



**Regular City Council & Finish 2024 Budget Meeting**  
**October 10, 2023, at 6 pm**  
**Sturgeon Lake City Hall**

The following councilmembers were present at the hall: Mayor Scott Helfman, Councilmember Ken Grey and Councilmember Adam Langhorst

The following councilmembers were absent: Councilmember David Lingle and Councilmember Nick Dagele

The following city employees were present at the hall: Fire Chief Al Cekalla, City Clerk/Treasurer Sandra Osterdyk, and Public Works Superintendent Larry Coursolle

The following city staff members were absent: Public Works Employee Bob Pladson

Members of the public that were present: Kari Rybak and Shelly Coursolle

**Call to order:** Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Helfman called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at 6:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Fire Department Report**

**Fire Department Report:** The City Clerk/Treasurer confirmed that Sam.gov has been reactivated as of 10/10/23. It took several other emails of the same paperwork as before, multiple phone calls in addition to many new logins to various portals within to verify credentials within websites to verify credentials to restore access. Sam.gov access was restored to allow the Fire Department to apply for grants again.

The Fire Chief said he visited the DNR nursery to look at a truck. He will be notified when it's available. There will be added extras that need to be put on the truck as it is currently the very bare basic when it's done will be a \$100,000 truck.

He checked with the DNR and he would like to sell the two trucks at the wastewater plant in a sealed bid process. The plan would be to advertise for two weeks after they select a date for people to look at the truck. Will need to be repaired so they are operational. Sell after three years.

The Fire Department has two new volunteer firefighters who have recently joined the department, Cody Lemke and Kyle Olson who currently waiting for background checks to clear, 1 already has completed his physical, and they have training in Hinckley on October 25, 2023. This now brings the total to 17 members.

Turkey Bingo is scheduled for Friday, November 10, 2023, at 7 pm at the Star Club in Kettle River and raffle tickets will be available soon. There was a total of 5 calls within the last month.

Fire Chief Cekalla asked Mayor Helfman if he contacted the church on the Fire Hall land for sale. Currently the price is unknown. The best guesstimate would be roughly in the ballpark of \$80,000-\$100,000 if one had to guess but nothing is for certain at this time. Mayor Helfman stressed that you must remember that there is no water or sewer on that property and that will need to be extended which as well could roughly be another \$100,000 to install, have an engineer involved and the Department of Health.

Fire Chief Cekalla and Councilmember A. Langhorst figured that the rough estimate for the new Fire Hall is more realistic at \$5 million rather than the \$2.7 million that was originally quoted. It is believed the original numbers are based off pre-covid numbers and the number asked for in the bond will not be enough to build the new Fire Hall as they have imagined. Mayor Helfman has asked them to figure out a floor map and bring it back to be considered. Mayor Helfman will reach out to Senator Rarick and Representative Dotseth.

## Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 12, 2023, Public Hearing: Water Sewer Special Assessment Hearing Regular City Council & Finish 2024 Budget Meeting were submitted for approval.

Councilmember A. Langhorst made a motion to table the approval of the minutes of the Public Hearing: Water Sewer Special Assessment Hearing Regular City Council & Finish 2024 Budget Meeting, seconded by Councilmember K. Grey. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor, D. Lingle and N. Dagele absent.

## Special Guests and Visitor Comment

Kari Rybak was present to speak to the council about a new guy wire that MN Power installed in the alleyway behind her property and asked the council for their help in trying to find a better solution so the alley can be used again before the utility pole being removed due to the fire. She said that a dump truck cannot clear the wire now. The new wire is now blocking access to properties. MN Power did not remove the old pole. Overall, the residents in the area feel the new wire is a huge safety concern for them and they would like to use the alleyway again as they cannot right now.

### Financial Report

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

Councilmember A. Langhorst made a motion to approve Claims Paid, seconded by Councilmember K. Grey. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor, D. Lingle and N. Dagele absent.

**Unpaid Claims:** The Clerk/Treasurer presented the Unpaid Claims to the council. Any questions the council had about the Unpaid Claims were answered satisfactorily by the Clerk/Treasurer.

Councilmember A. Langhorst made a motion to approve the Unpaid Claims, seconded by Councilmember K. Grey. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor, D. Lingle and N. Dagele absent.

**Financial Report/Review:** The Clerk/Treasurer presented the Financial Report/Review. Any questions the council had were answered satisfactorily by the Clerk/Treasurer.

