

Owatonna City Council Minutes

The Owatonna City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall. Council President Schultz called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. Present were: Council Members Dotson, Burbank, Okerberg, Voss, Raney, Svenby and Schultz; Mayor Kuntz; City Attorney Walbran; City Engineer Skov; Community Development Director Klecker; Finance Director Moen; Fire Chief Johnson; Park & Rec Director Tuma; Police Officers Alex Vogel and Michael Brein; IT System Administrator O'Connor; City Administrator Busse and Administrative Specialist Clawson. .

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, President Schultz read a Virtual Meeting Statement advising of virtual participation and of COVID-19 compliance requirements. This meeting was accessible by TEAMS at 507-242-3225 with Conference ID 769 354 127#. Council Member Svenby made a motion to approve the Agenda, Council Member Okerberg seconded the motion; all members voted aye for approval.

Mayor Kuntz read proclamation for this week (March 28 – April 3, 2021) to be Brent Carlson Week. Pastor Carlson just celebrated his 75th birthday and has been involved in many community events over the last 21 years. He has served as Chaplain for the Steele County Free Fair, leads Owatonna's National Day of Prayer and is currently a Chaplain for the Owatonna Police Department.

Mayor Kuntz also made proclamation for April to be Blue Ribbon Month to Prevent Child Abuse. The National Blue Ribbon Campaign increases public awareness for Child Abuse Prevention. The Exchange Center for Family Unity in Owatonna educates and supports families, and the Exchange Clubs hope to make our community a better place to live by encouraging everyone to not turn their backs and help stop or prevent future child abuse.

Brad Meier, President/CEO of the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and Community Development Director Klecker presented an update of Owatonna Partners for Economic Development(OPED) activities. OPED is a partnership and collaboration of five entities: City of Owatonna, Steele County; Owatonna Public Utilities, Owatonna Area Business Development Center, Steele County and the Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and Tourism. Brad thanked the Council for their support over the years which has been critical to the success of Owatonna has experienced. OPED's current 3-Year Strategic Plan includes Economic Development in the downtown area, they have worked to attract and market downtown development as new development or redevelopment. Last year, three new business came to Owatonna: Costco Distribution, Rise Modular and Minimizer; Costco Distribution said they felt the community really wanted them to locate here based on city support. During 2020 several companies expanded their operations in the Industrial Park and downtown redevelopment has been continuing. Currently, the biggest development project pending in the city is the new Owatonna High School which OPED members believe will be economic driver and also promote residential growth.

Council President Schultz explained council members review the Consent Agenda items prior to the meeting for approval in one motion. Current Consent Agenda items include:

Minutes - Council Meeting – March 16, 2021

Minutes – OPU Commission Meeting – February 23, 2021.

Minutes – Park Board Meeting – March 8, 2021.

Minutes – Planning Commission Meeting – March 9, 2021.
Minutes – EDA Minutes Meeting – March 17, 2021.
Minutes – HRA Meeting – March 22, 2021.
Minutes – Airport Commission Meeting – March 11, 2021.
Minutes – Human Rights Commission Meeting – March 9, 2021.
Schedule of Regular Meetings – City Boards, Commissions or Groups.
Tree Trimmer Permits: Wolf and Sons, Inc, Owatonna, MN and Knutson Bros., Ellendale MN.
Event Permit – National Day of Prayer – May 6, 2021.
Event Permit – From the Heart Half Marathon and 5K Run/Walk – May 1, 2021.
Event Permit – 2021 Farmer’s Markets – Saturday mornings during May through October.
Event Permit – 2021 Thursday Night Markets – First Thursday Nights in June, July and August 2021.
Event Permit – 2021 Summer Concert Series – Thursday nights during June through September
Event Permit – 2021 Lighted Holiday Parade – December 2, 2021.
2021 Retail Fireworks Permit – TNT Fireworks in Walmart Parking Lot.
Contract – 2021 Downtown Flower Planters and Watering - Cedar Valley Services.
OPD Mutual Aid Request – City of Minneapolis MN.

Council Member Svenby commented he is personally affiliated with the From the Heart Event. Council Member Dotson made a motion to approve these Consent Agenda items; Council Member Burbank seconded the motion; all members voted aye for approval.

Council Member Raney recapped expenses for the period. Bills presented for payment totaled \$666,596.12 Council Member Voss made a motion for approval, Council Member Svenby seconded the motion; all members voted aye to approve these payments.

