

Dassel, MN

Regular City Council Meeting

Minutes

Monday, December 16, 2024 at 6:00 pm

1. Call to Order

Minutes:

Meeting called to order by Mayor Lalone at 6:06 pm.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Mayor Lalone

b. Roll Call

Council members Gaertner, Landrus, Sombke, Thurn & Mayor Lalone

Minutes:

Member present: Gaertner, Landrus, Sombke, Thurn and Mayor Lalone. Member absent: None

2. Approval of Minutes - City Council Minutes Nov. 14, 2024, and DAHS meeting Oct. 22, 2024

Minutes:

Motion by Gaertner, seconded by Landrus to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

3. Public Hearing(s)

Minutes:

Public Hearing was opened at 6:08 pm.

a. Truth in Taxation Public Hearing

Minutes:

Administrator Eckerly reported the Levy is currently at 6%. The increase of \$46,000.00 is due to the increase in the contract with the Sheriff's Department of \$12,000.00, Planning and Development services increase of \$15,700.00, energy cost increase, health benefit increase and the addition of the City Administrators wages. This portion of the Public Hearing was closed at 6:22 pm.

b. Assessment of Delinquent Utility Accounts Public Hearing

Minutes:

This section of the Public Hearing was opened at 6:22 pm and closed at 6:24 pm with no one present to speak.

4. Open Forum

(The City Council invites residents to share new ideas or concerns related to city business; however, individual questions and remarks are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. No City Council action will be taken, although the Council may refer issues to staff for follow up or consideration at a future meeting. The Mayor may use discretion if speakers are repeating views already expressed or ask for a spokesperson for groups of individuals with similar views. Speakers should state their name and home address at the podium before speaking.)

5. Additions or Omissions to Agenda

Minutes:

Administrator Eckerly would like to add the annual pay increase for employees of 2.5% to the agenda for approval under 9j.

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Thurn to approve the agenda with the one addition. Motion carried.

6. Consent Agenda

Minutes:

Motion by Sombke, seconded by Thurn to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion carried.

- a. **Payment of Claims \$402,423.54**
- b. **Motion not to waive municipal tort liability limits established by MN Statute 466.04.**
- c. **Motion to Approve the Appointment of the Fire Department Officers effective Jan. 1, 2025**
- d. **Motion to schedule the 1st City Council meeting of 2025 on Tuesday, January 21, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. (Oath of Office)**

7. Council & Committee Reports

a. Council member Landrus - Dassel/Cokato Trail meeting 11/20/24

Minutes:

Council member Landrus reported on the trail meeting on November 20, 2024. The active transportation program funding was discussed to see about getting some assistance with maintenance of the asphalt on the trail. Bolton and Menk will be assisting with the grant application.

b. Council member Gaertner - Small Business Group meeting 11/25/24

Minutes:

Council member Gaertner reported the groups last meeting was to discuss the Dazzle in Dassel event. That event took place on December 13, 2024. The group was having a hard time finding someone to play Santa. Someone was hired and Santa made an appearance at the He Shed She Shed and the Garden Nook. Next meeting should be the 1st Monday in January 2025.

c. Council member Sombke - DAHS meeting 11/26/24

Minutes:

Council member Sombke was absent from the November meeting. Nothing to report. The next meeting will be in January 2025.

8. Staff Reports

a. Museum Director

Minutes:

Administrator Eckerly read the Museum Directors report. There is an area they would like to use as a little theatre. They are in need of having extra storage. The Department is looking at a new copy machine, a new microfilm reader, computer for the back room and also a new small copy machine for the back computer. The Director is getting quotes to have the History Center portion of the building painted. A new company was out to give a quote for the maintenance of the sprinkler system.