Councilmember A. Langhorst made a motion to approve the Financial Report/Review, seconded by Councilmember K. Grey. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor, D. Lingle and N. Dagele absent.

## Reports of Departments

**Cemetery Committee:** There is an upcoming burial at the cemetery on Saturday, October 28, 2023. Mayor Helfman was at the cemetery to mark the site already.

**Compost Committee:** No update.

**Park Committee:** The City Clerk/Treasurer shared that she spoke with Mark from the Lions Club and the Lions Club will be taking over the installation of the Playground equipment as of October 9, 2023. Mark shared that the Lions are very excited about the project and are looking forward to this.

**Public Works:** Busy mowing. Got the FFA signs hung up. Need one more to hang up on Farm to Market. The City Clerk/Treasurer will reach out to her contact to see if they can get an additional sign for the city. The trailer lights are not working. Mayor Helfman will look at the trailer lights. At this time the trailer will be out of order for use until this is fixed.

Bob Pladson has not been at work for half of September, 54 hours, and only one day in October, 8 hrs. He has had limited contact at best with Larry, the City Clerk/Treasurer, and no contact with mayor Helfman. Mayor Helfman asked the council how they would like to proceed going forward with Bob.



Councilmember K. Grey stated that in any other job being absent without communication is uncalled for and three missed days are grounds for termination. The City Clerk/Treasurer said that it must be three consecutive days of no-call/no-shows in a row under the Department of Labor Standards for it to be considered job abandonment to result in a voluntary termination. It's standard in personal policies. The council stated that they would look at a personal policy at a later date. Discussion regarding Bob Pladson's employment continued, Mayor Helfman asked if they wanted to consider giving him a second chance, but that was quickly shot down.

Councilmember A. Langhorst made a motion that due to the lack of respect, no notification that Bob Pladson's employment with the City of Sturgeon Lake be terminated effective October 10, 2023, seconded by K. Grey. The motion carried with a roll call vote all members present voting in favor, D. Lingle and N. Dagele absent.

The City Clerk/Treasurer will issue a letter to Bob stating his employment has been terminated.

The council agreed that the second City of Sturgeon Lake Public Works Maintenance Worker part-time employee position will be reposted in the Spring of 2024.

The city will start jetting lines next week. Mayor Helfman will help with this and hopes to get flyers out by the end of this week to alert residents of the hydrant flushing.

Calibration Controls provided Quote # 2430 for a 12" Effluent Magnetic Flow Meter Replacement for \$13,295.00 as there was a lightning strike near the other one on 9/14/23 at the Wastewater Plant. There will be an added quote to connect to after it is installed. This will be approximately \$5,000. The City Clerk/Treasurer will open a Property Insurance Claim on this. There are two meters, the main meter is the one that burnt out. Able to salvage parts to get the main meter operational currently. The installation could be two months or March or April depending on the weather.

CIP will be onsite on Tuesday to stain the pavilion and paint the handicap and crosswalk areas.

**Roads:** Talked to Mike about grading.

**Solid Waste:** no update

**Storage Facility:** Kiminiski's will be on-site to pave around the building. They have already been on-site doing prework. Confirmed that they slope away as part of their original bid. The City Clerk/Treasurer confirmed that there are currently 4 vacant small storage units and 4 vacant large storage units as of October 10, 2023.

**Water/Sewer Operator:** No added update.

**Zoning:** The City Clerk/Treasurer completed a Subdivision approval for Larry Dagele so he could file his property split with the Pine County Recorder's Office.

**City Clerk Treasurer:** UB Pay is online and available for residents to make payments via the website with two residents signed up already. Continue to work on the 2024 Water Sewer Assessment Delinquent List with about a quarter of the people on the list paid so far. Been extremely busy completing month-end and quarter-end reporting.

**Mayor:** No update that he hasn't already talked about.

### **New Business**

Cemetery and Compost Director. The councilmember who asked for this to be added is not present to address this topic. Topic to be discussed again on November 14, 2023, meeting.

