

City of Sturgeon Lake
Public Hearing and Regular City Council Meeting, April 13, 2021 at 6 pm
Held by telephone conference per MN State Statute 13D.021

The following council members were present at the hall or by telephone: Mayor Todd Danelski, Councilmember Jessica Langhorst, Councilmember Adam Langhorst, Councilmember Rick Lewis, and Councilmember Erica Rasmussen.

The following council members were absent: None.

The following city employees were present at the hall or by telephone: City Clerk Lorelea Beede-Slocum, Deputy Clerk Kathleen Bennett, Maintenance Technician Mark Noyes, and Fire Chief Al Cekalla.

The following city staff members were absent: Treasurer Kathy Lake.

The following members of the public were present by telephone: Vern Anderson, Alaena White from the Moose Lake Star Gazette, Tom Helfman, Emily Danelski, Tom and Judy Koch, and Patrick Hegge.

Public Hearing

Call to Order: Mayor Danelski called the public hearing to order at 6:01 pm with a roll call.

Special Guest Patrick Hegge: Patrick Hegge addressed the city council about whether the council would approve a variance on a building permit for a garage without having a survey done first. Mr. Hegge was requesting to build a new garage five feet from the fence on his right lot line, and five feet from the fence on his rear lot line. His existing garage is one and a half feet from the rear fence line and three feet from the right fence line.

Public Comment: The Clerk stated the neighboring property owners have been notified. She stated that the neighbor requested that the over hang on the garage be no closer than five feet to the property line. The set back requirement, is five feet with the roofline at three feet. The roofline is planned to be farther away from the property line than the current garage. R. Lewis asked if there will be gutters on the neighbors side of the garage. The council agreed that gutters should be put on that side. Mr. Hegge had a question about the time limit for the permit. The clerk will be looking into that and will notify Mr. Hegge. A. Langhorst stated he was hesitant to approve a variance without a survey of the property.

The public hearing was adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Regular City Council Meeting

Call to order: Mayor Danelski called the regular city council meeting to order at 6:16 pm.

Special Guests and Visitors Comment

Special Guest, Vern Anderson: Mr. Anderson addressed the council and inquired about the following: (1) He wants to improve an existing "track". (2) He would like to open a campground with state licensure on 21 acres of property. (3) He asked about whether there was an ordinance on signage in the city. (4) He wondered if there is an ordinance in regard to outdoor storage units, which would be a lighted facility. (5) The possibility of opening a race track. The council asked Mr. Anderson questions about these topics and his intentions. The council agreed that he would have to comply with the new ordinances on noise, debris, lights, and etc. They questioned whether it is too close to a residential area, noise levels, how large the storage would be, what would be stored at the sheds, where things would be located, and how

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many spaces would be in the campground. The council would like to review things more and look at plans for the projects before making any decisions.

Fire Department Report: Fire Chief Al Cekalla reported they are working on the mutual aid contract with the DNR and stated the fees went up to \$350 per tanker. Al reported on electrical repairs for the tanker. He also shared that the Willow River Fire Department will be providing backup for the S.L Fire Dept. through the mutual aid agreement. The final concern by the fire chief, is damage to the west side fire hall garage door, due to someone probably backing into it.

Financial Report

Claims Paid: The Clerk presented the claims paid to the council. Any questions the council had about the claims paid were answered satisfactorily by the Clerk.

There were two unpaid claims needing approval: (1) Hawkins, Inc. for \$1,987.40 for pumps and chemicals. (2) McCarthy Well Company for \$530. The Clerk asked the council if we have had a contract with them in the past. M. Noyes stated that they were scheduled to do pump inspection, he believes by the previous water operator. People's Service, Inc. did not set this up either. The council would like the Clerk to reach out to McCarthy Well Co. and talk to them about this service. The City did not receive a well inspection report from this company. J. Langhorst will call them and find out what the situation is. The payment will not be approved until J. Langhorst notifies the Clerk with approval.

