

**CITY OF EVART  
PRE-COUNCIL MEETING  
September 5<sup>th</sup>,2023 @ 7:00PM  
Community Room at the Depot, 200 S. Main Street**

Mayor Chris Emerick called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Present Council Members:** Matt Hildebrand, Sean Duffy, Jim Schwab, Sandy Szeliga

**Present Staff:** City Manager Pepper Lockhart, Downtown Development Director (DDA) Todd Bruggema, Finance Director Jennie Duncan, Department of Public Works Director Don Duncan, City Clerk Andrea Grupido, Chief of Police John Beam, City Attorney Eric Williams

**Guests:** Troy and Patricia Blakeslee, Dixie Gable, Karen Higgins, William and Tami Dellar, Ken Wirth, Kelly Whitman, Eric and Shannon Schmidt, Diane Brackett, Bridget Silvernail, Roger Elkins, Chuck and Ronda Strange, Carl and Donna Robinson, Gary Hartsock, Mark Sochocki, Linda Miller, Rob and Brandy Brown, Laurie Gostlin, Janet Taylor, Travis Douglas, Matt Harrison, Bill Shively, Jodie Hardy, Dale Martin, Chad Wilson, Jesse Hyden, Kel Hyden-Shyrock, Olyvia Campbell, Alec McKay

**Old Business:**

J. Duncan wanted to bring to council's attention that the PD budget does not include fringe benefits. Duncan will talk to the auditors in October to see if they can adjust the PD budget to reflect their fringe benefits as well. J. Duncan explains that when extra pension payments can be made, they come from the general fund. If the PD starts to budget for those fringe benefits, thus contributing to the general fund, then the city could make extra pension payments and possibly give the current administrative staff at City Hall a well-deserved raise.

**K9 Information**

Chief Beam provides information regarding 3 different kennels. NMK in Harrison has a purchase price of \$13,000 and is a 4-week training program. Crest in Auburn Hills is between \$13,000-\$14,000 and is a 5-week program. West Michigan K9 out of West Olive would be \$16,000 and is a 5-week program. Chief Beam recommends NMK for the proximity and time of training. The K9 would be trained in narcotics, aggression control, article searches and building searches. The dog's services would be available to the schools for searches and would be the only active K9 in the county at this time. Fundraising can offset some of the costs incurred by the city. Officer Hyden has been with the Evart Police Department for over a year and has expressed interest in the position since he started. Officer Hyden's vehicle is already set up for the K9, and they are looking into grant opportunities to get a replacement vehicle set up.

**Lamar Lease**

The previous lease was made with the LDFA for \$400 annually. The new lease agreement would be with the City of Evart at a proposed \$500 annual fee for 10 years. Hildebrand suggests changing the term from 10 years to 3 years to stay consistent with the City's other lease terms.

**AT&T Lease Agreement**

AT&T would like the city to reconsider the lease for \$1,750/month if they can come up with a workable water tank design instead of building their own tower.

*Election Agreement*

Grupido says that the State is strongly urging municipalities to partner up with the county if possible. This will better their chances of receiving grant money for the implementation of early voting. There would be a high cost to the city if the early voting site was run as a single municipality considering the cost of a new tabulator and VAT is around \$10,000. Grupido is recommending the city enter into an agreement with the county to share the costs of an early voting site.

*Well 1 Pump*

EGLE has frozen all the testing requirements for the remainder of the year while the pump is shut down and can be decided on what rehab, if any, will be done.

  
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Andrea Grupido, City Clerk

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