

City of Menahga
Special Meeting City Council Minutes
Thursday, January 31, 2019

A. Call to Order

The Menahga City Council held a Special Meeting Thursday, January 31, 2019. Mayor Liimatta called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

B. Roll Call

Comprising a quorum of the council, the following members were present:

Tim Ellingson
Larry Karjala

Robyn Keranen
Joanie Liimatta

Art Huebner – via Skype

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Item 1 – Appointment of the City’s 2019 Criminal and Civic Legal Counsel

- Liimatta – asked if there was any discussion and gave a chance for everyone to look at the information.
- Karjala – I wish it were apples to apples
- Liimatta – I guess the most apples to apples would be looking at the Action Memorandums
- Pachel – the numbers for Action Memorandum 19-004A were the numbers Gina had. I didn’t change anything on them.
- Renata Parks – that was budgeted
- Liimatta – is there any discussion
- Ellingson – yeah, the \$17,000 amount, is that what we budgeted last year or this year?
- Pachel – that is what was budgeted for the 2019 budget, the numbers I got for 19-004B I took off his proposal from the \$600/month flat fee plus mileage
- Karjala – that is a moving number
- Pachel - yeah
- Ellingson – right, do you know, Amanda, what we spent last year
- Pachel – that I do not
- Ellingson – that’s one way I could compare.
- Karjala – yeah
- Ellingson – right now to me it looks like Pederson & Pederson is less per meeting and they don’t charge us for mileage. I do have a problem with them having to be at every meeting because I don’t think it’s necessary.
- Karjala – yeah
- Ellingson – so those are my basic thoughts. At this point I would go with Pederson & Pederson based on those thoughts
- Liimatta – my thoughts about having somebody here at each meeting. I think we could have avoided some of these pit falls that we have had over the past few years if we would have had somebody to run it by right at the time.
- Ellingson – it’s an expensive convince
- Karjala – yeah

- Ellingson – I think we can use some common sense and consult afterwards if we think there is a problem because he or she is not going to be listening every moment saying no don't do this. We can consult with them afterwards, for the most part. That's how I think.
- Liimatta – Art do you have any comments, questions
- Huebner – I guess personally I would like to see a change for Menahga to move forward with I know we have had the same representation for a number of years. I believe he states in his letter here it says 1988 he has lead the city on Civil and prosecuting matters. I think the comparison in costs might come out similar once you add in the mileage and other costs. At the same time I think a little bit of refreshing of representation might go a lot. My recommendation would be to go with Ramstad, Skoyles, & winters.
- Liimatta – Robyn do you have any discussion
- Keranen – I am leaning toward Ramstad, Skoyles, & Winters just as far as I am thinking we never did get explanation as to what that \$17,000 was, but when I look at these numbers. And whether or not we decide to have them at every meeting or not I guess that can be decided. But I am thinking when I look at it in my book like oh that looks like a pretty hefty number the \$600.00 flat rate, but for the services he can provide for us with his expertise, not only from him but from his representatives I would be in favor of him
- Liimatta – Scott (Saehr), I am going to ask you. This is Scott from Sourcewell and he works with a lot of different administrations. Do you have any opinions on this? We are not in mid-stream right now, it's the beginning of the year.
- Saehr – Mayor if I may, I'll make a few of comments about past experiences. Typically you look at that hourly wage that is a very important factor, I think. I am not 100% sure I just received the packet when I came today so I wasn't completely aware of all the details and the proposals. I am not sure where those numbers came from the \$7,200 I believe on up to \$17,000. But again I would reference that hourly wage. Typically you'll see and I see on the betterment of the city that involvement on a meeting, I think, can be more at a per time basis. I don't think they need to necessary show up at every meeting because of the cost factor involved. And again for budget reasons as well typically if there is a situation that comes up in the meeting and your administrator or clerk can move forward with gathering the right information and then bringing that to a following meeting if that's necessary. Again, ask the question Pederson & Pederson, are either of these two the current city attorney?
- Liimatta – Pederson is
- Karjala – Pederson
- Saehr – I guess some of the things from the outside looking in that I would look at is relation to what kind of city work they have done in past in other cities that are similar to your community. Weather that's population, school district, things like that just kinda to get a general idea comparing cities so that they have the experience. Again, hourly is what I would look at because most times it's that interaction that's more so on an hourly basis. I guess from past experience that's what I would look at. Again it's what the council is looking for and what your needs are. Thank you.
- Liimatta – yes (calling on resident, Jeff Etter, in the audience)
- Etter – When did you start the meeting early? I got here as the siren was going off and you guys were already in progress.
- Liimatta – we started at six
- Keranen – According to the clock and computer it was six
- Pachel – According to the computer it was six
- Etter – so your siren is wrong?
- Ellingson – It's about 2 minutes late, yes
- Liimatta – I didn't know that either

- Karjala – it’s never on time
- Liimatta – can I have a motion now to accept Pederson & Pederson
- Karjala – the only comment I would have is Pederson & Pederson have represented the city since 1988. They have the background, they have the experience. In the end the \$17,000 represents a line item out of the budget. We don’t know. We can’t compare \$17,000 to \$7,200.
- Ellingson – especially when the other one has done nothing for us
- Karjala – nothing for us
- Ellingson – up to this time, of course they have a personal interest having both grown up here, which can help
- Keranen – it can be bad too
- Ellingson – yeah, but it hasn’t been in 31 years, so
- Liimatta – I don’t know how many cities Pederson does handle. I know that Ramstad’s firm is handling Sebeke now, and there are quite a few towns about our size that they are also doing. Of course Detroit Lakes is much bigger, but Frazee, Audubon, Lake Park, Callaway, and Sebeke. So they are pretty heavily entrenched in city representation. I guess I can ask for a motion on Action Memorandum 19-004A to accept Pederson & Pederson as the City’s 2019 Criminal and Civic Legal Counsel