Upcoming events include: The Bortnam family musicians will be performing on Dec. 21, 2024, and coming in 2025 is Reader's theatre of Our Town Exhibit – "What's in a Name – Dassel?", Hatchery 2025, Printing and books – Steve Meisner and our printing items from the Dassel Dispatch, and Manhole Covers – Lydia Henry What Is It?

b. Liquor Store Manager

Minutes:

Manager Moy reported a little growth in sales numbers. The sign has been installed and running after a faulty connector was replaced. In November, Brandon Fischer, GreenWize Energy Solutions gave an estimate in regard to switching the interior lightning to LED. This is just for the liquor store side of the building. The LED bulbs that were recently replaced will be taken out and kept for use elsewhere. Council would like Moy to reach out to the tenant on the other side of the building to see if they would be interested in switching as well.

The total project is: Before Rebate \$8,665.95 Rebate Amount \$4,149.65 Out of Pocket. \$4,516.30

Motion by Gaertner, seconded by Thurn to approve the quote from GreenWize to retro the interior lighting at the liquor store to LED for \$4,516.30 to be charged to account to be determined by the City Administrator. Motion carried.

c. Fire Chief

Minutes:

Chief Johnson reported 26 calls for the month of November 2024. There were 12 within the city limits and 378 year to date.

d. Public Works Director

Minutes:

Street Department: The Department has been salting and sanding as needed. They installed holiday decorations along HWY 12 and Atlantic Ave. They have been continuing to pick up brush and stick piles along streets from the Halloween storm and in the field. He has been in contact with K&H towing regarding towing during snow removal again this year. The Department is all set and will do the same thing they did last year. He would like to remind residents that winter parking restrictions are in effect. Water Department: There was a service line leak on Sellards Dr. over Thanksgiving. It was repaired on Dec. 3, 2024, to find it was leaking prior to curb stop which per new ordinance is the cities responsibility. There were batteries that had to be replace at Water Plant generator. He has received a few complaints on discolored water but after investigation found to be homeowner issues. The most common has been low to empty water softeners. He submitted service line inventory and paperwork for the Lead and Copper inventory to Department of Health and is still waiting on a letter of completion. Sewer Department: The Lift pump at Lake and Willis is replaced and working. He has added this Lift pump to yearly inspections. The Department is continuing to sample as needed. He had Algren Electric install plugs into panels of 5th St. Lift and Simons Lift to be able to replace battery back-ups without having to wire them in. He has contacted Litchfield sewer department about having us come and walk through their plant. This will be a great help to see the mechanical plant side in operation for Nolan and

myself when we go test for our B license. We will do this during slow times. He is requesting a motion to purchase siding and soffit for Main and 5th St. Lift Stations. Moy presented pricing from Menards for supplies for staff to install steel siding and soffit on the two lift stations. Moy reported the Department will install the siding and soffit as they did the roofs on the buildings and the siding on Sellards Park bathroom. They tentatively plan to do the installs this winter/early spring as weather allows. The cost of the supplies is \$4,000 and would be taken out of 602-49450-401. We are purchasing on the heavy end of supplies because Simmons and our field shed also need to be completed in near future and will use remainder there. He is still waiting on quote for the irrigator pump at sewer plant.

Equipment: They have all summer equipment put away and snow equipment ready for service. They have been continuing to maintain and do preventative maintenance on equipment. He would like to purchase a bed mounted sander for the Tool Cat from Farmrite. Moy reported with the addition of the Safe Routes to School and downtown area, the Department has been doing a lot more clearing of snow on sidewalks. The Department only has a walk behind type of spreader for salt/sanding the sidewalks. The quote is for a trade in that Farm-Rite received that wasn't used so it is new condition and \$2,000 less than a new one. It is a preferred design for our use. The quote is for \$5,900 installed.

Personnel: Stan is off for the winter but still available for snow plowing. There will be employees using PTO rounding out the end of year but will maintain adequate staff snow plowing if needed. Parks: The Department has begun flooding the skating rink as long as weather allows. The rink is now open. The Department leveled dirt out at Summit Park. He was trying to work it out with the Rotary Club to be able to put time in, but weather didn't allow. They rough leveled it and will finish it in the spring including seeding. Moy attended DC Trail Meeting about moving forward with the grant to have trail repaired.

