

**Hazen City Commission
Regular Meeting
October 2, 2023
Hazen City Hall**

Present: President Obenauer, Commissioner Pillar, Commissioner Stern and Commissioner Wiedrich.

Absent: Commissioner Haack

Others Present: Attorney Donovan, PW Brousseau, Editor Arens, Auditor Erhardt, Blayde & Charlene Marjanen, Lauren Donovan, Tanya Schrempf, and Buster Langowski.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by President Obenauer.

President Obenauer led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Pillar said the prayer.

Minutes: Commissioner Wiedrich moved to suspend the reading and approve the minutes of the September 18th meeting, as presented, second by Commissioner Stern. Motion unanimously approved.

Agenda: Commissioner Pillar moved to approve the agenda, as presented, second by Commissioner Stern. Motion unanimously approved.

CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY & ENGINEER

Engineer's Report: The commission reviewed the engineer's written report and was advised that work to backfill trenches in Expedition Estates will continue. If time, and conditions permit, one lift of asphalt will be installed yet this fall. When asked if it will be final grade asphalt in front of the residences by Commissioner Pillar it was reported it will likely be a base lift until next spring when the remaining work is completed.

Settlement Agreement – Auen World Medical Staffing Inc: The commission reviewed a proposed Settlement & Release Agreement relating to Auen World Medical Staffing preferred stocks that were purchased through Lewis & Clark Regional Development Group in 2005. The business is being considered for sale and the city, Hazen Community Development (HCD), and the North Dakota Development Fund may have opportunity to receive some of the purchase funding back. Buster Landowski reported that Mercer County Economic Development (MCED) and the City of Beulah also purchased preferred stock in the business and that HCD had received a dividend payment around 2014 or 2015. Mr. Langowski reported that HCD had received and signed a similar agreement to the one in front of the commission. There were additional questions about the original contract agreement when the stock was purchased and the fact that if this was grant money through the state there is no loss to the city. Attorney Donovan would like to see the administrative contract to get more clarity on the matter. No further action taken.

REQUEST OF CITIZENS

Chalk Fest: The commission reviewed a video of activities during the 2023 Chalk Fest. Lauren Donovan appeared to thank the city for assistance and reported some of the numbers from the event, including the fact that the first event saw forty (40) local drawers for the public spaces on street, the second year saw one-hundred forty (140) drawers and this year three-hundred fourteen (314) people participated in drawing on the "quilt" pattern. Ms. Donovan reported that numbers captured this year

indicate there was approximately one thousand (1000) people taking in the event with 51% from Hazen, 32% from Beulah, 12% from other areas of North Dakota and 5% of the visitors were from outside the state of North Dakota, with two (2) people being from out of the country, South Africa, and Saskatchewan. Plans for the 2024 event will be discussed at upcoming meetings of the group and Ms. Donovan asked if the city had any comments or concerns to bring to the committee. Commissioner Wiedrich said there was a concern with security for the event when alcohol is being sold and the fact that similar events are required to provide paid security. Ms. Donovan said security is done by volunteers to conserve funds. President Obenauer suggested the committee work with Police Chief Wolff to ensure the next event has proper security in place. President Obenauer added that it was very nice to see young people taking in the event. Ms. Donovan concluded by reminding the commission that this event is used to raise funds to enhance the park and that funds raised this year will be used to complete the lighting in the park. Ms. Donovan said that “memorial” benches were sold during the event and when they are purchased will be added to the park. There was a question about what to do with the old benches and Ms. Donovan was directed to work with Hazen Parks & Recreation to find a new place to use them. Mr. Langowski reported that the Convention & Visitors Bureau also donated \$2800 for the purchase of new coated metal benches for the park.

APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS AND BUILDING PERMITS

Variance/Permit Request – B & C Marjanen: The commission reviewed a letter of Blayde and Charlene Marjanen to request permission to bring two (2) Norwegian Dwarf goats into city limits. Mr. Marjanen has three (3) blue heeler dogs that are trained to work with livestock and are used by ranchers in Minnesota and Arizona. Mr. Marjanen would like the goats as companions the dogs are accustomed to being around. President Obenauer asked if the Marjanen’s had considered working with local ranchers to keep the dogs active, and Mr. Marjanen said the dogs get enough work out of state and that he wanted the goats as companions for the dogs. Commissioner Stern indicated he was not worried about the goats as he can hear dogs barking all the time. Commissioner Pillar stated the goats are cool but was concerned about the precedent that may be set by allowing them, contrary to ordinance. Mr. Marjanen said he understood the concern of the commission. No action taken to approve the request.

REPORTS

Water/Sewer/Garbage: Commissioner Pillar informed the board that he, and staff, will participate in a presentation for water meters available from Core & Main, in preparation for a meter replacement project in 2024 – 2025. Part of the process will include developing specifications to bid on supplies in the future.

Street/Cemetery: Commissioner Haack absent. No report. PW Director Brousseau informed the commission that staff is sweeping leaves, equipment is being prepared for winter, cutting edges are on hand for the winter, and the angle blades have been delivered to Hazen Welding for repairs and fabrication of the second snow gate.

