

**Minutes
Avon City Council
November 07, 2022**

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WERE PRESENT

Jeff Manthe – Mayor, Katie Reiling, Aaron Goebel, Doug Schaefer, Jeff Meyer - City Councilors
Corey Nellis – Chief of Police, Landon Gudim – Police Officer, Chuck Pelkey – Public Works Foreman, Justin Kurtz –
Water Wastewater Foreman
Jodi Austing-Traut, City Clerk-Administrator

Mayor Manthe called the Avon City Council meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Hearing West Central Sanitation Assessment Certification

Austing-Traut presented a resolution and list of unpaid invoices for West Central Sanitation for the council's consideration in assessing to property taxes. No one was present to contest the assessments.

Motion Katie Reiling to close the public hearing at 6:35 pm, second Doug Schaefer and carried unanimously.

Motion Doug Schaefer to adopt Resolution 2022-29 Adopting Assessments for Delinquent Refuse Bills as presented, second Jeff Meyer and carried unanimously.

Public Hearing Half-Cent Sales and Use Tax Extension

Austing-Traut presented a resolution for the council to consider to begin the process of requesting legislative authorization to extend the half-cent sales and use tax in Avon beyond the \$1,500,000 imposed in the original legislation so that the street projects that were originally proposed can be completed. Austing-Traut gave a brief history of the local sales and use tax program and legislative process.

Motion Katie Reiling to close the public hearing at 6:45 pm second Aaron Goebel and carried unanimously.

Motion Aaron Goebel to adopt Resolution 2022-31 Requesting Approval to Extend Minnesota Session Laws 2019, First Special Session Chapter 6, Article 6, Section 13 second Katie Reiling and carried unanimously.

Public Forum

Bob Pflipsen 901 Hamlet Drive North was present to discuss the storm drain at 403 Chinook Avenue. Pflipsen expressed concerns about using tax payer dollars to relocate this storm drain when the pipe itself appears to be mostly in good condition. He further explained his opinion that the property owner, having built a porch over the storm pipe, might have some liability. Jeremy Mathiasen, City Engineer stated that it is the city's responsibility to ensure that the infrastructure is being maintained, however, only the end of the pipe as it drains into Middle Spunk Lake appears to be damaged. This conversation was continued later in the meeting as it was an item on the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Council Minutes of October 3, 2022
2. Receive Planning Commission Minutes October 18, 2022
3. Receive Fire Department Minutes
4. Paid Check Register, Manual Claims, Capital Expenditures, Payroll Deposits
5. Legal Fees, Engineering Fees, Auditor/Acct. Fees
6. Agreement for Maintenance of Property (Avon Estates Cutting)
7. Resolution 2022-30 Approving Variance for Rear Setback at 219 Woolgrass Way (42.26304.0500)
8. Receive Donation from Avon Lions \$1,250 for Fire Prevention Week

Motion Katie Reiling to approve consent agenda with a correction to the minutes of October 3, 2022 second Aaron Goebel and carried with Meyer abstaining.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

Avon Lakers Request to Lower the Left Field Fence at Blattner Field

Pete Schleper was present to request that the council authorize the lowering of the left field fence at Blattner Field in Avon to 4 feet to match the adjacent fence heights. Mayor Manthe presented a certificate of volunteer appreciation to Pete Schleper for his work in keeping Blattner Field looking exceptionally beautiful. Council consensus to allow the fence to be lowered.

Sewer and Water Rates

Council discussed the fact that the sewer fund has been running at a deficit for many years. Water and sewer rates have not been increased since 2018. A decline in new development, along with loss of assessment revenue, and existing debt repayment schedules has continued to create a deficit in the sewer fund. Kurt Haakinson of MRWA was at the meeting to give a presentation on the findings from the Sewer and Water Rate study that was done recently by MN Rural Water Association. Haakinson looked at the average operating expenses as well as debt service needs and calculated the water and sewer rates that would be necessary to run the funds at a break-even point. If the council chooses to use water and sewer revenues to fund both debt and operations at this level, water rates would have to increase by .37 cents per 1,000 gallons. Sewer rates would have to increase by 4.23 per 1,000 gallons. This would be on average a \$15/month per household increase. Council can also consider the use other funding sources, such as property taxes or increased development fees to try to offset the deficit. Council will discuss further at a future meeting.