Building/Property: The Department has been cleaning and organizing the buildings. He worked with Spring Lake Association and MN Rural Water Association to complete a smoke test on "Chucks Pipe" to identify where it was coming in from. They discovered where the intake is and is coming from low land to the west. The line and intake are all out of city limits along with where it enters Spring Lake. The Department has been installing markers for snow cleaning. They will be reinstalling the thrift stores sign on the new liquor store sign. They were waiting on an answer if they wanted to have the sign redone but they do not. Motion by Lalone, seconded by Landrus to approve the purchase of material for repair of the siding/soffit project for the Main and 5th St lift stations not to exceed \$4,000.00 with fund coming from account 602-49450-401. Motion carried.

e. City Engineer

Minutes:

Engineer Lease reported the grant they are applying for is an active transportation grant for projects between \$50,000 and \$1,000,000.00. The project cost for the DC Trail is right around \$540,000.00 and if we receive the grant. It would be \$460,000.00 and would cover all of the construction costs. That would include resurfacing the entire trail to Cokato with portions of it receiving an actual reclaim to get better base material underneath it.

f. City Administrator

Minutes:

Administrator Eckerly reported upcoming events include Holiday – Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Tuesday & Wednesday, Dec. 24 & 25, 2024, City Hall Closed Holiday – New Years Eve (City Hall open until noon), Dec. 31, 2024, and New Years Day (Jan. 1, 2025) City Hall Closed, Small Business Group meeting, Mon. Jan. 6, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at SIMO, Department Head meeting, Tues, Jan. 14, 2025, 7:00 am, City Hall, Holiday – Martin Luther King Jr, Monday, Jan 20, 2025, City Hall Closed, City Council Meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. City Hall, Fire Relief Annual meeting, Wed. Jan. 22, 2025, 7:00 pm. Fire Hall (Mayor/City Adm., DAHS meeting, Tues. Jan. 28, 2025, 10:00 a.m. History Center, Board of Equalization Training, MUST BE COMPLETED BY Feb. 1, 2025.

She attended a meeting with a developer and Bolton & Menk regarding building five duplexes in Cherry Circle. She also spoke to another developer regarding building duplexes on Summit Avenue. She attended a TASC webinar, met with LeeAnn and Jerry Irwin, Trail Meeting, Department Head, Safety Meeting. Administrative staff had a training session with Jim Brown, H2O Analytics on the application for residents to monitor their own water usage and the steps to launch the application in January 2025. Tracey Bergum, City Clerk and I had a pre-audit meeting with Sara Oberloh to get prepared for the 2024 audit. Sara also stopped out and met with Heather Moy, Liquor Store Manager. Audit will be scheduled sometime in March 2025. The Department has handled a variety of complaints and inquiries. Staff is working with the delinquent utility account property owners prior to the Public Hearing on December 16, 2024. She is working on a proposed new fee schedule, budget and reviewing posting entries from throughout the year for corrections. Since it is the end of the year, there has been staff inquiring about their Earned Sick and Safe time. That is when she reviewed that volunteer firefighters were included in the policy. The State of MN changed the ESST law to not cover Volunteer and paid-on-call firefighters in the Spring of 2024. She talked with Dave Johnson, Fire Chief regarding the impact if she proposed the removal of the volunteer firefighters and he said it would be fine, and no one would be impacted. She has a motion requesting the change to the Personnel policy section referring to Earned Sick and Safe time. She has been in contact with Duane Heier regarding the restrooms at Breed's Park to get me an engineer drawing of the proposed restrooms that I can submit to the Building Official for review. Carolyn Holje, Museum Director, knows an artist that is working on creating a draft drawing of the proposed city seal. She has been working with Bill Singer, AT Group for the enrollment of the Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance, Delta Dental renewal, Flex Spending enrollment, Health Savings enrollment. She is working on the city's renewal of liability/property and work comp insurance with the League of MN Cities. She volunteered to be part of the new Economic Development sub-committee for the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities. The new MARCO copier was installed Friday, December 13, 2024.

