

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, December 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., Jeremy Mathiasen, City Engineer with Stantec, Inc., St. Cloud, MN, Police Chief Ozzie Carbajal, Joseph Mergen, Public Works Supervisor, Tim Hennagir, Staff Writer, the Star Post, Bryan Schiffler, Larry Eggert, Rick Christensen, Harold Desautel, James Welle, Sonya Hoffarth, Ashley Clapp, Pat Garceau, Mike Doebler, Kane Bauman, and Alicia Bauman.

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 Al Amdahl and seconded by John R. Harlander to approve/authorize payroll (3443-3453), electronic payments (900065-900069), transfers, and the payment of the following bills: Check Numbers 72205 to 72353. 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 November 16th and hearing none declared them approved.

Open forum/public comments: none

Bryan Schiffler, a local business owner, appeared before the council to discuss the proposed pedestrian walk/bike trail along the eastern boundary of North Lake abutting State Hwy 238 (TH238) connecting North Park to an existing sidewalk on Lake Avenue. Mr. Schiffler informed the council if a permit is submitted and approved by the Mn Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other entities, the entire project would be privately funded by donations or in-kind services, and there would be no request for taxpayer funding. Mr. Mathiasen informed the council a meeting was held with the DNR to get a better understanding what is expected to be included in an application for a Public Waters Permit including an upcoming meeting scheduled with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). Mr. Harlander informed the council if the project is approved, construction shall not begin until 100% funds are secured by donations and deposited in an account designated for the said trail improvement. Mr. Schiffler presented to the council a letter of support he received from Travis Okerlund, Superintendent of Albany Area Schools, encouraging the city to explore the development of the said trail. Mr. Harlander noted the project shall include engineered plans and specifications, on-site daily construction inspection, and competitive bids, similar to past street reconstruction improvements. Mayor Tom Kasner, with the consensus of the council, directed Mr. Schneider to schedule a joint meeting of the council and Park Board to be held on Wednesday, January 18th prior to the regular city council meeting, for the purpose of gathering public input on the proposed construction of a pedestrian walk/bike trail along the eastern boundary of North Lake abutting State Hwy 238 (TH238) connecting North Park to an existing sidewalk on Lake Avenue.

Mr. Schiffler also presented to the council a proposed concept drawing of future recreational improvements to be constructed in North Park (58+/- acres) such as, but not limited to, picnic areas, youth baseball fields, soccer fields, BMX bicycle track, splash pad, dog park, green house, walk/bike paths, lake learning platform, etc. Mr. Schiffler informed the council if any of the improvements are constructed, the costs would be paid for by donations and no taxpayer funding would be requested. Mayor Tom Kasner, with the consensus of the council, directed Mr. Schneider to schedule a joint meeting of the council and Park Board on Wednesday, January 18th for the purpose of gathering public input related to future recreational improvements in North Park. Mayor Tom Kasner announced the time of the meeting is to be determined.

Mr. Schiffler also requested the council consider the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of County Roads 41/10 and State Hwy 238 (8th St.). Mr. Schiffler informed the council the roundabout would improve traffic movement and safety at one of the busiest intersections in the city. Mayor Tom Kasner noted the roadways fall under the jurisdiction of the Mn Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and Stearns County Highway Department. Mr. Mathiasen noted he will contact each to see if they have any future plans for traffic improvements at the intersection.

Mr. Schiffler also requested the council consider painting or marking the shoulder of County Road 41 and State Hwy 238 or 8th Street South as a bike or pedestrian route from the Albany Chrysler Center to the Lake Wobegon Trail crossing on 8th Street near A&W/Subway. Mr. Schiffler informed the council he is purchasing electric bicycles for his customers to use while waiting for vehicle maintenance to promote the trail and outdoor activity. Mr. Schneider noted if the shoulder of a roadway is designated as a bike route, no vehicle parking is permitted. Mayor Tom Kasner noted the roadways fall under the jurisdiction of MnDOT and Stearns County Highway Department and directed Mr. Mathiasen to inquire about the rules and regulations for use of shoulder as a bike or pedestrian trail.

Pursuant to due notice, at 7:25 PM, Mayor Tom Kasner called the public hearing into session to consider approving the 2023 Budget and the amount of property taxes being proposed to be collected to pay for the costs of services the city will provide in 2023. Mr. Schneider noted a notice of the public hearing was published in the Star Post on November 23rd and 30th. Mr. Schneider presented to the council the proposed employee benefits, hourly wage increase, revenues, capital equipment fund, and department operations (water, sewer, park, police, street, administration, library, elections, fire). Mr. Schneider noted the 2022 levy was \$1,093,413 and the proposed 2023 levy is \$1,320,424, a 20.76% increase. Mr. Schneider noted the following budget highlights: 1) 10% debt service levy increase for the purpose of funding the 2023 Forest Avenue Capital Improvements, 2) \$42,000 increase Economic Development Authority funds for storefront improvements, 3) administration office personnel increase and 4) \$20,000 increase for Pickleball Court improvement in North Park. Mr. Schneider informed the council if the proposed 2022 levy is approved, the city's 2023 tax capacity rate is estimated to be 45.224%, a slight increase from the previous year which was 43.35%. James Welle, 501 8th Street, appeared before the council to inform the council his property taxes increased substantially. Mr. Schneider noted the following caused significant residential property tax increases: 1) market value increase (15-28%) for residential properties, 2) low interest rates, 3) home sales exceeding market values, and 3) limited inventory of homes for sale. Larry Eggert, 111 12th St., questioned why the homestead exclusion decrease on his property. Mr. Schneider noted the legislature in 2011 repealed the Homestead Market Value Credit and replaced it with Homestead Market Value Exclusion; whereby the exclusion is a reduction in the value of property subject to tax (lowers the taxable value). Mr. Schneider also noted as residential market values increase, the homestead market value exclusion decreases. Mayor Tom Kasner closed the public hearing at 7:55 PM. Mayor Tom Kasner informed the public a resolution to approve the 2023 Budget and levy will be presented to the council at the regular council meeting held on Wednesday, December 21st.

