

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the Council in and for the City of Albany, Stearns County, Minnesota, was called to order by Mayor Tom Kasner at 6:30 o'clock in the evening on Wednesday, September 7, 2022, in the Council Room at 400 Railroad Avenue for the said City.

Other Council members present were: Councilors Keith Heitzman, John R. Harlander, Adam Rushmeyer, and Al Amdahl. None were absent for the meeting.

Other's present were: Tom Schneider, Clerk/Adm., Joe Mergen, Public Works Supervisor, Jeremy Mathiasen, City Engineer with Stantec, Inc., St. Cloud, MN, Jason Murray, the city's financial consultant, with the firm of David Drown Associates, Police Chief Ozzie Carbajal, Mark Osendorf, Community Relations and Economic Development with XCEL Energy, Brad Sylliassen, Director, Design, and Construction with XCEL Energy, Gary Winkels, Albany Fire Chief, and Tim Hennagir, Staff Writer, the Star Post. The following high school students were present for the meeting: Logan Goebel, Luke Barrow, Connor Karki, Cameron Smith, Cole Theising, Cole Panek.

The council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The council took notice of approval of payment of bills. After due discussion, a motion was made by Keith Heitzman and seconded by Al Amdahl to approve/authorize payroll (3354-3380), electronic payments (900026-900035), transfers, and the payment of the following bills: Check Numbers 72090 to 72121. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mayor Tom Kasner called for any corrections or additions to the minutes of the regular meeting of the council held on August 17th and hearing none declared them approved.

Open forum/public comments: Dalton Herzog, 160 3<sup>rd</sup> St., appeared before the council on behalf of the West Stearns CEO program, requesting a financial contribution to support the programs goals and objectives. Mr. Herzog noted the students in Albany, Melrose, and Sauk Centre participate in the program that develops real-life skills in building relationships with local community businesses funded by donations from several businesses and municipalities. Mr. Herzog also noted the leadership at the Albany Area Schools support the program. Mr. Amdahl noted the school district already offers similar courses connecting students with local businesses. Mr. Heitzman questioned if students pay a fee to participate in the said program. Mr. Schneider noted if the council considers a financial contribution, the funds would need to be approved by the Economic Development Authority (EDA). Mayor Tom Kasner informed Mr. Herzog the EDA may consider his request at their next meeting and thanked him for providing information about the said program.

Jean Pundsack, 211 Railroad Avenue, appeared before the council to inform the council Stantec Consulting Services, Inc., the city engineering firm, denied her request to be reimbursed for damage to her vehicle in the amount of \$700+/- and requested the city reimburse her for the repairs. Ms. Pundsack noted the installation of the concrete curb in the center of the alley and lack of adequate bituminous in the alley caused her to accidentally drive her vehicle into a lilac hedge while backing out of her garage which caused damage to her vehicle. After due discussion, Mayor Tom Kasner informed Ms. Pundsack, the driver of the vehicle, the city is not reimbursing her for any repairs.

Mr. Osendorf appeared before the council to inform the council XCEL Energy has made the decision to construct a new service facility in the city of Belgrade to consolidate older facilities which are no longer adequate for their service vehicles. Mr. Osendorf informed the council there should be no changes to service and/or response time to the community. Mr. Winkels noted the fire department has experienced delays in service at various emergency scenes and questioned how the response time can be improved if service vehicles are no longer stationed in the city. Mr. Sylliassen informed the council the decision was difficult to relocate the service vehicles, but Belgrade is centrally located for their service territory. Mr. Sylliassen noted public and employee safety will not be sacrificed and service levels to first responders and fire departments is not going to change. Mr. Sylliassen noted XCEL has service vehicles in St. Cloud that can also be dispatched to assist the city and if any issues arise, he should be contacted

immediately. Mayor Tom Kasner informed the council and public present for the meeting; the city has been very fortunate to have had XCEL service vehicles stationed in the city for the past thirty (30) years and thanked Mr. Osendorf and Mr. Sylliassen for attending the meeting to clarify XCEL’s decision to relocate service vehicles to the city of Belgrade.

Mr. Murray appeared before the council to discuss financing the proposed 2023 Forest Avenue reconstruction improvements (est. \$2.6 million), debt management, and utility fund revenue analysis. Mr. Murray presented a revised Bond Summary Report which showed a three (3%) percent utility revenue and seven (7%) percent bond levy increase if the city moves forward with the aforesaid improvement. Mr. Murray noted the city should not incur any additional debt for a few years and noted the summary is monitored on an annual basis. Mr. Murray informed the council based on his review of the aforesaid summary; the council will be able to fund the proposed 2023 Forest Avenue Reconstruction Improvements. Mr. Mathiasen informed the council the preliminary engineering report may be completed next week and if so, the report will be presented to the council at the September 21<sup>st</sup> council meeting.

