

**City of Menahga
Regular City Council Minutes
August 14, 2023**

1. Call to Order

The Menahga City Council held their Regular Monthly Meeting on Monday August 14, 2023.

Mayor Elizabeth Olson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

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

Mayor Elizabeth Olson Mike Netland Dan Warmbold

Jody Bjornson Durwin Tomperi

City Office Staff present: Interim City Clerk/Treasurer Jensine Kurtti and Deputy Clerk Dustyne Hewitt

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of Agenda

To amend the Agenda as follows: Remove under Unfinished Business 11.d Fire Hydrant at Menahga Public School; and add under New Business-10. m. Personnel Discussion.

Main Motion: To approve the agenda as amended.

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

5. Communication Appearance Request

a. Hope Williams – The Economic Alliance

Hope Williams from The Economic Alliance (TEA) made a presentation to the Council on the services that TEA could provide for the City if the City were to become a member. The suggested cost of membership for the City was as a Gold Sponsor for \$5,000 a year, which included grant writing. Williams felt that Menahga had a lot of economic development potential, and she would be able to provide potential businesses with business plan assistance and other services such as grant writing, Gap financing, and stated she works with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) out of Brainerd office as well.

6. Public Forum and Correspondence

• Mike Schultz – ATV Discussion

Mike Schultz had a concern about the regulation on use of ATV’s and Side-by-Sides on Highway 71. He stated that he lives on Highway 71 and since it is a U.S. Highway, he is not allowed to drive his ATV out of his driveway. The Council felt that it is a situation that is out of the City’s control as it is not in its’ jurisdiction. It was noted that the Ordinance is in the process of being updated and at that time, if approved, an ATV/Side-by-Side will be allowed to cross a U.S. and State Highway at 90 degrees, and then be able to drive on City streets.

7. Consent Agenda

Minutes to Approve:

a. July 24, 2023 – Special/Budget Meeting

b. July 31, 2023– Special/Work Session Meeting

Main Motion: To approve the meeting Minutes of the July 24, 2023, Special/Budget Meeting and the July 31, 2023, Special/Work Session Meeting as presented.

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

8. Public Hearings – None

9. Acknowledgment/Motion of receipt of board/commission minutes.

a. Greenwood Connections Board Minutes and Report.

Administrator Laura Ahlf presented her monthly report to the Council. The resident occupancy rate as of August 14, 2023 was 86%. The month of June showed a positive bottom line of \$80,825.73, with a year-to-date profit of \$591,301.80.

Ahlf provided the Council with a draft copy of the proposed City Ordinance change as to the operations of the facility. Ahlf stated that it was still a work in progress and was not a final draft at the GWC Board level.

She reported that the GWC had just finished their Annual Survey, which the last survey was done in April of 2022, 15 months ago. Ahlf stated they had a great survey with only one deficiency involving corrections needed in the form used for vaccine authorization.

The facility is in the process of switching their payroll processing system at a cost of \$21,023. Discussed selling the 2007 Ford Van and a 2013 Dodge Van and purchasing a larger van to replace the two. GWC had received \$243,037 from the Dept. of Human Services which may be used for improvements to the facility that will not affect rates. Ahlf felt that the kitchen could use some new appliances and upgrades, as the current kitchen dates back to 2004. There was discussion regarding the GWC and other City employees being covered by the same Health Insurance plan. It may be looked at again in future renewals. Board member Olson reported that Laura Ahlf's annual review was overall "excellent" and the comments were "very, very good".

NOTE: During the GWC Administrator Report, Mike Netland left the Council chambers temporarily.

Main Motion: To approve the GWC Administrator Report dated August 8, 2023 and Financial Report as of June 30, 2023.

Moved by:	Tomperi
Seconded by:	Warmbold
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Tomperi, Warmbold, Bjornson
Opposed:	None

b. Planning and Zoning Commission Minutes – Informational Only

The Planning Commission Minutes and a list of Zoning Permits given in 2023 were provided to the Council members. Kurtti gave an overview of the Brian Madsen Variance Hearing that was held, and that the Commission felt that it should be approved by Council. This Variance request was due to the current Ordinance rear setback requirements which are well above industry standards. It was noted that this issue will be addressed when the Land Use Section of the Ordinance is updated.

10. New Business

a. Variance Request for Brian Madsen

The Council was given the Findings of Fact document that was prepared by the Planning Commission at the Public Hearing. The Council reviewed and discussed the Findings of Fact.

Main Motion: To approve the variance for Brian Madsen for the construction of a garage at 52 Juniper Ave. NW, Menahga with a rear setback of 10 feet.

