Dawson City Council Minutes

October 6, 2020

5:30 p.m.

The Dawson City Council met in regular session Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. at the Dawson City Hall Council Chambers following social distancing guidelines and wearing masks.

Councilpersons present: Councilman Jeff Fish, Councilman Charlie Prestholdt, Councilman Steve Tufto, Councilman Jeff Olson, and Councilwoman Chessa Frahm

Councilman absent: Councilman Al Tufto

Others present: Maintenance Superintendent Brent Powers, City Attorney Rick Stulz, City Clerk/Treasurer Jill Kemen, Jeff Kuhn with Widseth Smith and Nolting, Deb Lanthier Head Librarian, Clyde Dessonville with Minnwest Insurance, Dave Hickey, Mike Cagley, and Glenn Carlson

President Olson called the meeting to order and everyone repeated the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilman Prestholdt motioned to approve the agenda with a second from Councilman S. Tufto. Voting in favor Councilman Fish, Councilman S. Tufto, Councilman Olson, Councilwoman Frahm, and Councilman Prestholdt. Voting against none. Absent Councilman A. Tufto. Motion passed.

On motion by Councilwoman Frahm with a second from Councilman Fish to approve the consent agenda items number 4 and 17, Approve September 15, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes and Financial Information September bills paid. Voting in favor Councilman Fish, Councilman S. Tufto, Councilman Olson, Councilwoman Frahm, and Councilman Prestholdt. Voting against none. Absent Councilman A. Tufto. Motion passed.

President Olson opened the 10 minute public forum. Hearing nothing, President Olson closed the public forum.

Clyde Dessonville with Minnwest Insurance presented on the city renewal of the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust. Property and liability insurance show a 7% increase from the previous year. This is due in part to the increase in building values and other equipment changes adding approximately $2M. The city insurance rating, however, did decrease from the previous year due to low claims submitted. As always, the liability insurance state mandated is covered under this policy however if the city should choose to increase the liability to $1M the premium would increase by $5,515. Councilman S. Tufto asked if the city needs to look at increasing the liability insurance at some point. City Attorney Stulz responded saying since the city does not see many federal claims, the amount that the city currently has is sufficient. On motion by Councilman Fish to accept the quote for property and liability insurance without the addition liability insurance with a second by Councilman S. Tufto. Voting in favor Councilman Fish, Councilman S. Tufto, Councilman Olson, Councilwoman Frahm, and Councilman Prestholdt. Voting against none. Absent Councilman A. Tufto. Motion passed.

Deb Lanthier, Head Librarian, gave a Pioneerland Library System (PLS) year in review for 2019 and shared the vision and mission statements of PLS. The drop in users that was seen from 2018 to 2019 was due to a system purge from PLS. Due to the pandemic, PLS opened a portal for Libby E-Books. Lanthier stated this was a wonderful way for patrons to be able to use the electronic section of the library without previously having a library card. Legacy grants help fund authors to come to our local library as well as Prairieland Library Exchange donating $1,000 toward author visits too. Books returned get quarantined for 3 days before redistribution however, Lanthier stated that the library is quiet. New this year is a T-mobile hotspot to rent for

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28 days. The library currently has two available to rent. Councilman Olson remarked that it is nice to see the library is still being used. He thanked Deb for her report.

Jeff Kuhn, City Engineer, presented the first pay estimate for the project. Work is 1 to 2 weeks ahead of schedule, however with the weather, this lead could diminish quickly. The underground work should be finished at the end of this week or beginning of next. Next week a new sub-phase will begin. There are currently 5 to 6 blocks with curb and gutter poured and 5 to 6 more ready to be poured on Wednesday. Radius handwork and driveways are also being completed. Most of the work in the low spots is complete in case winter would make a quick appearance. The first lift of blacktop will be laid before the freeze. Density tests being conducted have yielded positive results. So far there is good compaction material that makes this favorable. Overall, 12% of the contract is complete or approximately $1.2M. There have been some minor changes along the way, some overrun and some underrun however the budget continues to be in a good spot. Kuhn addressed the need for more trees to come down than anticipated and realizes that people are upset about this. He said it is important to protect your investment for years to come. Tree roots cause major damage to tile drains, sidewalks etc. and it is best to remove them. On motion by Councilman Prestholdt to approve pay estimate #1 with a second from Councilman Fish. Voting in favor Councilman Fish, Councilman S. Tufto, Councilman Olson, Councilwoman Frahm, and Councilman Prestholdt. Voting against none. Absent Councilman A. Tufto. Motion passed.

Councilman Prestholdt attended a meeting at PURIS along with other members of the community. The purpose of this meeting was to visit with Megan Lynch, HR, and Dan Rutledge, Plant Manager, regarding hiring and housing within the community. Currently employing approximately 20 people, PURIS plans to add another 70-75 more in the next 3 to 6 months. Some of the employees are currently driving from Marshall, Willmar, and Madison. Councilman Prestholdt said there is a need for housing within our community. Our current housing study no longer fits with what our community needs. He feels at least 30 houses have been lost since the 2011 study. Councilman Olson said housing studies cost approximately $5,000-$7,000. Councilman S. Tufto said he feels the realtors really need to be working the area and trying to help. Councilman Olson suggested getting an estimate for an updated housing study. Work off the previous study to try and save money when conducting one.

Councilman Prestholdt spoke about Dawson Chamber and the welcome baskets that they used to give out to new residents. This helps new people know what we have available within our city and gets these newcomers in store doors. He just wanted to inform council of this idea.