[J. Langhorst made a motion to approve the paid and unpaid claims, seconded by E. Rasmussen. Motion carried with a roll call vote with all members present voting in favor.](#)

Reports of Committee Officers and Administration

Road Commissioner: J. Langhorst reported that M. Noyes and Sandberg's have been addressing some grading and will be doing more streets once the frost is gone. The county swept the streets, so there will probably be a bill for that soon. The council talked about Timberline Road and possible road improvement in the future. Also, the possible paving of Aspen Lane was discussed. R. Lewis said that he would check whether the residents on Aspen Lane would be willing to pay assessments for that street improvement.

Solid Waste Officer: E. Rasmussen stated that she has been researching our nuisance ordinance and working with the Clerk on procedures. She has drove around the city gathering information on properties that have nuisance issues.

Park Advisory Committee: T. Danelski and J. Langhorst discussed setting up the next park advisory meeting. The Mayor reported on the following wish list in regard to the Park: (1) Removal of concrete block barriers because of liability issues. (2) Replacing concrete with a split rail fence. (3) Staining the pavilion. (4) New playground equipment upgrade. (5) Fencing in the basketball hoop. (6) Creation of a city forest in Cathedral Pines properties with split rail fence and signage. They would like to have a Park Advisory Committee meeting before the next City Council meeting.

Storage Facility Manager: T. Danelski reported on contract renewal and updates. The small units are \$25/month and the large units are \$75/month. M. Noyes and T. Danelski will take care of items left when units are abandoned. There is a lot of junk and trash left in some of the units. The Mayor brought up having an abandoned property sale. The council decided to have an auctioneer do an auction on a

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Saturday. T. Danelski and M. Noyes will make a list of items to go on the auction. M. Noyes will be spreading gravel at the units and will be addressing the ice problem.

Water/Sewer Operator: M. Noyes reported that the RIBS are shut down because there is a problem with the effluent pump. Jerry Williams, of People's Service will be helping with that.

Cemetery Director: T. Danelski reported that he burned the brush pile. The shrubs that come up will be sprayed with herbicide and will be controlled.

City Clerk: L. Beede-Slocum reported that the approval from last month for the renewal listing of 9010 Royal Ave was completed. The contract is identical to the initial one. The listing is for 6 months. The Clerk shared that five properties have sold in the city so far this year, five land use permit applications have been submitted and one water and sewer application. She shared that she has been continuing the setup of the new accounting software with Banyon. The storage customers have all been notified of the new billing procedure for storage. The Clerk has set up all the storage customers to be billed from UB-Max as the utility customers are. During the setup she reported that she discovered not all storage customers were being billed the same rate. Notices went out to individuals letting them know that the discrepancy was discovered and letting customers know that the small units are \$25 and the large \$75. The Clerk also asked for help in getting the information about new storage units being approved. She stated that people move in or out of a storage unit, and she is not getting notified for three or four months later. This is not good practice, a contract must be completed, signed and returned before items are placed in the storage unit. The final update the Clerk shared is that the city is being billed \$600.00 as a new property tax for the water tower beginning 2021. She was told by the Pine County Auditor that this is the tax on the Verizon Tower Lease.

