

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, January 5, 2022, in the Council Room at 400 Railroad Avenue for the said City.

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

Other's present were: Tom Schneider, Clerk/Adm., Joe Mergen, Public Works Supervisor, Jeremy Mathiasen, City Engineer with Stantec, Inc., St. Cloud, MN, Sam Butler, Stantec, Inc. and Ellarry Prentice, Staff Writer the Star Post.

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 John R. Harlander and seconded by Keith Heitzman to authorize electronic payments (payroll), transfers, and the payment of the following bills: Check Numbers 71489 to 71535. 71571 to 71606. All voted for the motion and it carried. The checks out of sequence is due to a printing error.

Mayor Tom Kasner called for any corrections or additions to the minutes of the regular meeting of the council held on January 5th and hearing none declared them approved.

Open forum/public comments: none

Mr. Mathiasen appeared before the council to present the plans and specifications and resolution to set a bid date for the proposed 2022 Midland Avenue Improvements. Mr. Mathiasen noted the improvements consist of new roadway, curb/gutter, watermain, sewer main, services, and storm sewer. Mr. Mathiasen noted the reconstruction improvements are similar as previous improvements. Mr. Mathiasen informed the council bids will be received until 11:00 AM on Wednesday, February 16th, then publicly opened, tabulated, and potentially awarded at the February 16th council meeting. After due discussion and upon the recommendation of the city engineer, a motion was made by Al Amdahl who introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION 2022-02
RESOLUTION APPROVING PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS
AND ORDERING ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
2022 CITY Roadway and Utility Improvements
(Midland Avenue, 2nd Street, 3rd Street, 4th Street, 5th Street, and adjacent alleys)

The motion for the foregoing resolution was seconded by Adam Rushmeyer and after a full discussion thereon and upon a vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: Mayor Tom Kasner, Councilors Al Amdahl, John R. Harlander, Adam Rushmeyer, and Keith Heitzman, and none voted against the same whereupon the said Resolution declared duly passed and adopted. The full text of the said Resolution is on file at the office of the city Clerk/Administrator for public inspection during regular office hours. Mr. Mathiasen questioned if the council had any objection to receiving bid applications electronically (QuestCDN.com website via the VirtuBid) being this is becoming very common in the industry due to COVID-19 which should save the city \$500 to \$1,000 and spare contractors time and expense of driving to city hall. Mayor Tom Kasner, with the consensus of the council, had no objection.

Councilor Keith Heitzman, Albany Golf Club Liaison, informed the council the club is considering landscaping improvements near the front entrance of the clubhouse and improvements between the clubhouse and the top tracer facility should be completed in the spring. Mr. Schneider noted a proposed sidewalk on the south side of Church Avenue in front of the clubhouse may be constructed this spring which includes handicap parking spaces and a handicap entrance to the clubhouse. Mr. Schneider noted final design will be coordinated with the city engineer and Police Chief Carbajal.

Councilor Al Amdahl, Park Board Liaison, informed the council there will be a Park Board meeting on January 25th to discuss proposed North Park and North Lake improvements, redevelopment of the former hospital/clinic site adjacent to North Park, and funding options. Mr. Schneider noted the Albany Area School District is considering the redevelopment of the former hospital/clinic site for early childhood and pre-school students, but no final decision has been made until after a proposed referendum by the district in August.

Councilor John R. Harlander, EDA Board Liaison and member, informed the council there will be an EDA meeting on January 20th to discuss the proposed storefront improvements on a request for funding assistance by David Belford, owner of Barbacoa American and Mexican Food, 441 Railroad Avenue.

Mr. Schneider informed the council Mark Harren, owner of Mid-Mn Code Enforcement, the city's building official, sold his company to Inspectron, Inc., Rosemount, MN effective January 1st. Mr. Schneider noted Michael Friedrichs who had worked for Mr. Harren will be the new city building official. Mr. Schneider noted there will be no immediate increase in fees, but plans are to revise the building permit applications which will be made available online to provide a convenient way for individuals to view inspection results. Mayor Tom Kasner, with the consensus of the council, had no objection to the designation of Michael Friedrichs as the city's building official. Mr. Schneider also noted Inspectron, Inc. will do business as Mid-Mn Code Enforcement and has an office in Waite Park, MN.

Mr. Schneider also informed the council that Further, the city's Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) services administrator, sold to Health Equity; whereas Health Equity does not want to purchase the VEBA administration services. Mr. Schneider noted the city was advised that the Minnesota Healthcare Consortium will find a new VEBA administrator on or before October 2022. Mr. Schneider also noted there will be no changes during this transition period.

The council took notice of a request by Stearns County Parks to approve a letter of support for them to seek grant funding from the Federal Recreational Trail Program for the Lake Wobegon Trail maintenance (from the city of Albany to the city of Holdingford). Mr. Schneider noted the proposed maintenance improvements are to seal cracks in the bituminous, and dura-patching to keep local users and tourists safe while using the said Trail. After due discussion, a motion was made by Al Amdahl and seconded by Keith Heitzman to direct Mayor Tom Kasner on behalf of the city to execute a letter of support for the Stearns County Park Department. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Schneider informed the council after recent snow events a few residents called city hall regarding alleged damage from snowplows to their mailbox. Mr. Schneider informed the council if a snowplow hits a mailbox, the city is probably liable and noted if wet snow is merely pushed from the snowplow into a mailbox the city liability is less likely and the city will not repair the mailbox. Mr. Mergen recommended property owners purchase steel frame posts and bolt the mailbox to the post similar to the mailbox cluster installations seen around the city for reconstruction improvements rather than a poorly designed wooden post and mailbox attachment. Mr. Schneider informed the council he will prepare a sketch of a steel frame post and mailbox which can be distributed to the public for consideration rather than using a wooden post.

Mayor Tom Kasner informed the council he was approached by a member of the community about the idea of identifying on-street parking spaces within the business district. Mayor Tom Kasner noted painting parking lanes is expensive and enforcement difficult when common sense by motorist should solve confusion. Police Chief Carbajal informed the council he has not heard of any on-street parking issues within the business district and enforcement would be challenging. Mayor Tom Kasner also noted at one time a business owner at a council meeting questioned if designated handicap parking spaces would be considered within the business district near intersections on Railroad Avenue between 3rd Street and 7th Street. Mayor Tom Kasner with the consensus of the council, directed the city engineer to prepare a map of proposed designated handicap parking spaces within the business district on Railroad Avenue for review.

Mayor Tom Kasner informed the council he and Councilor Keith Heitzman, employee liaisons, met with Police Chief Carbajal and Tom Schneider, Administrator, to discuss a request to increase the maximum Pay Equity pay range for Groups X and XI, a \$2.00 per hour increase. Councilor John R. Harlander noted the pay ranges for each employee group will be reviewed mid-summer and retention of employees is important in today's business climate. Mayor Tom Kasner noted prior to retirements of long-term employees, the council has to have a plan in place to train new employees to make sure the transition goes smoothly. After due discussion, a motion was made by Mayor Tom Kasner and seconded by John R. Harlander to increase the maximum Pay Equity pay range for Groups X and XI, a \$2.00 per hour increase for each of the aforementioned positions. 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, February 2, 2022, and adjourned the meeting at 7:20 PM.

Tom Schneider
Clerk/Adm.