City Attorney Walbran presented Proposed Ordinance 21-3, a request to adopt S-5, Supplement to the 2015 City Ordinance Code. During 2015, American Legal Publishing Corporation completed recodification of the City’s Code and annually they prepare a supplement which contains ordinances approved since the prior supplement. This is the fifth supplement, current through Ordinance 1612 which was approved on December 15, 2020. Council Member Raney made a motion to approve the first reading of Proposed Ordinance 21-3, Council Member Okerberg seconded the motion. With a roll call vote, all members voted aye, the motion carried. The second reading of Proposed Ordinance 21-3 will be heard during the next Council Meeting on April 20, 2021.

Community Development Director Klecker requested action on Resolution 46-21 accepting the bids and awarding the contract for the 10-unit T-Hangar and Taxi-lane Project at the Airport be tabled. New information received regarding potential FFA funding towards this project and staff requests additional time for review. Council Member Dotson made a motion to table action on Resolution 46-21, Council Member Svenby seconded the motion; all members voted aye in approval.

Public Works Director Skov presented Resolution 47-21 to receive the bids and award the contract for the 2021 Bridge Street Project. Five bids were received with BCM Construction of Faribault, MN with lowest responsible bidder with bid at \$358,203.02. This project is a full reconstruction of Bridge Street from I-35 to 24th Avenue. BCM Construction was awarded the Park Avenue Project in 2018; Council Member Okerberg questioned if there had been a delay in completion of the project in 2018; Skov responded weather delayed project completion in 2018 which was not fault of

the contractor. Council Member Raney commented companies submitting competitive bids brought good bids resulting in savings to the City and tax payers. Council Member Svenby asked when the project would begin, Skov replied he anticipates the project will begin early May and take several months to complete. Council Member Raney made a motion to approve Resolution 47-21, Council member Dotson seconded the motion; all members voting aye for approval.

Public Works Director Skov requested approval of Resolution 48-21 to accept the feasibility report and set the date for a public hearing for the 2021 North Cedar Avenue Streetscape Project. On February 16, 2021, Council approved Resolution 32-21 ordering preparation of the North Cedar Avenue Streetscape Feasibility Report. The project involves reconstruction of Cedar Avenue from Broadway Street to Rose Street as the existing street improvements have exceeded their useful life. The watermain needs to be replaced and any building not currently connected for Fire Service will be required to add a 6" line which will be an additional cost and included in the Preliminary Assessments. Council Member Raney made a motion to approve Resolution 48-21 setting a public hearing for Tuesday, April 20th at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers, Council Member Burbank seconded the motion; all members voted aye for approval.

Park and Rec Director Tuma presented bids received for the Merrill hall fire alarm panel and device upgrades. The current fire panel is over 25 years old and beyond its lifecycle making diagnosing issues challenging. By upgrading the fire panel and devices the system will be fully addressable providing timely trouble shooting and accurate monitoring. The project includes a new panel, smoke detectors and strobes. The Fire Alarm Panel project is on the approved 2021 Capital Improvement Plan, the bid received from LVC was \$15,713, 47% under the current budgeted amount. One reason for the substantial cost savings is due to the model selected which is a step down from a higher grade but is the same model we currently use in other Owatonna buildings. Council Member Raney asked if this upgrade would reduce the volume of false alarms incurred; Tuma replied a fully integrated panel will allow better detection and remote clearance opportunities. Council Member Burbank asked who currently occupies Merrill Building; Community Development Director Klecker advised Wee Pals occupies the main floor and several spaces leased on the second floor to various non-profit entities. Council Member Dotson made a motion to accept the bid from LVC for this project. Council member Burbank seconded the motion; all members voted aye in approval.

During Staff Comments, Finance Director Moen commented staff has been watching demonstration of the Finance ERP software and preparing for the annual audit, 2020 ended financially positive and preparing request to allocate funds towards specific projects such as Council Chamber Renovation and Streetscape. Council Member Raney asked if new software would be purchased or leased; Moen responded all proposals are subscription based. Fire Chief advised next week is Severe Weather Awareness Week and the annual statewide tornado drill occurs next Thursday, April 15th at 1:15 pm and 6:30 pm, it is important to review where you go to be safe and also how you receive the warnings. A Fire Code Information Sheet from the Mn Department of Public Safety State Fire Marshal Division was presented, the City's ordinances are similar regarding Recreational Fires and portable outdoor fireplaces. He asked everyone to be courteous to their neighbors and not allow smoke to become a nuisance, if anyone has questions they should call the Fire Hall. Fire Inspectors are 80% complete of downtown buildings including review of rental units. The new pumper is

