. Mr. White stated that would not be necessary. Motion by Mr. Hildebrand to approve Resolution 2022-16, setting council meeting dates on the first and third Monday of each month at 7:00 and 7:30 pm; reappoint Sandra Szeliga as Mayor Pro Tem, effective December 1, 2022 through November 24, 2024; and authorize Jennie Duncan, Deputy Clerk to sign approved resolution. Support by Mayor Emerick. Motion passed with all in favor.

#### **F. Riverside West**

Ms. Lockhart reminded council members about the history regarding Riverside West campground, and it being taken offline almost three years ago for safety concerns at the time. During most recent Parks and Recreation Committee it was determined that the campground could be reopened after some electrical upgrades to the site hookups and is recommending that council approve making those upgrades and fixing one pedestal as assessed by Baldwin Electric. Ms. Lockhart suggested that the city start with these upgrades now, allowing the campground to be usable this upcoming season while we apply for available grants to continue upgrades going forward. There was discussion regarding rates and return on investment. Ms. Lockhart raised concerns that the longer the campground is closed people will lose interest in it ever opening. Mr. Hildebrand commented that there are very few costs to the city that would change if the campground were reopened. Mr. Duffy suggested marketing and promoting the campground once it is opened. Ms. Lockhart commented that she has spoken with Chief about giving the park host authority to issue parking citations as needed to take that time consuming matter away from city police. She also stated that Mr. Duncan has done a good job of getting the information needed to provide a good assessment of what is needed to get the campground up and running again and the cost for park host and improvements are already in the budget for this year. If approved, DPW will do the upgrades as indicated and Baldwin Electric will come back out and certify the work. Motion by Mr. Hildebrand to authorize electrical work needed to reopen the campground for camping at Riverside West for the 2023 season and attempt to fill camp host position for 2023 season at the amount budgeted amending job description to include added responsibility of enforcing parking as described. Support by Ms. Szeliga. Motion passed with all in favor.

#### **G. Extend Master Plan**

Ms. Lockhart reminded council that Williams & Works is working on the master plan. She noted that it was Dan Elliott who made the suggestion to extend the current master plan while we are working on the new one. Mr. Hildebrand suggested changing the language in the resolution to include a specific end date. Ms. Lockhart suggested an end date of June 30, 2023. Motion by Mayor Emerick to approve Resolution 2022-17, a resolution to extend existing Resolution 19-2017 City of Ewart Master Land Use Plan, to include the language suggested by Mr. Hildebrand; and authorize Jennie Duncan, Deputy Clerk to sign approved resolution. Support by Mr. Duffy. Motion passed with all in favor.

#### **H. Health Insurance Costs for 2023**

Ms. Duncan asked if there were any questions regarding the information she provided in the packet. She discussed the quotes received from Lerner for Priority Health and BCBS. She explained the city currently utilizes the 20% cost sharing rather than the hard cap. With the quotes received the hard cap would be a cost of \$68,698.37 to the city with the balance being spread equally amongst the employees – this would apply to both Priority Health and BCBS. The 20% option would have the following costs to the city:

Priority Health 250 - \$63,414.62

Priority Health 500 - \$54,749.66

Priority Health HSA - \$55,802.88 – this cost includes the city paying the required \$2100 deductible on to a health card for each employee. Ms. Lockhart suggested the city give employees the option to choose from one of these three. Mr. Hildebrand asked which plan is most beneficial to employees. Ms. Lockhart confirmed that the 20% option over the hard cap. City has until December 1<sup>st</sup> to advise Lerner Financial of their renewal decision. Ms. Lockhart will ask Lerner Financial to do a presentation to employees on the options available. Motion by Mr. Hildebrand to accept the Priority Health option to give employees choices between Priority Health 250, Priority Health 500 or Priority Health HSA 2100 with the \$2100 deductible paid by the city on an HSA card for those employees who choose that option; and authorizing continuing with the 20% cost option as opposed to hard cap. Support by Mayor Emerick. Motion passed with all in favor.

#### **I. Budget Amendment for Special Revenue Funds – per auditors**

Ms. Duncan stated that during this year's audit they were made aware that the Fire Department Special Revenue Fund and Library Special Revenue Fund need to be adopted into the budget. She explained that they were not made part of the budget in the past because the city is merely a holding fund for money received as taxes and personal property taxes from the state that go directly to the fire department and library. Approval of this budget amendment brings the City into compliance with the 2023 Budget. Motion by Mayor Emerick to approve bringing both special revenue funds into the City of Ewart 2022/2023 Budget. Support by Mr. Hildebrand. Motion passed with all in favor.

#### **J. City Clerk Position**

Ms. Lockhart stated she had received two applications and that the council has 30 days to fill the position. Mr. Hildebrand asked if that gave Ms. Lockhart enough time to interview both candidates and bring her recommendation to council. Mayor Emerick agreed stating it would give them a better idea of skill sets and an opportunity to make them aware of all that the job entails. Mr. Hildebrand asked that the job continue to be posted until filled.

#### **Department/Informational Reports**

**K. Accounts Payable Report (11/2/2022 – 11/22/2022)**

**L. Payroll Reports (11/2/2022 – 11/22/2022)**

**City Attorney Report/Comment**

Mr. White asked if there were questions on his report. There were none. He noted that he would like council to consider a change to his compensation package: No monetary change but proposing to only be required to attend one meeting a month. Mr. Schwab asked if Mr. White's reports could be more detailed. Ms. Lockhart explained that due to confidentiality he can't be too detailed. Mr. White stated that if any council members have questions regarding his reports, they can contact him anytime. Mr. Hildebrand requested that Mr. White include the general amount of time spent on each item in his reports.

**City Clerk Report/Comment**

None.

**Finance Director Report/Comment**

Ms. Duncan asked if there were any questions on her report. There were none.

**Department of Public Works Report/Comment**

Mr. Duncan reported that his staff removed some storm damage caused by the windstorm; they have repaired the road into the Fifth Street Park; they have been cleaning up the DPW yard, garage and SRE building, all equipment is now being stored indoors. He also reported that the leaf vac worked very well this fall and has already caused savings on gas and employee time. There were some issues with snow plowing equipment and the salt truck this past week but is working now. Christmas lights have been installed on Main Street.

**Police Department Report/Comment**

Chief thanked the city for lighting up the bridge lights in support of Reed City. His post on FB has reached over 17,000 people and has had nothing but positive comments.

**Downtown Development Authority Report/Comment**

P. Meeting Packet from November 2, 2022- Mr. Bruggema stated that a public hearing has been set for the DDA TIF Plan for December 13, 2022. He also said the next joint meeting will be November 30<sup>th</sup> and we will go over the safe routes to school updates and the SBEI final draft from Michigan State.

**Fire Department Report/Comment**

None.

**City Manager Report/Comment****Evart Housing Commission**

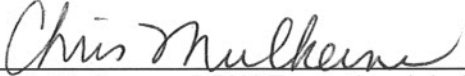
R. Minutes – October 25, 2022

**Evart Public Library**

S. Minutes – October 17, 2022

**Citizens' Comments:** None.

Motion by Mayor Emerick to adjourn. Support by Mr. Schwab. Motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25pm.

  
Chris Mulkerns, DPW Executive Administrative Assistant