

Mayor Sandie Peterson called the council meeting to order on Monday December 12, 2022 at 7:00pm at the Lafayette City Council Chambers, 791 Main Avenue, Lafayette. Present were: Mayor Sandie Peterson, Councilors: Dave Reed, Scott Portner, Tom Polich, and Curt Tauber. Also present were: Utility & Maintenance Superintendent Al Fox, Clerk/Treasurer Sandy Burger, City Attorney Aaron Walton and Fire Chief Nick Klingler; Ambulance President Mark Dick was absent.

Guests present: Roger Hippert – Heimat Properties, LLC’s Attorney – 218 N Center Street, New Ulm, Doug Hanson – Winthrop Publications, Larkin VanDeest – 411 10th Street, Dave Burger – 580 Main Avenue, Nancy Reinhart – 600 Adolph Avenue, George and Karyl Putnam – 440 Avenue, Jessica Moldan – 660 10th Street, Brooklyn Peterson – 660 10th Street, Brennan Moldan – 1091 Lafayette Avenue and Bradley Moldan – 540 Lafayette Avenue.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Peterson opened the public hearing for the Rezoning application from Heimat Properties – 351 6th Street. Attorney Hippert explained the reasoning for the request to have the property re-zoned from Residential to Commercial. The owner has been a good steward of the property and it ended at no fault of his, the property taxes and utilities for the building alone are \$71,000, with no income, that is not sustainable. By following the interim ordinance, Hippert submitted written replies to each of the eight (8) questions to help council make the decision whether or not to approve. With little public input the Mayor closed the hearing at 7:06 pm and opened the Certify Utilities hearing, with no one present the hearing was closed at 7:07pm

Motioned by Polich and seconded by Portner to approve the agenda as presented; all ayes, motion carried.

Motioned by Reed and seconded by Portner to approve the Consent Agenda; all ayes, motion carried. Included in the consent agenda were: 11/14/2022 council minutes, 12/1/2022 Special Pay Equity review meeting, 12/6/2022 1st Truth in Taxation Hearing and final Budget Workshop minutes, bills totaling \$71,503.58 and the three (3) sump pump waivers presented.

Reports:

Fox: The Storm Water grant was denied, also were not awarded the fluoridation grant, in part due to no longer having a school in town. The total cost of the update is \$4,865, he explained that it was last updated about 20 years ago.

Motioned by Reed and seconded by Polich to approve the purchase for the Fluoridation equipment replacement; all ayes, motion carried. Fox explained the National Rural Water and MN Rural Water associations PFAS Cost Recovery program; there is no cost, as of now it is not a Permitted Limit, and the benefit is when the time comes to have to monitor it there will be cost recovery. It is highly recommended to register to protect our utility from a PFAS financial burden. The consensus of the council was to register.

Burger: Working on reports due before the end of the year, annual payrolls and preparing for year end. Due to the large increase in tipping fees from MN Waste Processing Center (MWCP) the garbage increase amounts are as follows: bag tags eighteen cents, bag base service forty-two cents, small cart \$1.52, medium cart \$2.38, large cart \$3.17, and recycling twenty-three cents increase; city-wide clean-up fee did not change. This will be as of January 1, 2023 and reflected on the end of January billing.

Peterson: Invited everyone to attend the Santa Day festivities.

Tauber: New Ulm building officials met and decided being Courtland left that they would not supply building inspector services to Lafayette.

Klingler: Has an interested person who works at UFC and would be able to go on day calls. Asked about the city interest in the rural pumper, Peterson would like more information. Rural Fire meets in the beginning of February.

Unfinished Business:

RO Water Project: Short term financing has been received. PFA requested a WIF project information worksheet, this has now been completed and will be submitted this week. RFPs were sent out 11/28 and due back 12/16 for the RO project’s site evaluation, Geo-technical Services and investigation of the old well house foundation location. **Portner motioned to approve the authorization for Fox to move forward with awarding the RFP for these services, Tauber seconded; all ayes, motion carried.**

MN Building Code: **Motioned by Portner and seconded by Polich to not move forward with adopting the MN Building code, ayes Portner, Polich, Reed, Peterson, Nay Tauber, motion carried.**

Pay Equity: After discussion, **Portner motioned to adopt the Pay Equity Step Plan Program and Placement for the current FT staff, Reed seconded, all ayes, motion carried.**

