September 9, 2024

The Newell City Council met in regular session Monday, September 9, 2024, at 7PM at Newell City Hall with Mayor Wayne Westergaard presiding. Council members present Bill Henrich, Dennis Zeigler, Steve Smith, Larry Nielsen, and Ana Johnson. Johnson moved to approve the agenda, 2nd by Nielsen, all ayes. Smith moved to approve the consent agenda, 2nd by Henrich, all ayes.

Commercial Recreational Specialists returned to present on a splash pad as an option to replace the previously damaged park equipment. They provided options to best fit our town size (1500-1700 sq. ft.), average cost estimates ($200K) and average life expectancy of splash pads (20-25 years).

Mayor Westergaard reported that 25 new trees have been planted at the park & golf course. They are growing well. They will need to be fenced & posted for up to 3 years. There were 12 volunteers there to plant the trees.

Public Works – Butch will be retiring on 9/30/24. He reported that the Golf Course shelters are done. Water use at the golf course fairways 1.6 million gallons. Asphalt was laid last week. The manhole raisers will be done soon. There are two bids for the golf course sewer and one on the way.

Clerk – Nielsen moved to approve the financial report, 2nd by Johnson, all ayes. Sierra gave her written resignation to the city Friday and public resignation at the meeting and thanked the city for her time here. Olsen provided a hometown pride update; we are hoping to have a committee formed soon. Olsen is working with Siepker insurance to work through park equipment claim. Citizens have asked about the possibility of hosting fireworks again in the future. Our insurance company provided an estimate of $325 for a $5K show with 500 spectators, along with stipulations for a show mainly being it hired by a licensed company. No other discussion or decisions on fireworks. City code update revisions have been sent in for the first draft. Zeigler asked to get the website updated for minutes and council/boards.

Fire – Chief Erie reported that 5 firefighters placed in the top 8 teams at state convention this year, which is a very respectable finish for Newell Fire Dept to be proud of. He requested that the city enforces the posting of house/building numbers.

Ambulance – There were 9 ambulance calls in August. There will be a soup/sandwich fundraiser on 10/6/24 from 10-1 at the fire station for all to attend.

Police – Chief McCoy proposed a policy to allow K9 use in the city. Police reserve Cain Junkman is a certified K9 trainer. K9 would be for narcotic tracking, with a no-bite policy. This service would be at no cost to the city. Res #16-24 to allow the use of K9 services in the city was moved by Johnson, 2nd by Smith. RCV: Johnson, Nielsen, Smith, Ziegler, Henrich, all ayes. 0 nays. Grants for a new police vehicle are being researched. McCoy gave an update on his certification, primary tests are done, background checks and PT test are in the works.

Library – Tanya Landgraf reported that the library board reviewed their emergency protocols. State of IA says they need to fall under the city policy. Council was asked to review city policy on this. Assistant librarian Chelsey Todd has been hired and is being trained.

Westergaard opened the public forum at 8:03pm. Patty Johnson, representing the pool committee, asked about local option sales tax for pool, Olsen reported that the money was transferred for FY23-24 per resolution 12-24. Patty Johnson asked about financing a splash pad, council explained that it was a presentation, there is no plan or budget in place as of yet. Discussion had regarding donated funds to pool if project doesn’t reach goals to build. Committee encourages pledges if worried about donating, but if donors request dollars back it will be returned to them. Open forum was closed at 8:13pm.

Westergaard opened the public hearing at 8:14pm for opening of sealed bids for city property 216/218 W 2nd St. First bid was from Essings & Sons for $3,000 with intent to rehab if possible or demo if too far gone. The lot would be used for parking their equipment. The second, Dick Bennett for $2,550 with intent to rehab and use bottom half for storage of appliances and the top for apartments. Res #15-24 to sell the property to Dick Bennett for $2,550 with timeline stipulations was proposed by Nielsen, 2nd by Zeigler. RCV: Johnson, Nielsen, Smith, Zeigler, Henrich, all ayes. 0 nays.

Letters have been sent out by Wayne concerning updates on nuisance/abandoned properties in town. Discussion on who enforces code, typically the police officer or towns that have county hires a code enforcer. Olsen shared the 2024 Debt Obligation report presented showing city debt as of , Nielsen moved to approve, 2nd by Johnson, all ayes. Open meeting laws and enforcement rules were provided as a review for council. No questions or discussion following.

Personnel Committee – Johnson moved to approve promotion of Doug Lange to PW superintendent on 10/1/24 with pay increase to Butch’s current wage, 2nd by Nielsen, all ayes. Hiring seasonal help Bobbie Westergaard at rate $13.25/hr and Doug Rieman $13.75/hr were moved by Henrich, 2nd by Nielsen, all ayes. Zeigler asked Jensen Bodholdt, PT deputy clerk, if she was interested in the FT City Clerk position, she declined. Johnson moved to approve city clerk position opening, 2nd by Henrich, all ayes.

Discussion was had concerning the use of storage containers in town. Council decided that for industrial/commercial use – yes. For residential use – no.

Henrich moved to set Trick or Treating for 10/31/24 from 5 to 7pm, 2nd by Smith, all ayes.

Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:47pm, 2nd by Henrich, all ayes.

Jensen Bodholdt, Deputy City Clerk Wayne Westergaard, Mayor