

City of Menahga
Special Meeting/Work Session/Budget City Council Minutes
Monday, August 26th, 2024

a. Call to Order

The Menahga City Council held a Special Meeting/Work Session Meeting on Monday, August 26, 2024.

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

b. Roll Call

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

Mayor Elizabeth Olson Dan Warmbold - Absent Mike Netland

Jody Bjornson Durwin Tomperi - Absent

Administrative staff: Clerk/Treasurer Brett Gagnonpalick

c. Pledge of Allegiance

d. DNR Oak Wilt Analysis –

Megan O’Neil and Rachel Dube from the DNR presented their findings from their visit to the City of Menahga. They took samples from some select trees within the City and sent the samples onto the University of Minnesota for their findings, which resulted in no Oak Wilt. Anthracnose was found; however, it is not a fatal tree disease.

Oak Wilt is caused by a non-native fungus that releases spores. A majority of Oak Wilt is around the Twin Cities – Metro area and northward through the central part of the state. It can spread via beetles, birds, and firewood. Red oaks will die within 1-2 months, and there is no treatment. Bur Oak will take between 1-7 years. The fungus will live underground, sustain on the roots, and

spread with that method as well. To remove oak wilt, it is important to remove the entire tree, root and branch.

When cutting oak branches, it is important to put a sealer on the cut portion of the tree immediately after felling the limb.

e. Department Reports

- **Fire Department, Chief Dave Kicker –**

Kicker reported four (4) fire calls during the month of August. He requested the Council approve his submission of a \$50,000 Grant with a 25% match, from Sourcewell to purchase turn-out gear and a new set of electric Jaws.

Main Motion: To approve the fire chief submitting the Sourcewell \$50,000 Grant with a 25% match by the City, to purchase new fire department equipment.

Moved by:	Netland
Seconded by:	Bjornson
Action:	Motion carried by a 3-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Netland, Bjornson
Opposed:	None

Kicker is requesting to bring a Chaplain on board at no cost to the City to service the firefighters of the City of Menahga. She will be here to help debrief the firefighters in the event they have to handle and treat a traumatic call.

Main Motion: To approve the Fire Chief bringing on a Chaplain for the Fire Department at no cost to the City.

Moved by:	Netland
Seconded by:	Bjornson
Action:	Motion carried by a 3-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Netland, Bjornson
Opposed:	None

- **Police Department, Chief Amy Lane –**

Chief Lane reported 136 calls from July 24 to August 22, including going over the crime and violation citations.

She asked for approval to sell the old 2016 squad. Lane indicated it would require a lot of expense to repair.

Lane requested recognition at the next Council Meeting for the individual who saved someone who nearly drowned in Spirit Lake. The Council readily agreed.

- **Public Works – Director Ron Yliniemi –**

Yliniemi updated the Council on all the tires being hauled and away, as well as an update regarding the building and safety issues that were identified in the shop area. He is making progress in getting it up to standard.

There was a manhole identified that has raised above the road. This is due to the ground settling and is located on 9th and Elm.

Main Motion: To approve Howard’s Driveway, Inc. patching of the manhole cover located on Elm and 9th Ave. at a cost of \$1,400.00.

Moved by:	Bjornson
Seconded by:	Netland
Action:	Motion carried by a 3-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Netland, Bjornson
Opposed:	None

Yliniemi reported that the generator outside the water plant is fully installed and running per design. During the startup and testing, there was a power surge that caused a pump to break, which he has not yet received a quote on a replacement. Yliniemi believes it was a fluke. There is a grounding issue that was not properly installed. This is a work in progress.

There was discussion on all the potholes located on the gravel roads and the ends of the alleyways within the City. Specifically noted was the alleyway by the First English Church where it enters State Hwy #87. Yliniemi reported he would investigate it.

- **Liquor Store Manager, Heather Shepersky –**

Shepersky stated that business is decent enough. A new TV purchased was to replace the one that failed. Netland provided some ideas to generate more customers. Shepersky states that there have been methods tried for insignificant gain.

- **Greenwood Connection, Administrator Laura Ahlf –**

Ahlf reported the census for July was 86%. GWC has hired some nurses, as well as the director of nurses who moved on to a better position. It is a challenge to find someone who has the qualifications to fit that role.