Finance Commissioner: A. Langhorst reported that he researched the feasibility of the City beginning to meter water usage by the city's residents and businesses. As you may recall, the City Council was recently made aware of the increased water usage starting in 2019 and noted a high level of unaccounted for water. The city does not currently read any meters. The American Water Works Association recommends that water utilities set a goal of having no more than 10% of water pumped being unaccounted for. In February 2021 and March 2021, the city had unaccounted for water of 52% and 49%, respectively. We currently have Neptune S-10 meters installed at the majority of its customers which are setup to be read electronically using the E-Coder R900I. Most water meters are expected to have a 15-20 year life span and they are over halfway through their expected life span. To use these meters the city would need to purchase the Neptune 360 software along with the equipment to read the meters. The equipment needed would be a Trimble Nomad Handheld Unit and a Neptune 900B Belt Clip Transceiver Unit which would cost \$4,000-\$5,000. The software would cost about \$5,000/year or \$50,000 over ten years. An alternative brought to us by People Service would be to purchase new water meters from Metron-Farnier that have cellular capability built into the meter. A. Langhorst described how this would work. The installation of water meters could be hired out or performed by Mark Noyes, Maintenance Tech. The Water Scope software is included in the price of meters along with data for 10 years. After 10 years, they estimate it will be about \$8-10 per meter per year. This would probably cost around \$1,800-\$2,000 annually. The cost of the meter replacement project would likely be around \$70,000 when it is all said and done. Metron-Farnier is willing to allow us to pay the total cost of the meters over three years at 0% interest. We could use some combination of the \$40,000 payment from Mediacom and \$50,000 federal aid from the 2021 American Rescue Act. According to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), the 2021 American Rescue Act allows the City to use the funds for investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

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A. Langhorst went on to report that the city recently received a copy of the feasibility study from Tim Korby at HR Green to address the hydrogen sulfide problem in the sewer line from CIP. USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program could fund the cost to install the oxygen generator at CIP and to repair the manholes. M. Noyes will ask Jerry tomorrow to look at the manholes with him and start planning to address the problem.

In the fire hall outlets were installed for the Fire Department's Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor.

[J. Langhorst made a motion to put the Metron-Farnier on the agenda for the next month's meeting and come in for a presentation, seconded T. Danelski. Motion carried with a roll call vote with all members present voting in favor.](#)

Zoning Officer: R. Lewis reported that someone wants to move a shed. There is a lot of building that is in the planning. One of the properties belongs to Galen Neigum and the other project is Hubred's garage. M. Noyes will be locating the sewer line for the project.

Public Works Reports: A. Langhorst submitted a draft of a job description for an Assistant Maintenance Technician which is a seasonal job to help M. Noyes with the operation and maintenance of riding and push lawn mowers to cut at the City Park, City Hall, lift stations, and around the water tower. Also, to pick-up garbage, move objects, assisting with road and building maintenance as needed, with an average of 16 to 24 hours per week depending on the weather and grass growth.

Mayor's Report: T. Danelski reported that it has been an interesting month. He also stated that anything he had to report was discussed throughout the meeting.

Old Business

Inventory of water meters in the city: The Clerk has an incomplete list of the water usage meters for the city. This problem should be addressed by the measures reported on by the Public Works Commissioner.

Follow up City Engineer payments/services: The Clerk contacted Tim Korby, City Engineer. T. Korby sent a breakdown of services and payments, and a copy of the contract with the city. The council discussed the following : (1) satisfaction level of working with HRGreen. (2) When is the zoning map going to be finished? (3) Looking into engineering services. R. Lewis will contact T. Korby and get the zoning map finished.

Follow up from City Attorney regarding non-conforming properties after zoning is passed: L. Beede-Slocum contacted the city attorney. He sent a letter on non-conformities and how they are addressed. Also, included was a copy of Minnesota Statute 462.357 for the council's review. Subdivision 1 e. Addresses the topic of Nonconformities. According to the statute, building issues in the city would not be "grandfathered in". The council would address these on a case-by-case basis as there are a lot of statutes and ordinances involved.

New Business

Vote on variance for 8991 1st Ave: After discussion, the council decided to deny the variance until a survey is done. R. Lewis will contact Patrick Hegge to inform him of the council's decision.