Moved by:	Bjornson
Seconded by:	Tomperi
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Tomperi, Warmbold, Bjornson
Opposed:	None

b. Lift Station Pump

At the last Work Session held on July 31, 2023, Ron Yliniemi discussed the need for new hydraulic kits for the Main Lift Station. Of the two quotes Yliniemi received, Minnesota Pump Works was less expensive.

Main Motion: To approve the quote from Minnesota Pump Works for the parts and installation of new hydraulic kits for the Main Lift Station in the amount of \$4,160.80.

Moved by:	Warmbold
Seconded by:	Bjornson
Action:	Motion carried by a 4-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Tomperi, Warmbold, Bjornson
Opposed:	None

c. Liquor Store Point-of-Sale System

At the work session held on July 31, 2023, Liquor Store Manager presented the Council with information on a new point-of sale system for the Northbound Spirits. The current system is outdated and does not support updates. Shepersky stated that one of the benefits of the new system is that it has the capability to pass the credit card fees onto the customer, which currently are being paid by the City.

NOTE: Mike Netland returned to the Council Chambers.

Main Motion: To approve the purchase of the Clover Station Duo Point-of-Sale System package, with a cost not to exceed \$7,000.

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

d. Wadena County GIS

Wadena County GIS Coordinator Gina Dahms had contacted the City about participating in an upgraded pictometry resolution for the City of Menahga on the

County GIS System. The upgrade charge would be \$1,800 for three years or the standard resolution which is used by the rest of the County would be free of charge.

Main Motion: To deny the upgrade to the Wadena County GIS Pictometry for the City of Menahga at a cost of \$1,800 for three years.

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

e. Ulteig Engineers – Change Order Construction No. 2, Water Tower Extension

Chris Thorson was present to ask the Council for the approval of Change Order No. 2, which would extend the completion date for the demolition of the existing water tower. This Change Order would change the project completion date from September 15, 2023, to October 21, 2023. Thorson was asked about what the amount of payment would be from the Contractor to the City if not completing the project by September 15th. Thorson stated that the penalty assessed to the Contractor would be about \$1,000 a day. The consensus was to deny the request at this time unless the Contractor was willing to pay the City for the delay. Thorson stated that the new tower should be full of water and disinfected by September 15, 2023.

Main Motion: To deny Change Order No. 2 for the extension of the completion of the Water Tower Project from September 15, 2023 to October 21, 2023.

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

f. Ulteig Engineers – 2024 Street & Utility Improvements Project

Chris Thorson requested approval on Work Order No. 1 – 21.00648 Menahga – 2024 Street and Utility Improvements, which is listed as First St. SW and Balsam Ave. and 2nd St. North area, along with watermain replacement on TH 87 between Fir and Juniper Avenues. The engineering portion of the project was reported as \$360,750. When questioned on how much the City will have to pay before it finds out if there is funding available to move forward, Thorson replied, “Around

\$180,000". After Council discussion as to whether the Menahga City Attorney should review the Contract brought up by Tomperi and Olson, a vote was taken. There will not be a City Attorney review of the Contract.

Thorson felt that a committee for the project would be the best way to move forward with the details of the project. By Council consensus, the decision was made that Bjornson and Warmbold, as well as Ron Yliniemi and the City Clerk/Treasurer will comprise the Committee.

Main Motion: To approve Work Order No. 1 – 21.00648, without the City Attorney review, for the 2024 Street and Utility Improvements Contract, with a total cost to Ulteig of \$360,750.

Moved by:	Netland
Seconded by:	Bjornson
Action:	Motion carried on a 3-2 voice vote
In favor:	Warmbold, Netland, Bjornson
Opposed:	Tomperi, Olson

g. Hire Fireman LeeRoy Kicker

Chief Dave Kicker had requested that LeeRoy Kicker be added to the Fire Department roster. The Council agreed, pending a satisfactory background check.

Main Motion: To approve the hiring of LeeRoy Kicker to the Menahga Fire Department.

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

h. Resolution 2023-31 - \$4,000 VFW Donation for Police Body Cams

The Menahga VFW Post 6206 had generously donated \$4,000 for new Body Cameras to be used by the Menahga Police Department.

Main Motion: To approve Resolution 2023-31 for the \$4,000 VFW Donation to the Menahga Police Department for Body Cameras.

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

i. Compensation for Trainer Alvina Kytta

Jensine Kurtti requested that the Council consider raising the wage of former Deputy Clerk Alvina Kytta. Kytta has been working as a trainer/temporary Deputy Clerk for the City since 2019. Kurtti stated that Alvina has been available to train two (2) previous Deputy Clerks and is now in the process of training Dustyne Hewitt. Kytta is being paid the same wage she was given in 2019 of \$32.51 per hour, with no benefits. Kurtti felt that she should be increased to a minimum of \$35.00 per hour. After discussion it was decided that Kytta’s wage will be increased to \$36.00 per hour. Mayor Olson thanked Kytta for all that she has done for the City.