Also, from the PURIS meeting, it was talked about having a central location for all the homes in Dawson for rent or for sale. It would be up to individuals to let the city know what they have available and then the public would be able to access this information at city hall. This could be utilized by realtors as well as home seekers.

Councilman Prestholdt shared an example of the “Key to the City of Dawson” that was given to Stan Nelson along with the Proclamation that Attorney Stulz wrote. Mr. Nelson was incredibly grateful to receive this. Councilman Prestholdt felt that if more wanted a key, maybe it would be ok to charge for this. The current key is valued at $120.00. The key will be available for viewing in the city office.

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Tennis courts have been a topic of concern for some citizens. Councilman Prestholdt has been approached by a few families wondering what the city is going to do with the tennis courts given their current condition. The tennis courts hardly have anything left to play on. In 2012 bituminous was laid and the Hansen boys painted markings on the new floor. Unfortunately, this only lasted about 3 years before the tar began to disintegrate. Councilman Prestholdt handed out two estimates to replace the courts. One is for one court and the second estimate was for all the courts. The courts are 50’ x 115’. Councilman Olson asked if Councilman Prestholdt had brought this to the Park Committee yet, to which he replied no. He just wants the council to think about it and would bring it to a committee meeting first before anything would be decided. Councilman Prestholdt stated the bids do not include new fencing which he hopes could remain on both ends. He feels the courts either need to be torn up or made more permanent. Councilman Olson said the Park Committee knows the budget best and they should figure out a plan and bring it back to the full council with costs and budget. This discussion was tabled until the Park Committee meets. Maintenance Superintendent Powers stated that maybe the contractors would be willing to mill what is currently there. They are looking for material to reuse for the street project and this would also lower the costs of the courts.

Another topic Councilman Prestholdt addressed was the softball field concession stand. He will also bring this to the Park Committee. He asked Tom and Donnie Bothun to look at the current conditions of the restroom so he could get an idea of what it would take to fix it up inside. The bathrooms do not meet ADA compliance and the cement on the north and south sides sits lower than the building causing water to drain back toward the building. Councilman S. Tufto asked if Brian Bothun could lift the cement up to help remedy the situation to which Councilman Prestholdt responded it needs to be tore out. Powers also said it needs to be relandscaped to help with the water issue.

Jill Kemen, City Clerk/Treasurer has asked council to approve the resolution adding two more election judges to the list of previously approved judges. Because of the pandemic, some judges are not comfortable working. This is going to be a big election due to the presidential race. We also must be diligent to disinfect and keep the voting area safe for all. On motion by Councilwoman Frahm with a second by Councilman Prestholdt to approve the resolution appointing two more election judges. Voting in favor Councilman Fish, Councilman S. Tufto, Councilman Olson, Councilwoman Frahm, and Councilman Prestholdt. Voting against none. Absent Councilman A. Tufto. Motion passed.

The EDA update is for information only. No discussion was had.

Maintenance Superintendent Brent Powers’ Report

1. The campers at Veteran’s Park all wish to remain at the campground throughout the winter. Powers has been working to winterize the water. He has insulated garbage cans that will go over the water spickets and will also use heat tape to help from not freezing. Snow could be piled as insulation to keep the water pipes from freezing.
2. Well # 6 has had a new well casing dropped and cemented in it. Next week the plan is to complete the steps to put the pitless unit in service again.
3. The leaking manhole is still leaking.

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1. With boulevard trees being a topic of conversation, Powers was wondering about the city purchasing bare root trees for homeowners to plant. He thought maybe this could be done in 2022 but

homeowners could put their order in to the city ahead of time as to make sure to get the amount they need. He also feels it is important to set better guidelines for planting trees. These guidelines were then discussed among council. Councilmen Olson and Prestholdt both agreed it would be a good idea to give trees back.

1. Powers addressed the tree on Patrick Nelson’s lot. He said he made the mistake thinking it was indeed a boulevard tree when in fact it was not. He feels the city should right the wrong and purchase a tree for Nelson. The council agreed this would be a good solution.
2. Powers stated he is having his second shoulder surgery on November 9th and would be out of work several months.

Tami Schuelke-Sampson Report given by Jill Kemen City Clerk/Treasurer

1. Johnson Memorial Care Center and Assisted Living dates have been set for voting. Out of caution due to the pandemic, the city office staff is asking if the office could be closed on October 15 and October 16 to accommodate the need for elections judges needed to help with the election. Councilman Prestholdt felt that this was a needed service we offer to the residents there. On motion by Councilman Prestholdt with a second by Councilman Fish to approve the closing of the office to accommodate voting. Voting in favor Councilman Fish, Councilman S. Tufto, Councilman Olson, Councilwoman Frahm, and Councilman Prestholdt. Voting against none. Absent Councilman A. Tufto. Motion passed.
2. There have been several upset people calling the city office to complain about the increase in capital improvement fees on their bills. Kemen wanted council to be aware of this.
3. Kristin Daline, Utility Billing/Office Clerk and Schuelke-Sampson mailed the Small Cities Grant application to residents and commercial owners. There is a due date of October 15th with applications being mailed to the RDC in Appleton or dropped off at the city hall.

Councilman Olson shared the decision that CEDA will manage the USDA RBDG grant and revolving loan fund. Both CEDA and the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission for Professional Services bid to provide administration and management support. This decision was made at the EDA meeting.

 Motion by S. Tufto to adjourn the meeting with a second by Councilman Fish. Voting in favor Councilman Fish, Councilman S. Tufto, Councilman Olson, Councilwoman Frahm, and Councilman Prestholdt. Voting against none. Absent Councilman A. Tufto. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

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City Clerk/Treasurer Council President