Pursuant to due notice, at 7:58 PM, Mayor Tom Kasner called the public hearing into session to consider and possible adopt the proposed assessment for single family residential lot, forfeited property that has been sold (Lot 10, Block 7), within the Whispering Oaks at Two River for costs related to the installation of utilities, streets, and other municipal improvements. Mr. Schneider noted only one (1) forfeited lot remains in the said subdivision which was constructed in 2005. Mayor Tom Kasner closed the public hearing at 7:59 PM. After due discussion, a motion was made by Adam Rushmeyer and seconded by Al Amdahl to certify to the Stearns County Auditor the unpaid assessment as follows:

Address	PID #	Remaining Delinquent	Remaining Balance	Amount:
100 Whispering Oaks Dr.	40.25655.0084	\$7,420.80	\$9,820.64	\$17,241.44

- The remaining delinquent amount shall be payable in full with general taxes for the year 2023.
- The remaining balance shall be payable in equal annual installments including principal and interest extending over a period of seven (7) years, with interest at the rate of 4.0% per annum, in

the amount annually required to pay the principal over such period at such rate, the first of said installments to be payable with general taxes for the year 2023, collectible with such taxes during the year 2023.

All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Mathiasen also presented to the council Payment Voucher No. 3 for the Golf View Drive Lift Station Improvement Project. Mr. Mathiasen noted payment includes the new standby generator installation which is operating as planned. 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. 3 to Liberty Electric, Albany, MN, in the amount of \$20,520. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Schneider informed the council interviews were held on November 21st for a part-time position in the Administration Department. Mr. Schneider noted a notice of the job opening was published in the Star Post on October 26th. Mr. Schneider recommended Molly Hoppe, Albany, MN, be hired for the position at an hourly rate of \$18.50/hour. After due discussion, a motion was made by Mayor Tom Kasner and seconded by Keith Heitzman to hire Ms. Hoppe, for the aforesaid position at an hourly rate of \$18.50/hour beginning in January 2023, contingent upon a successful background check. All voted for the motion and it carried.

The Council took notice of a resolution to certify the location of the election polling place for the year 2023 as required by Mn State Statute. After due discussion, a motion was made by Al Amdahl who introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION 2022-36
A RESOLUTION TO DESIGNATE THE POLLING PLACE FOR 2023
Albany City Hall
400 Railroad Avenue, Albany, MN 56307

The motion for the foregoing Resolution was seconded by John R. Harlander 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, Keith Heitzman, Adam Rushmeyer, and John R. Harlander, and none voted against the same whereupon the said Resolution was 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. Schneider presented to the council the proposed 2023 Albany Schedule of Fees and Charges, "Appendix A" beginning January 1, 2023. Mr. Schneider informed the council administration staff incurs costs in certifying unpaid accounts to the Stearns County Auditor for collection and recommended a charge of \$75 per account be considered to help defray the costs incurred by the city. After due discussion, a motion was made by John R. Harlander who introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

CITY OF ALBANY
RESOLUTION 2022-37
A RESOLUTION AMENDING APPENDIX A

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 Appendix "A", Albany Schedule of Fees and Charges 2023, is on file at the office of the City Clerk/Administrator for public inspection during regular office hours.

The council took notice of a contract for services between Premier Pyrotechnics and the city of Albany for the purpose of purchasing fireworks for 2023 Heritage Day community celebration to be held on August 5, 2023. Mr. Schneider noted the Chamber of Commerce is the sponsor and the city is the buyer

as outlined in the contract. After due discussion, a motion was made by Keith Heitzman and seconded by Al Amdahl to authorize Mayor Tom Kasner to execute the said contract on behalf of the city. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Schneider informed the council the city did not receive an application for the vacant one-year term on the Planning Commission ending December 31, 2023. Mr. Schneider noted the notice of the vacancy on the board was published in the Star Post on November 2nd. Mr. Schneider informed the council he contacted Todd Horton, 303 Sunset Court, a former Planning Commission member, who had served for 14-years (2006-2020); whereby after a short conversation, Mr. Horton agreed to accept the one-year appointment. Mr. Rushmeyer recommended to the council Mr. Horton be appointed to the Planning Commission having considerable knowledge and experience with the regulations in the zoning ordinance. After due discussion, a motion was made by Adam Rushmeyer and seconded by John R. Harlander to appoint Todd Horton as a board member on the Planning Commission effective immediately for a term ending December 31, 2023. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Mr. Schneider questioned if the council had any suggestions on naming the alley that lies in an east/west direction between 2nd Street and 3rd Street directly north of Railroad Avenue. Mr. Schneider noted there are two residences that access the alley and the current addresses 120 ½ 2nd St. and 130 ½ 3rd St., is confusing for delivery and emergency personnel including difficulty in completing applications that do not recognize a half street. Mr. Schneider also noted one of the property owners had requested the council consider a specific street name for the alley. After due discussion, a motion was made by Al Amdahl and seconded by Keith Heitzman to name the aforesaid alley “Hidden Way”. All voted for the motion and it carried. Mr. Schneider informed the council he will contact the two property owners, local fire/police departments, and Stearns County, to direct them to update their 911 Emergency and property tax systems.

Mayor Tom Kasner announced the next regular council meeting for 6:30 o’clock in the evening on Wednesday, December 21, 2022, and adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.

Tom Schneider
Clerk/Adm.