Main Motion: To approve a wage increase for Alvina Kytta to \$36.00 per hour, effective immediately.

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

j. Parcel Split Procedure

Jensine Kurtti asked the Council how they would like to proceed moving forward with property owners who would like to have a parcel split to their property. Currently the requests have come before the City Council for a decision. Kurtti stated that Sourcewell Consultant Jake Huebsch had stated that these types of decisions are generally handled administratively in all the other cities that he works with. Kurtti presented a form and criteria that is used in making the decision of whether to split a parcel or not. The charge for the Parcel Split is \$100.

Main Motion: To allow a Parcel Split approval to be handled by Administrative Staff.

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

k. Set Budget Meeting

Jensine Kurtti asked the Council when they would like to schedule their next 2024 Budget Meeting. Thomsen and Kurtti have been working through the numbers and would continue to review the line items in both revenues and expenses. After discussion it was decided by consensus that September 14, 2023 at 5 pm is the

scheduled date for the next Budget Meeting.

I. Year-to-Date Revenue and Expense Report – Through June 30, 2023

Kurtti had included in the packet a Year-to-Date Revenue and Expense Report for the Council to review. Kurtti stated that it had been some time since the Council had been given this report. The report ended on June 30, 2023, which would be 6 months or 50% of the actual revenue and expenditures, as they compare to what was budgeted.

m. Personnel Discussion

Bjornson asked for an open discussion on what has been done to fill the City office positions. He stated that he had not heard anything, and that he felt that it would be nice to be informed on what was happening. Mayor Olson stated that if he had questions he should come and talk to the City Clerk/Treasurer and be given that information. Due to Open Meeting Law concerns, Council members must be careful not to discuss City business outside of a Council Meeting. It was mentioned that Kurtti could send out a weekly update to the Council on what is happening, whereby Kurtti agreed.

11. Unfinished Business

a. Schedule Field Trip to Liquor Store

Liquor Store Manager Heather Shepersky has invited the Council Members to visit the Liquor Store and see for themselves the condition of the equipment and facility. It was decided that rather than go as a group, anyone wishing to tour the Liquor Store can arrange a time to meet with Heather.

b. Signs at Cemetery

Cemetery Manager Ralph Cox had requested new signs to be placed at each entrance to the Cemetery. These signs will have the cemetery rules placed on them and be laminated for durability. Funding for these signs will be paid from the donation received from Blueberry Township.

Main Motion: To approve the purchase of two custom signs for the cemetery from Road Traffic Signs, not to exceed \$250.

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

c. Reassessment of Assessments on Tax-Forfeited Properties

The City discovered that several parcels that had been sold at the Wadena County

Tax-Forfeited Auction or, over the counter (after the auction), had not been reassessed for the unpaid Special Assessments on these parcels once they had been sold. When the parcels were sent to the State of Minnesota to be sold, the special assessments were canceled on the property. However, once the property was returned to private ownership, the law allows Cities to reassess the property through a Reassessment Hearing, to recover the cost of the Special Assessments for the improvements that were provided.

Main Motion: To authorize Ulteig Engineers to proceed with a Reassessment Hearing on the unpaid Special Assessments on the tax-forfeited properties.

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

12. Consideration of Bills

The Council members had several questions regarding the bills as they were presented. Deputy Clerk Hewitt was available to answer questions. Many of the questions focused on mathematical errors from the invoices on what was paid. The first question was an overpayment to Bergstrom Electric of \$.20. Other questions were related to coding amounts which did not equal the actual invoices which were attached to be paid. Hewitt indicated that she does receive coding from Liquor Store Manager, however, it was indicated by the Council that she should be double checking all accounting to make sure it does match up with the invoices to be paid. It also appeared that credits were not being given on some invoices that were being paid. Hewitt agreed to check into the questions the Council had presented.

- a. Batch #081423PAY - \$139,731.58
- b. Batch #MNPower073123 - \$6,727.58
- c. Batch #073123EFT - \$61,141.20

Main Motion: To approve consideration of bills: Batch #081423PAY – \$139,731.58; Batch MNPower #073123- \$6,727.58; EFT Batch #073123EFT - \$61,141.20, for a total amount of \$207,600.36.

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

13. Adjournment

Main Motion: To adjourn at 7:47 pm.

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

City Clerk/Treasurer, Jensine Kurtti

Mayor, Elizabeth Olson