currently in the build process in Appleton WI; delivery has been delayed because of the pandemic and now anticipate delivery in June. Public Works Skov commented staff has been busy with improvement projects, street sweeping is done and now begin to patch areas. He encouraged everyone to view an animated video of the Streetscape Project available on the City's website. Park and Rec Director Tuma commented the golf course opened during the last week of March and was busy over the weekend; restrooms in the parks were scheduled to open April 15th but the weather has been so nice, and the parks have been busy, staff is working to have the restrooms open later this week. There has been a delay to install cameras at the golf course and Dart's Park; a part was missing to complete the installation but hope they will be operational soon. Motion detector alarm systems have been installed in the Central Park and Morehouse Park restrooms for after hour security. Proposals for renovations to Council Chambers were received which staff will now review and prepare for presentation to Council. Council Member Raney forwarded information about the Lowe's Grant offered nationwide for community improvements. Staff is preparing an application for improvement to the Lake Kohlmier play area, the grant application is due April 19th. Community Development Director Klecker gave a brief update on current construction, six new single family permits have been issued this year and four additional are currently pending. Status of several projects included: Minimizer was issued a Full Occupancy Certificate and now open; The Point Apartments received a Temporary Occupancy Certificate, 31 of 43 apartments were leased when they opened April 1st; Bosch Warehouse should be occupied later this month; South Central Human Relations has received a Full Occupancy Certificate; Eastgate Apartments has the roof trusses up so the this building is now beginning to take shape; Mound Street Apartments are enclosed and electrical is going in; Seykora Asphalt received a Temporary Occupancy Certificate; and renovation of the building at 202 Bridge Street has allowed Graif Clothing Store to open yesterday.

During Public Comments, Matt Kottke, 1590 E Rose Street, commented he is in favor of the improvements planned in N Cedar Streetscape Project for the 200 block of Cedar Avenue but concerned with loss of parking spaces proposed in the 100 block in the N Cedar Streetscape Project. His family has owned a jewelry store in this block for more than 100 years; parallel parking on both sides of the street will be very detrimental to numerous businesses in the 100 block of Cedar Avenue. He is appreciative that Mayor Kuntz and City Administrator Busse stopped in to discuss this proposed project and invited Council Members to also stop in to discuss this project which affects these business's livelihoods. The City's Downtown Streetscape Study prepared November 20, 2019 included this Community Feedback, "One of the main concerns expressed during community engagement was the quantity of parking spaces, multiple comments expressed the need to keep all existing and add more." We need customer convenient parking, and this project is pushing parking out away from our stores.

Roger Wasek, 646 East Vine Street, expressed concern about intersection visibility triangles and potential City liability if an accident is caused if these areas are not maintained. He asked three intersections be reviewed: Vine Street and Oak Avenue; Mill Street and Oak Avenue; and Willow Avenue and E Rice Lake Street. Several years ago, the Steele County Board addressed visibility triangles at intersections where tall cornstalks were a safety issue, small triangle RW signs were installed, showing street's Right of Way.

Mark Maisio, 445 Dart Avenue, commented he operates Elwood Star Cleaners, a dry cleaning business in the 100 block of N Cedar, he also wants to discourage a change to parallel parking on

both sides of this street as their customers require parking with fast easy access which diagonal parking provides. If this block is converted to just parallel parking, they will lose 10 parking spots in this block. Their customers cannot use the proposed alley to the east, that leads to a lot owned by Jostens so their customers are not able to park there and will have nowhere to park. He anticipates several businesses may decide to close if there is less parking on the street.

Jerry Besser, 623 S Cedar commented he has operated a retail business in the downtown area for 30 years and has a passion for local businesses. Local business relies on convenience and customer service. He was all for the streetscape project when he first heard it would require loss of two parking spots in the 100 block but the current plan results in 30 spaces lost with 10 in the 100 block. Elderly residents rely on the parking spots currently available for business and the concerts in Central Park. He is opposed to bump outs on narrow streets and doubts the fire pumper will be able to make the turn and should also be verified for consideration. He also thanked Mayor Kuntz, City Administrator Busse and members of the Chamber for stopping in to review the proposed project plan.

Jerry White, 2260 Hartle, also expressed concerns about loss of parking spots in the 100 block of Cedar Avenue. When shopping in this area he currently uses the handicap accessible parking spot in the 100 block which will be moved to the 200 block. He questions if the Streetscape Project will benefit the City or local businesses and believes Owatonna has the opportunity to become the star of Southern Mn but only if parking is available.

During Council Comments, Council Member Raney commented it was good to see so many people out enjoying the parks and trails this past weekend. He asked everyone to be aware of others on the trails and allow room as others might just be learning how to ride a bike. Mayor Kuntz thanked the Maintenance Staff for recent updates to City Hall; the new paint and carpet in the front hall look City Administrator Busse reminded everyone the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization will meet prior to the next Council Meeting, the meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers on Tuesday, April 20th.

At 8:08 p.m., Council Member Raney made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Council Member Dotson seconded the motion, all members voted aye in approval.

Dated: April 15, 2021

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeanette Clawson, Administrative Specialist