Mr. Mathiasen presented to the council Payment Voucher No. 4 for the 2022 Capital Improvement Project. Mr. Mathiasen noted the payment voucher includes storm sewer, street subgrade, and base materials, concrete items and bituminous non-wearing course quantities. After due discussion and upon recommendation from the city engineer, a motion was made by John R. Harlander and seconded by Adam Rushmeyer to approve Payment Voucher No. 4 to Breitbach Construction Company, Elrosa, MN, in the amount of \$524,870.06. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Pursuant to due notice, Mayor Tom Kasner called the public hearing into session at 7:20 o’clock in the evening on a request by RS Tooling, LLC, 461 Huskie Drive, Albany, MN, to vacate the drainage and utility easement as dedicated in ALBANY BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL PARK, according to the recorded plat thereof, Stearns County, Minnesota, bounded as follows:

**EASEMENT VACATION DESCRIPTION**

- On the north by a line measured 5.00 feet northerly of, as measured at a right angle to and parallel with the South line of Lot 4, Block 3, said ALBANY BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL PARK.
- On the east by a line measured 10.00 feet westerly of, as measured at a right angle to and parallel with the easterly lines of Lots 4 and 5, Block 3, said ALBANY BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL PARK.
- On the south by a line measured 5.00 feet southerly of, as measured at a right angle to and parallel with said South line of Lot 4.
- One the west by a line measured 5.00 feet easterly of, as measured at a right angle to and parallel with the West lines of said Lots 4 and 5.

Mr. Schneider noted a public notice was published in the Star Post on August 17th and August 24th and no written comments were received. Mr. Schneider informed the Council the utility companies were given notice and no utilities are located within the proposed described easement to be vacated. Mr. Schneider also noted the purpose of the request is to construct a new industrial building. Mayor Tom Kasner closed the public hearing at 7:25 PM. After due discussion, a motion was made by Keith Heitzman and seconded by Al Amdahl to approve the following: 1) vacate the public drainage and utility easement as per the aforesaid legal description, 2) authorize Mayor Tom Kasner to execute a Notice of Completion of the said vacation, and 3) approve certificate of compliance to combine both aforesaid lots into one lot. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Schneider informed the council the 2021 comprehensive financial audit of the city operations has not been finalized, but will be completed next week and the city auditor will present the final audit at the September 21<sup>st</sup> council meeting. Mr. Schneider also noted the 2023 property tax levy can be approved at the September 21st Council meeting which will be forwarded to Stearns County on or before September 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Schneider also noted the public hearing for the proposed 2023 Budget and levy will be considered at the December 7th council meeting.

Mr. Schneider presented to the Council the preliminary 2023 Budget which included the following departments: Administration, Police, Fire, Street, Park, Library, Elections, Water, and Sewer. Mr. Schneider presented a general levy increase of 14.86% and an 10% debt service levy increase. Mr. Schneider noted the preliminary 2023 tax capacity rate is estimated to be 42.97%, a decrease of 0.38% and noted the following highlights:

- Local Government Aid will increase \$18,183.
- PEIP Health Insurance benefits and city related contribution.
- Employee hourly rate increase.
- \$20,000 for future pickleball court improvement in North Park.
- Debt Service levy increase (10%) to fund existing debt and proposed 2023 Forest Avenue Reconstruction Improvements, but will be adjusted as per the Bond Summary Report.
- 4% increase water and sewer rates beginning Jan. 1, 2022.
- Future capital equipment purchases and fund balance.
- Contract agreement managed information technology (IT) services

Mr. Mergen informed the council he ordered a new 2022 pickup from the Albany Chrysler Center as per the city's capital equipment replacement schedule for the Public Works Department; whereby the new vehicle will replace a 2011 Dodge Ram.

Police Chief Carbajal appeared before the council to recommend part-time Patrol Office JoAnna Bigler be promoted to full-time status. Chief Carbajal noted Ms. Bigler has been with the department for several years and is fully trained in department policies and procedures. After due discussion and upon the recommendation by Chief Carbajal, a motion was made by John R. Harlander and seconded by Adam Rushmeyer to promote JoAnna Bigler as a full-time Patrol Officer in the Albany Police Department. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Schneider informed the council he, Police Chief Ozzie Carbajal, Sergeant Matt Gannon, and Heather Cruz, Administration/Police Assistant, met with representatives from Xtona, an information technology (IT) service vendor and Albany Mutual Telephone Association, to discuss the city's computer security system, computer server/storage, monthly software fees, continuity, and other services. Mr. Schneider also noted the cost to provide the service ranges from \$1,263 to \$1,600 per month, an increase from the current vendor, but more services will be provided to assure compliance. After due discussion, a motion was made by Al Amdahl and seconded by Adam Rushmeyer to contract with Xtona as the information technology (IT) services. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mayor Tom Kasner announced the next regular council meeting for 6:30 o'clock in the evening on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, and adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.

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Tom Schneider  
Clerk/Adm.