Finance/Busing/Library: Commissioner Stern had nothing to report at this time.

Police/Fire/Forestry: Commissioner Wiedrich informed the board that the police department handled one-hundred eighty-one (181) calls for service in September and detailed calls handled by each officer. Commissioner Wiedrich had nothing to report regarding the fire department.

Regarding forestry, Commissioner Wiedrich informed the board that the forester has been grinding

stumps and trimming trees when possible.

HCD: Buster Langowski had nothing to report at this time.

President: President Obenauer had nothing to report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Mower Repair/Replacement: The commission was informed the 2016 JD mower had been repaired at a cost of less than \$1600 and is back in service. The commission again reviewed proposals of RDO Equipment – John Deere (\$39,497.04), Northern Plains Equipment - Kubota (\$51,675.00) and MTI Distributing – Toro (\$69,951.48) for the purchase of a new front deck mower. It was explained that the Kubota & Toro bids included equipment (blower/broom) that the city currently has that would not transfer to these brands. Commissioner Stern moved to approve the purchase of the John Deere 1575 mower at a final cost of \$39,497.04, second by Commissioner Pillar. Upon discussion, PW Director Brousseau informed the commission that this would be his recommendation for purchase and that our current attachments will work on this mower. On roll call vote: Stern, “Aye”, Pillar, “Aye”, Wiedrich, “Aye”, Obenauer, “Aye”, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

2024 City Budget – Public Hearing: President Obenauer recessed the regular commission meeting and opened the public hearing on the 2024 City Budget at 6:18 PM. Tanya Schrempp had a property tax question that was not related to the city’s budget and was advised to contact the county treasurer. No other public comments were received, and Auditor Erhardt explained that there were no changes from the preliminary budget that was approved in early August and the proposed budget will see a mill levy change of less than one (1). No other comments were received, and President Obenauer closed the public hearing at 6:22 PM CT and reconvened the regular city commission meeting.

Commissioner Pillar moved to approve the 2024 City of Hazen budget, as presented, second by Commissioner Stern. On roll call vote: Pillar, “Aye”, Stern, “Aye”, Wiedrich, “Aye”, Obenauer, “Aye”, motion carried.

City Hall Improvements: The commission reviewed a proposal from Home Connection for carpet, or tile, replacement in city hall offices and the commission room. The request for the proposals was discussed during the budget meeting as a possible project for this year, or next. There was talk about whether the project should be this year or next and if it included any extra material for later repairs in case the style chosen is no longer available. The commission also discussed the option to have the current carpet professionally cleaned prior to taking any action. Commissioner Pillar said he would like to wait on this project until the city has the opportunity, early next year, to see if revenues are coming in as anticipated and determine if it is prudent and necessary to proceed. No further action taken.

City Phone System Upgrade: The commission reviewed a proposal of West River Telecommunications to replace the city’s aging phone system as it is becoming hard to find replacement parts and technicians familiar with the current one. There were some questions about some of the proposed costs and the commission directed the auditor to follow up with WRT and report back to the next meeting. No further action taken.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Blayde Marjanen asked the commission about ways for his employer to fund different events, or projects within the city. Commissioner Pillar directed him to Community Development Director Langowski and Hazen Chamber Director Heier for further discussions.

Approval of Bills: Commissioner Wiedrich moved to approve the bills presented, second by Commissioner Stern. Pre-paid and bills approved for payment are as follows: ND Safety Council, 359.00; Patriot Fire & Safety, 683.64; US Postal Service, 359.14; Aramark, 376.07; Black Mountain Software, 100.00; Bobcat of Mandan, 305.14; Chad Fleckenstein, 1537.73; Christy Metz, 21.00; CVB, 3838.72; D&E Supply Co, 227.56; Danielle Albertson, 195.00; Donovan & Kaffar PLLP, 1575.00; Ecolab Pest Elimination, 130.79; Elan Financial Services, 455.13; Fitterer Oil Hazen LLC, 872.73; Further, 6.50; Hazen Mercantile Inc, 115.41; Jarid Dauenhauer, 85.15; Jim Block, 52.50; Erhardt IT Solutions, 275.00; Krause’s, 180.58; Lucky’s Towing, 700.00; Marco Technologies LLC, 703.43; Matthew Bender & Co, 320.11; Menards, 67.84; Mercer Co Highway Dept, 758.17; Monte Erhardt, 124.80; Moore Engineering Inc, 1660.87; Olson Electric, 743.00; Peggy Rahn, 122.50; SW Water Authority, 51571.47; Stein’s Inc, 360.98; Universal Premium Fleetcard, 1234.66. On roll call vote: Wiedrich, “Aye”, Stern, “Aye”, Pillar, “Aye”, motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 PM CT. The next regular meeting of the commission is scheduled for Monday, October 16, 2023, at 5:30 PM CT in the Commission Room of the Hazen City Hall.

Approved: _____
Jerry Obenauer, President

Attest: _____
Monte J. Erhardt, Auditor