New Business:

Zoning Permits:

LAF 2022- 14 – Rezone application by Heimat Properties LLC: Council reviewed Ord. 139 Interim Rezoning ordinance and discussed the 8 facts of findings for the rezoning process and then **Reed motioned to approve the rezoning of the said parcels, Tauber seconded; ayes: Reed, Tauber, Polich, Peterson; nays: Portner, motion carried.**

LAF – 2022 - 15 – CUP Application for Martens Solar: **Motioned by Reed and seconded by Polich to set the Public hearing for LAF – 2022-15 CUP for the January 9, 2023 council meeting; all ayes, motion carried.**

Resolution 2022- 28 – December Donations: **Motioned by Polich and seconded by Portner; all ayes, motion carried.**

2023 Fire Officers: Chief – Nick Klinger, Asst. Chief – Mark Voges, Secretary – Savanna Clemon, Training Officers Logan Van Deest and Scott Portner, Truck Runners – Wayne Portner and Kenny Liebl, Fire Marshall – Joe Sondag. Reed motioned to approve the 2023 Fire officers as presented, Polich seconded; ayes Reed, Polich, Tauber, Peterson, and Portner abstained.

Fire Department Resignations: Two firefighters submitted resignation letters. John Richter was effective on 11/10/2022 and Corey Langhoff effective 11/30/2022. **Motioned by Polich and seconded by Tauber to accept John Richter and Corey Langhoff's resignations, all ayes, motion carried.**

Resolution 2022- 22 Certify Utility: **Motioned by Portner and seconded by Tauber to approve Resolution 2022-22 Certifying past due utilities to the tax roll as presented; all ayes, motion carried.**

Resolution 2022-26 - Park & Rec Agreement: Council discussed the agreement and with no changes asked Burger to forward it to the park & Recreation chair Kayla Campbell and hopefully finalize in January.

End of Year Moves: Year end moves were presented by Burger. Fox requested to add a \$20,000 move from Water Fund to the RO Temp bond to help with costs of the project.

Ambulance assessments received in 2022: \$ 6522.80 to General Fund

Streets to Public Works savings: \$25,000 for street sealing and \$5,000 towards equipment

Revolving loan local Funds to Culture for updates: \$11,957.49

Fire department to Fire Equipment Savings: \$7,200

General Fund to General Fund Project Fund: \$10,173 remaining funds for the band shelter update.

Culture porta potties charges coded to ARPA funds of \$1,829.00

Water Fund to RO Temporary Fund: \$20,000

Motioned by Portner to approve all end of year moves, as amended, Polich seconded, all ayes, motion carried.

Resolution 2022-27 – Forgiving a Loan from Wastewater Enterprise Fund to the Water Enterprise Fund: Fox explained that this loan was made to the water fund by the sewer fund to help pay for the new well in 2019. Currently the water facility needs to build an RO filtration system due to the fact that the waste water plant cannot meet its chloride limits, it just makes sense to forgive this loan, so the money generated can help with the RO project costs.

Motioned by Portner to pass resolution 2022-27 Forgiving the WWTF loan to the Water Fund, seconded by Polich, all ayes, motion carried.

Resolution 2022-29 – Approving 2023 Budget and Adopting the 2023 Levy: There was further discussion on the 2023 budget by council and residents attending. The research into the city purchasing a lawn mower and providing in-house mowing verses contracting services, two quotes were presented for similar mowers that are available for approximately \$13,000. Currently there is \$10,000 in the budget for mowing services, the discussion differed for a cost saving measure, as we already pay the employees for their time, to with the pay equity review and the hours worked adjustment, would there be time – what would be neglected. It was decided to place 2023 mowing bids by season or by mow and have the information to be returned prior to the January meeting. A decision could then be based on what the results of the bids are.

Polich motioned to approve Resolution 2022-29 Approving the 2023 budget and adopting Property Tax Levy at \$175,139 General Fund, \$6,600 Ambulance, \$35,488 RS Fiber Debt Service or a total of \$218,277 or a 16.14% increase, Reed seconded, all ayes, motion carried.

Motioned by Polich and seconded by Portner to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 pm; all ayes, motion carried. The next Council meeting on January 9, 2023 at the Lafayette Council Chambers, 791 Main Avenue, Lafayette at 7:00 pm