Mayor Helfman mentioned these two areas fall under Public Works. There was some concern with the brush pile due to the invasive weeds. Councilmember K. Grey said he received a text from a resident asking about turning the area into a Community Garden. It was shared that there was talk about a Community Garden before here in town, but the concern is supervision at night if in town or out of town and Mayor Helfman said that everyone has their own garden. Councilmember K. Grey said that additional research planning options could be considered and that he would ask the resident to attend the next council meeting as she has experience around this. She also inquired about a Farmers Market. The City Clerk/Treasurer mentioned that a Farmers Market was also discussed and approved two years ago but no

volunteers to help get this set up as special license is needed. It has already been decided it could be held in the space across from City Hall or at the City Park. Added research with our insurance would also need to be looked at. Councilmember K. Grey also asked if Cathedral Pines residents could lease properties to bring in more revenue. It was decided that this topic would be discussed at the November 14, 2023, council meeting when more councilmembers would be present.

There is a local business that is looking to add some cannabis products to their store and has inquired about a Cannabis license. The City Clerk/Treasurer has instructed the business to go to the cannabis state licensing website to apply for a license there. At this time each county was issued a limited number of licenses. The City Clerk/Treasurer had reached out to Pine County but did not receive a call back before the council meeting on the status of Pine County's licenses. This is an item that will need to be added to the 2024 Fee Schedule. A draft ordinance will need to be presented at the November or December council meeting as well for the council to review to help set up a new ordinance for the City of Sturgeon Lake in 2024.

During the 2023 legislative session, a funding source was created for elections called the "Voting Operations, Technology, Elections, and Resources Account (VOTER Account). This supplied 1.25 million dollars of funding across the state of Minnesota annually. Pine County's part of that funding was \$7,827.95. Of this amount, 25% of it is to be distributed to the townships and cities based on a signed agreement. The City of Sturgeon Lake is to receive \$27.83. The council reviewed and elects to recognize the administrative burden of this minimal allocation and yields this allocation to Pine County to help offset county election expenses in 2023 and 2024.

Councilmember A. Langhorst made a motion to recognize the administrative burden of this minimal allocation and yields this allocation to the Pine County to help offset county election expenses in 2023 and 2024, seconded by K. Grey. The motion carried with a roll call vote all members present voting in favor, D. Lingle and N. Dagele absent.

Small Cities Development Program Income Reuse Plan 2022 was presented in partnership with Lakes and Pine for review and approval for owner-occupied Housing Rehabilitation loans that will follow the guidelines determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other criteria as layout in DEED and the Small Cities Development Program.

Resolution No. 2023-20 – A Resolution for Small Cities Grant

Councilmember A. Langhorst made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2023-20 – A Resolution for Small Cities Grant, seconded by K. Grey. The motion carried with a roll call vote all members present voting in favor, D. Lingle and N. Dagele absent.

Survey for Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) project list from the East Central Regional Development Commission received. The purpose of the survey is to find economic development projects in the region that may be eligible for federal funding from the Economic Development District (EDD). The survey will be forwarded to Mayor Helfman for further review as it is believed this does not apply to the City of Sturgeon Lake at this time.

### **Old Business**

Representative Jeff Dotseth was onsite on September 21, 2023, to tour the City Hall and Fire Hall. He could see firsthand the need for a new facility. Fire Chief Al Cekalla was unable to join but Mike Van Beuselcom was present to showcase the Fire Hall facility and councilmember K. Grey was also onsite to highlight City Hall but was not able to take part in the road part of the tour. There is a need to increase the original funding request. At this time, it sounds promising, but we will need to wait for more information to follow over the next few months as the funding requests are reviewed.

### **Budget Review**

Review and discussion of 2024 budget revenue and expenses accepted apart from the City Clerk/Treasurer salary for 2024. There was discussion and it was agreed that it would be reviewed at the November 14, 2024, meeting when the entire council was present to continue the discussion and discuss paid holidays going forward for all employees.



### Announcements

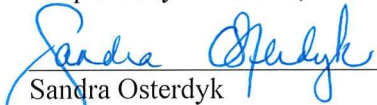
Fire Department Turkey Bingo is Friday, November 10, 2023, at 7 pm in Kettle River at the Star Club.

The next Regular City Council Meeting will be Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 6:00 pm.

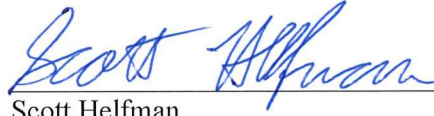
### Adjournment

A. Langhorst made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by K. Grey. The motion carried with all members present voting in favor, D. Lingle and N. Dagele absent. The meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Osterdyk  
City Clerk/Treasurer, City of Sturgeon Lake



Scott Helfman  
Mayor, City of Sturgeon Lake