

**City of Menahga
Budget Meeting City Council Minutes
November 8, 2024**

a. Call to Order

The Menahga City Council held an Enterprise Budget/Special Meeting on Friday, November 8th, 2024.

Mayor Elizabeth Olson called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.

b. Roll Call

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

Mayor Elizabeth Olson

Mike Netland

Dan Warmbold

Jody Bjornson

Durwin Tomperi - Absent

Office Staff present: City Clerk/Treasurer Brett Gagnonpalick, Deputy Clerk Melanie Schermerhorn

c. Pledge of Allegiance.

d. Employee Health Insurance and Benefits

Discussion began with Laura Ahlf and Liz Olson talking about flex accounts. Olson stated that having a flex account saves the employee money due to the fact that the health insurance deduction reduces the taxable gross or is deducted prior to being taxed. This includes the Social Security and Medicare taxes. Tomperi stated that the private sector is being hammered by the increase in health insurance costs as well as other governmental units, including the School District.

Ahlf stated she wished to clear the record regarding a newspaper article which reported that Olson did not recall a previous conversation with the Health Insurance Agent Bill Singer in September of 2023, regarding the topic of

including the City Staff with the GWC staff under one health insurance plan. Ahlf did provide an email received noting that some communication had taken place.

Ahlf explained her employee insurance plans, and the nuance that goes into them, with the Assisted Living not being reimbursed as is the Nursing Home.

The Council did make the determination that while GWC and the City are separate, both entities of the City should have equitable coverage and contributions. Netland argued that not being equitable could cause some issues. Discussion continued regarding combining the City and GWC health insurance plans, which will be explored in the future. Ahlf did report that the City and GWC have never shared insurance plans. The only thing the two entities had in common were using the same insurance agent. In the future, the City and GWC shall have a combined conversation to see if it would be feasible. This discussion was that it should occur in late August or September.

Schermerhorn states that the GWC Connection insurance would be cheaper for some of the City Employees and more expensive for others. Each employee receives a different premium due to their age.

Main Motion: To approve the GWC Employee Insurance Plans and level of contribution as recommended by Ahlf of \$1,200/month for family, \$1,000/month for Employee plus 1, and \$950/month for single remaining the same.

Moved by:	Netland
Seconded	Bjornson
Action:	Motion carried by a 5-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Netland, Bjornson, Tomperi, Warmbold
Opposed:	None

Gagnonpalick requested to table the City insurance plans discussion until after the Enterprise Budget discussion.

e. Budget by Department: 2025 Budget

- **Liquor Store - Heather Shepersky**

The budgeted amounts for 2025 will be lower than in 2024. As 2024 was a lower-than-expected year for revenues, that trend is expected to continue.

- **Campground/Park – Bryan Soukup**

Soukup's intention is to continue the campground's momentum. It was highlighted by the Council that the City is deficit spending with the Campground. The break-even analysis for 2025 would be to set the price at \$52.80 per night. In contrast, the City completely subsidizes the City beach in which no income is generated.

Tomperi discussed having someone at the campground 24/7 to work it as is being done in Akeley, which campground has reported a large revenue amount at the end of the season. The Council believes it would be a good idea with more research being warranted.

- **Water / Sewer – Ron Yliniemi**

Yliniemi and Gagnonpalick did a line-by-line review of the water/sewer budget. Yliniemi had a couple adjustments, but nothing significant.

There were pillars installed around the generator that was installed outside the water plant.

The subject of uniforms was brought up, and Tomperi mentioned that this discussion had taken place in the past, and that the conversation has the potential to open a "can of worms" as it would set the precedent that anyone could then ask for it. The amount cannot be zero per the Union contract, where they are allotted, certain items attached to a dollar amount, which is \$200.00 per year.

The topic of fluorosilicic acid was brought up. As the water that comes out of the ground already has natural fluoride in it. The question was asked why there was a need to feed it.

Sewer had a large expenditure under professional services, as part of jetting and filming the sewer lines.

The topic of meters was brought up by Olson. Yliniemi reported there are still two homes who refuse to let the Public Works employees in to switch out their meters.

Yliniemi was asked about the possibility of installing antennas to make reading the meters easier. Two (2) would be required, one (1) on top of the water tower, and the other at the south edge of town.

f. Council Discussion – City Contributions

The Council asked the Deputy Clerk to generate contribution numbers for \$950/month, \$1,000/month, and \$1,200/month as is contributed to the GWC employees. She stated that she believes there is sufficient flexibility in the budget to move around amounts to make those numbers work.

g. Adjournment

Main Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 1:16 p.m.

Moved by:	Netland
Seconded	Warmbold
Action:	Motion carried by a 5-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Netland, Bjornson, Tomperi, Warmbold
Opposed:	None

City Clerk/Treasurer Brett Gagnonpalick

Mayor Elizabeth Olson