The League of MN Cities Elected Leaders Institute is February 21-22 in Plymouth or February 28 - March 1 in Alexandria if anyone would like to attend, please contact her to get registered and hotel accommodations.

g. City Attorney

Minutes:

Attorney Greenley presented a draft of the Adult Cannabis ordinance to the council for feedback. Greenley proposed the idea of a Public Hearing or bringing the Cannabis Committee back to go through the draft. Another approach may be to just do away with the draft. The moratorium will expire on January 1, 2025. The Office of Cannabis Management will begin accepting application in January or February with no social equity requirement with a lottery possibly being held sometime in May/June 2025. Eckerly asked if the council would want an application to be submitted on behalf of the city to get included in the lottery, which was discussed in length by council with no conclusion. Greenley stated at this point he is unsure if the LMC will insure cities that sell Cannabis. Greenley will be working with Sarah at Bolton and Menk then setting up a joint Council and Planning and Zoning meeting to review the draft ordinance and zoning map.

h. Sheriff's Department

Minutes:

Deputy Kelly reported 105 calls for the month of November 2024.

9. Business Items

a. Motion to Approve Resolution 2024-022 Appointing Dassel State Insurance and Susan Jarl, Agent

Minutes:

Motion by Gaertner, seconded by Lalone to approve Resolution 2024-022 Appointing Dassel State Insurance and Susan Jarl, Agent. Motion carried.

b. Motion to approve annual proposal for \$895.00 and 5 year Inspection Proposal for \$1,950.00 from Escape Fire Protection for the wet/dry sprinkler system at the History Center.

Minutes:

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Gaertner to approve annual proposal for \$895.00- and 5-year Inspection Proposal for \$1,950.00 from Escape Fire Protection for the wet/dry sprinkler system. Motion carried.

c. Motion to Authorize Mayor Lalone to sign Letter of Support for Active Transportation Program Infrastructure grant.

Minutes:

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Sombke to authorize Mayor Lalone to sign Letter of Support for Active Transportation Program Infrastructure grant. Motion carried.

d. Motion to approve Resolution 2024-023 Authorizing Pursuit of Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant

Minutes:

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Thurn to approve Resolution 2024-023 Authorizing Pursuit of Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant. Motion carried.

- e. Motion to authorize purchase of used SP12 Sand & Salt Spreader installed in ToolCat for \$5,900.00 from Farm-Rite Equipment.**

Minutes:

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Gaertner to authorize purchase of used SP12 Sand & Salt Spreader installed in ToolCat for \$5,900.00 from Farm-Rite Equipment. Motion carried.

- f. Motion to approve changes in Personnel Policy in regard to Earned Sick and Safe Leave eliminating volunteer firefighters from coverage.**

Minutes:

Motion by Lalone, seconded by Landrus to approve changes in Personnel Policy in regard to Earned Sick and Safe Leave eliminating volunteer firefighters from coverage. Motion carried.

- g. UPDATED: Discuss proposed 2025 Fee Schedule**

Minutes:

Eckerly will research the State Statute in regard to the Peddlers license fee. Mowing will be added to the fee schedule at \$75.00 per incident. The charge for the Irrigation Box will be discussed further at an upcoming meeting. Mitch with Bolton & Menk has been asked about including specifications for the installation of an Irrigation Box for a curb stop to the ordinance. The Fee Schedule will be updates and published for approval at the January 21, 2025 meeting.

- h. UPDATED: Motion to Adopt Resolution 2024-024 Approving Final Budget & Levy**

Minutes:

Motion by Gaertner, seconded by Lalone Motion to Adopt Resolution 2024-024 Approving Final Budget & Levy. Motion carried.

- i. NEW: Motion to certify delinquent water and sewer amounts to the Meeker County Auditor to be put on the real estate taxes**

Minutes:

Motion by Landrus, seconded by Gaertner to certify delinquent water and sewer amounts to the Meeker County Auditor to be put on the real estate taxes. Motion carried.

- j. Motion to approve 2.5% pay increase for staff effective 1/1/2025.**

Minutes:

Motion by Gaertner, seconded by Thurn to approve a 2.5% increase in wages for city staff effective January 1, 2025. Motion carried

10. Adjourn

Minutes:

Motion by Gaertner, seconded by Sombke to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 pm. Motion carried.