City of Menahga
Menahga City Council – Community Meeting - Minutes
Monday, March 11, 2019

A. Call to Order

The Menahga City Council held a special community meeting on March 11, 2019 at the Menahga Senior Center located at 19 Cedar Ave NE, Menahga, MN 56464. Mayor Liimatta called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

B. Roll Call

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

Tim Ellingson	Robyn Keranen	Art Huebner – via Skype
Larry Karjala	Joanie Liimatta	

C. Mayor Liimatta laid down a few ground rules –

1. Turn off cell phone ringers
2. No applause
3. Comments
4. No personal Attacks

She also stated this must be treated the same as the Council Meeting because it is still a council meeting just at a different location.

D. Pledge of Allegiance

E. Public Input Signup Sheet

1. Judy Maaninga
   - Would like to see MPD stay as it is along with the hiring a Police Chief
   - These are home grown local boys that went to officer school for this purpose. These young men put their life on the line to protect our city day & night.
   - When calls come in they are almost always first to respond – why would you be against something that at times could mean life and death – minutes count
2. Shirley Paxton
   - Feels we need our police locally
   - We need to have them here in 5 minutes instead of 30 minutes
   - She respects Wadena County and what they do but feel we need our own Police here in Menahga
3. Kori Nelson
   - Has over 500 signatures on the petition to keep the Menahga Police Dept.
   - Do not object to Wadena County to assisting our officers, but assisting is what they need to do
   - Is worried about crime rates rising without local law enforcement

- Would like to see another Chief that will lead the city with dignity, pride, and honor

4. Jensine Kurtti
    - Likes all police officers whether they are the Sheriff's Office or the Menahga Police Department, they all do a great job
    - Looks at it from the fiscal responsibility of it and very happy to see that the proposal from the County will give us a School Resource Officer
    - We will be saving $18,000 per year going with the County
    - We will no longer as a city have liability against any police claims against brutality or somebody getting killed
5. Carol Waaraniemi
    - Feels it's important to have our local PD. She appreciates the County they are around too.
    - In the last 2 months we have had the county before I would see police officer's go by quite often and I can't say that I have seen Wadena County driving around
    - We have a budget for the PD, let's use it here in town. Let's have our local Police Department
6. Kelly Haugen
    - Would like to see Menahga keep its PD even though she has worked with the county for over 20 years.
    - Our local officers have the passion and care for the city. They care about the kids and elderly alike.
    - Vehicle unlocks are one service the MPD offer that the county does not
    - Menahga Officers are a huge help to the First Responders and usually there administering care before the First responders can arrive
7. Dennis Rockensock
    - Was a full-time officer in Menahga for 5 years and part time for 20 plus
    - Your local department has ownership in the city they buy into it because that their community
    - Local officers enjoy being with their community and learn to work with their community
    - This is not a trial thing. Once it's done its gone you will never get it back. You will be starting from square one and will not have the funds to start over.
8. Dorothy Ollanketo – Asked to be removed from list
9. Bernice Ollanketo – Asked to be removed from list

F. Mayor Liimatta asked to hear from Wadena County Sheriff's proposal and to explain their numbers.

Sheriff Mike Carr

- Thanked everyone for coming out and being passionate about their community.
- Explained the Menahga City Council came to them for numbers to contract.
- Stated the numbers of new officers coming into the police career is declining throughout the country.
- Wadena County Sheriff's Department assists all of the law enforcement agencies in the county.
- Once you lose a police department it is hard to get it back.

- If the Menahga City Council chooses to go with the Sheriff's Office he will guarantee they will provide good law enforcement service. A 30 minute response time is not true, would still have same response time.
- Mainly if we went with the county we would have the same number of officers including a school resource officer.
- He also encouraged people with questions to come talk to him after the meeting.

Mayor Liimatta thanked Sheriff Mike Carr and asked Wadena County Chief Deputy Joe Schoon if he had anything to add.

Chief Deputy Joe Schoon stated if anyone had questions on the numbers sheet he would go over it with them.

G. Mayor Liimatta asked the public if they had any questions for Sheriff Mike Carr or Chief Deputy Joe Schoon. There were none

H. Mayor Liimatta asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Main Motion:	**To adjourn at 7:26 pm**
Moved by:	Ellingson
Seconded by:	Karjala

Mayor Liimatta thanked everyone for their input and stated she really appreciated it.

Amanda Pachel, Interim City Clerk

Joan Liimatta, Mayor