Ahlf again brought up her request for a reevaluation. Olson stated that her evaluation was completed, and the Council had summarized the evaluation and approved it.

Bjornson brought up that not all the GWC board members turned in their evaluations. Olson responded that she only received three evaluations out of the seven GWC Board Members, which included differing Evaluation Forms. Ahlf stated she had some confusion on which form to use. (Ahf had previously had the Council approve a new form for GWC). Ahlf stated she was not pleased with the lower marks that were received on her evaluation. Ahlf states that it was because of the Ordinance her marks were low. Netland disagreed. Olson again stated it was completed and further, that Ahlf had signed the bottom of the form where it stated, "No need to do a reevaluation". Olson further reported that there have never been reevaluations completed in the past. Netland again stated the remarks were not about the Ordinance but was the manner of the conversation and how it was conducted. The Ordinance was cited to draw examples. Laura defended her conduct. Netland stated again, it was the way the manner in which the conversation unfolded. It was not in a business-like manner.

Main Motion: To approve the monthly report and financials, as presented by GWC Administrator Laura Ahlf.

Moved by:	Netland
Seconded by:	Bjornson
Action:	Motion carried by a 3-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Netland, Bjornson
Opposed:	None

- **Acting Park/Beach/Mowing/Building Maintenance – Brian Soukup.**

Soukup stated he is still getting his bearings on the Park position and that that business is doing very well. Workers harvesting potatoes will be taking up fourteen (14) of the camping positions until October.

Netland asks about the credit card fees being charged for the Park, - post anecdotal – that the City begin to charge a 2.5% fee to recoup these fees.

- **City Administration, City Clerk/Treasurer, Brett Gagnonpalick**

- 1. Monthly Report – July Budget YTD Rev-Exp, check reconciliation, Cash and investments – FYI.**

- 2. Water/Sewer Disconnect Policy**

Netland suggested to add 'per the fee schedule' into the Policy. Gagnonpalick stated it would be an additional line item as line number 5. The Council agreed to add to the Water Disconnect Policy as follows: "You will be charged a disconnect and reconnect fee per the fee schedule."

Main Motion: To approve the Water Disconnect Policy effective immediately for implementation, with the addition of paragraph 5. of the Policy as follows: You will be charged a disconnect and reconnect fee per the fee schedule.

Moved by:	Bjornson
Seconded by:	Netland
Action:	Motion carried by a 3-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Netland, Bjornson
Opposed:	None

- 3. Wadena County Public Notice – Amend Zoning Ordinance - FYI**

Bjornson asked about the server room and installing a door over the server. Gagnonpalick stated he would want it to be part of the larger renovation. Gagnonpalick indicated he would request that the fire staff walk around to get their materials and supplies for the pancake feed. Bjornson asked about the updated Personnel Policy. Gagnonpalick reported it is a very long and in-depth document. It is being worked on but is not a priority at this moment.

g. Consideration of Bills

The Council was provided with the actual invoices for Batch #081234teamsters - \$276.00 and Batch #082624checks – \$127,030.00 for a total of \$127,306.52.

Main Motion: To approve Batch #081234teamsters - \$276.00 and Batch #082624checks – \$127,030.00 for a total of \$127,306.52.

Moved by:	Netland
Seconded by:	Bjornson
Action:	Motion carried by a 3-0 voice vote
In favor:	Olson, Bjornson, Netland
Opposed:	None

h. Budget Discussion/Action

Netland identified the funding as to the transfer of \$240,000.00 from GWC. Netland wants to know if requesting 97k is a little heavy. As GWC is a City owned entity, like any other City Department, it is the Council’s prerogative to transfer funding. Gagnonpalick states the funding offset would go towards Northbound Spirits and its repair and upgrade. Some more discussion followed on how much to draw from GWC, with the number had been discussed at 60k. More discussion about where to take and put funding ensued, with the corrections being looked at the next Council meeting.

h. Adjournment

Main Motion: To adjourn at 7.55 pm

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

Clerk/Treasurer Brett Gagnonpalick

Mayor Elizabeth Olson