Streets/Stormwater Updates – Jeremy Mathiasen, Stantec

Mathiasen presented quotes for the stormwater pipe repair at 403 Chinook Avenue ranging from \$46,000 - \$55,000. Meyer suggested looking at alternatives such as placing a liner inside the existing pipe. An easement for the stormwater pipe was signed by Clare Graham back in 1978. It appears that a portion of the house and driveway were built over the pipe after that point in time. Staff will attempt to locate the original building permit.

Meyer presented photos and an historical account of county ditch #25 and the benefit that the city receives when it is clean and functioning properly. Meyer suggested the city stay on top of this issue as the county is set to do their scheduled review of the ditch.

ISSUES BY STAFF

Administration

Council received information to consider hosting the Stearns County Polar Plunge February 18th, 2023 at Middle Spunk Beach. Deputy Sherriff Chad Meemken of the Stearns County Sherriff's Department was present and explained that they are looking for a new site for the 2023 Polar Plunge. Expectations are for around 200 or so jumpers and up to 500 in total with spectators. Council consensus to support this event and to authorize staff to continue to work with the polar plunge team in whatever capacity is needed to ensure a successful event in Avon.

Public Works

Chuck Pelkey presented his written report. Midwest asphalt completed spray patching at the northern end of Char Ave in addition to Hamlet Dr S and Barracuda Ave. Avon Lions Club have painted and stained the structures at Wobegon Park. They also installed flag poles and flags as well as new LED lighting at several of the shelters in Wobegon Park. Pelkey thanked the Avon Lions for all of these projects that they have done to improve Wobegon Park.

Avon Women of Today would like to hang Christmas Lights at the shelters at Wobegon Park. They would like to order a large star for the Christmas Tree. They are willing to raise funds to pay for the lights and star; the city would be responsible for the electric bill and the cost of a sensor/timer.

Pelkey stated that changing out the street lights on the overpass to LED's will start mid-week depending on the weather. Two lights on main street went out with the wind storm over the weekend. These will also need to be replaced. Council consensus to go ahead and have them changed out since the contractor will already be in town.

Justin Kurtz presented his written report and quotes for electrical service for heat tape in the digstor pit. Freeport Electric quoted \$1,950 for this work.

Motion Doug Schaefer to authorize \$1,950 to Freeport Electric as presented, second Katie Reiling and carried unanimously.

Police Department

Written report was presented. Chief Nellis gave an account of several arrests that were made in the past month. Three of these involved significant amounts of drugs including methamphetamine and fentanyl. Chief expressed grave concern or the fentanyl crisis that is occurring in our country and in our local communities. Officer Gudim explained that in some cases, users are not even aware that the drugs are using are being laced with fentanyl. Chief suggested that this problem is larger than just a law enforcement problem and that legislative changes need to be made to curb this crisis. Council discussed a donation from the Avon Lions Club for \$6,000 for speed signs. Chief Nellis indicated that the \$6,000 may not cover the cost of multiple sites, but he would suggest that priority would be to place a sign at the beach area. A secondary site would be near the overpass on CSAH 9 / I94. Council expressed concerns for safety in both of those sites.

Motion Jeff Meyer to accept the \$6,000 donation from the Avon Lions Club and also to authorize additional funds from the city's general fund to be used to place speed signs at both the beach and the CSAH 9 / I94 overpass second Doug Schaefer and carried unanimously.

ISSUES BY COUNCIL

Mayor Manthe presented a certificate of volunteer appreciation to Councilwoman Katie Reiling for her work in keeping the city flowers and plants looking beautiful.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 9:01 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Jodi Austing-Traut - City Clerk/Administrator