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[J. Langhorst made a motion not to approve the variance submitted for 8991 First Avenue without a survey being provided, seconded by E. Rasmussen. Motion carried with a roll call vote with A. Langhorst, J. Langhorst, and E. Rasmussen voting in favor, and R. Lewis and T. Danelski voting against.](#)

Quotes for City Website: The Clerk submitted quotes for setting up a city website from *Immense Impact* and *Daymark Designs*. The quote from *Immense Impact* was for \$898.45 for initial set up and \$599.40 annual fee. They have a standard design and the Clerk would have to set up a new email account. Also, if the city ever wanted to change web sites the data does not transfer. The quote from *Daymark Designs* was for \$1,350.00 initial set up, and \$216.00 annual fee for domain name registration and web hosting, and \$120.00 annual fee if the city renewed for three years instead of one. The Clerk will not need to set up a new email account; the data will transfer to other domains; the city owns the site and can transfer, upgrade or change anything. Uploading ordinances or minutes, etc. will cost \$15.00 per ¼ hour. The council discussed this item and decided to move forward with *Daymark Designs*.

[R. Lewis made a motion to accept the quote from Daymark Designs to create the City's Website, seconded by J. Langhorst. Motion carried with a roll call vote with all members present voting in favor.](#)

Resolution for Pine County Paving Project: Pine County sent the city a letter and a resolution to approve the county project within municipal corporate limits for the resurfacing of CSAH 61 from the Kettle River to the Carlton County line.

[R. Lewis made a motion to pass Resolution 2021-10 Providing Municipal Consent for the Pine County Resurfacing Project from the Kettle River to the Carlton County line, seconded by J. Langhorst. Motion carried with a roll call vote with all members present voting in favor.](#)

Publish an opening for a part time public works employee: The council had some discussion about the needs of a seasonal part time employee to help M. Noyes with mowing and other duties needed. The City Clerk questioned the council about C. Jensen being a current employee. She shared he has not worked any hours for the city in almost a year. J. Langhorst contacted C. Jensen to ask if he was interested in the hours and pay of the open position. He declined the offer. The council accepted this, and agreed to end the employment of C. Jensen and to publish an advertisement for part time help.

[T. Danelski made a motion to eliminate C. Jensen's employment with the city, seconded by R. Lewis. Motion carried with a roll call vote with all members present voting in favor.](#)

[J. Langhorst made a motion to direct the City Clerk to publish an opening for a part time seasonal maintenance technician, seconded by R. Lewis. Motion carried with a roll call vote with all members present voting in favor.](#)

Request from resident to name and maintain unnamed city street: The council had a discussion about the request from a city resident to have their street provided with a name. It was shared that the street in question is on land not owned by the city, but owned by the property owners. Also, discussed is the fact that the U.S. Postal Service will not provide a mailing address to privately owned roads. The city council referenced the League of MN Cities Memo titled "Acquisition and Maintenance of City Streets" which was included in the meeting packet. R. Lewis stated that he believed D. Barron of Pine County and the City Clerk were already taking care of this matter. The City Clerk responded that according to city ordinance, an address can only be provided to a property on a named city street. Because this street had no name, she put it on the agenda for the council to address. A. Langhorst shared that the county does not

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have authority to name city streets. The council agreed to the name suggested by the resident but also agreed it would remain a private street and will be maintained by the property owners.

[A.Langhorst made a motion to approve the name “Crescent Pine Drive”\(the crescent shaped drive bordering PID 46.0101.006 & 46.0101.007\) a privately owned and maintained drive, seconded by J. Langhorst. Motion carried with a roll call vote with all members present voting in favor.](#)

Resignation of City Treasurer: The City Clerk had previously notified the council by email that at 3:00pm on Tuesday April 13, 2021, the Treasurer had resigned by turning in her keys with the City Clerk.

[J. Langhorst made a motion to accept the resignation of the Treasurer and to temporarily authorize the Deputy Clerk to complete the bank deposits, seconded by R. Lewis. Motion carried with a roll call vote with all members present voting in favor.](#)

Announcements

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 6 pm by teleconference.

Adjournment

[J. Langhorst made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by E. Rasmussen. Motion carried with a roll-call vote with all members present voting in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Bennett, Deputy Clerk

Todd Danelski, Mayor