A. Action Memorandum 19-004A: Appoint Pederson and Pederson PA as the City’s 2019 Criminal and Civic Legal Counsel

Main Motion: To authorize Action Memorandum 19-004A

Moved by:	Ellingson
Seconded by:	Karjala
Action:	Motion not carried by 2 – 3 vote
In favor:	Karjala, Ellingson
Opposed:	Keranen, Huebner, Liimatta

- Liimatta – I need a motion to appoint Ramstad, Skoyles, & Winters, Action Memorandum 19-004B

B. Action Memorandum 19-004B: Appoint Ramstad, Skoyles, & Winters as the City’s 2019 Criminal and Civic Legal Counsel

Main Motion: To authorize Action Memorandum 19-004B

Moved by:	Huebner
Seconded by:	Keranen
Action:	Motion carried by 3 – 2 vote
In favor:	Keranen, Huebner, Liimatta
Opposed:	Karjala, Ellingson

- Ellingson – Joanie may I make a suggestion?
- Liimatta – uh huh
- Ellingson – all of the organizations, few organizations I’ve been with the president doesn’t vote until the other members vote to make your final vote. May I suggest that
- Liimatta – I did wait until they voted
- Ellingson – Ok well I didn’t hear you vote after we voted. So if I can hear that then I know you are making the deciding vote

- Liimatta – I am voting for Ramstad, Skoyles, & Winters.
- Ellingson – thank you

Item 2 – Action Memorandum 19-017: Approve and accept the resignation of Public Works Director, Frank Thelin.

- Liimatta – the next item is resignation of Public Works Director, Frank Thelin, with regret that I saw that hit our desk. We can't force him to stay, unfortunately. So I need a motion to accept the resignation of Frank Thelin as Public Works Director
- Huebner – I'll make that motion
- Liimatta – I have a motion, can I get a second
- Keranen – I'll second
- Liimatta – I have a motion and a second is there any discussion
- Liimatta – yes, Jeff
- Etter – where are you going to find someone of Frank's quality to replace him?
- Liimatta – I don't know Jeff. We can't force him to stay here he is an at will employee
- Etter – then why is he leaving? You obviously have to know that.
- Liimatta – I don't know
- Etter – you don't know? You sit here and run meetings and you don't know why?
- Liimatta – I'm sorry Jeff that is my answer that I do not have a definitive answer in why he is leaving
- Etter – how did you three think that when you came in here to be council people and mayor that you had all this control. You are supposed to guide the city not run the city.
- Liimatta – ok Jeff you are out of order, this is a special meeting and we are accepting the resignation of Public Works Director at this time, is there any discussion amongst the council? Any discussion? Any discussion?
- Liimatta – We have had a motion and a second to accept the resignation of Frank Thelin. All in favor signify it by saying aye; Huebner, Keranen. Only grudgingly because he is an at will employee and we can't make him stay I will vote with, I guess I have to wait don't I? we just talked about that
- Liimatta – All opposed same sign; Ellingson, Karjala
- Liimatta – with protest I am voting with the accepting the resignation since he is an at will employee, so motion passed

Main Motion: To authorize Action Memorandum 19-017

Moved by:	Huebner
Seconded by:	Keranen
Action:	Motion carried by 3 – 2 vote
In favor:	Keranen, Huebner, Liimatta
Opposed:	Ellingson, Karjala

Item 3 – Action Memorandum 19-018: Approve of opening and posting for the position of the Public Works Director.

- Karjala – I have a question with regard to being a brand new system for the city, the filtration everything. What happens when you can't find anyone to run it? And that is a genuine concern.
- Liimatta- this is a scary situation

- Huebner – your honor, Ron supposedly has the license to run it and has been trained in on how to run it. And we can go back to the company that installed it.
- Karjala – no he doesn't
- Ron Yliniemi – yes I do
- Karjala – and the 2 years
- Yliniemi – yes

Main Motion: To authorize Action Memorandum 19-018 – closing Feb 22, 2019

Moved by:	Keranen
Seconded by:	Huebner
Action:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote
In favor:	Keranen, Huebner, Liimatta, Ellingson, Karjala
Opposed:	None

Item 4 – Determine if it will be necessary to extend out the closing dates for the following positions:

- Full Time Public Works Laborer
- Chief of Police
- Deputy Clerk

Main Motion: To extend the closing date to February 11, 2019 for Chief of Police

Moved by:	Keranen
Seconded by:	Ellingson
Action:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote
In favor:	Keranen, Huebner, Liimatta, Ellingson, Karjala
Opposed:	None

Main Motion: To extend the closing date to February 11, 2019 for Deputy Clerk

Moved by:	Keranen
Seconded by:	Huebner
Action:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote
In favor:	Keranen, Huebner, Liimatta, Ellingson, Karjala
Opposed:	None

D. Adjournment

Main Motion: To adjourn at 6:32 pm

Moved by:	Karjala
Seconded by:	Keranen
Action:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote
In favor:	Keranen, Huebner, Liimatta, Ellingson, Karjala
Opposed:	None


 Amanda Pachel, Interim City Clerk


 Joanie Liimatta, Mayor