

**MCGREGOR CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 15, 2020, 6:30 P.M.**

The MCGREGOR CITY COUNCIL met in Regular Session at 6:30 p.m. on **Wednesday, January 15, 2020** at City Hall with Mayor Lyle Troester presiding. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Troester led the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members present: Scott, Echard, Carroll, Halvorson, and Hallberg.

Mayor Troester read thank you notes from Festival of Trees for the city sponsorship and from former councilman Joe Muehlbauer for the certificate and gift. The mayor recognized with appreciation, Pat's Electric for donated labor and materials for electric service to the pocket park and for temporary electric service boxes provided for the Hog Jog dinner and Chalk the Walk events held as fund raisers for the Turner Park Splash Pad.

Scott moved, seconded by Halvorson to approve the Consent Agenda by one motion a) Agenda as listed b) Regular Meeting minutes December 18, 2019 c) Bills and Claims as presented for period December 19, 2019 through January 15, 2020 - City- \$86,253.43, Library - \$1,085.99, December 2019 Revenues - \$102,779.43, December 2019 Expenses - \$104,141.98 d) Treasurer's Report for December 2019. Roll call vote: Ayes – all. Motion carried.

Hearing of Delegations: No comments heard

Police report: Chief Millin provided a discussion of the annual report for the Mar Mac Law Enforcement District. The public relations section of the report highlighted department activities of the past year – Drug Take Back, Dunkin Cops on a Rooftop, What You Don't See trailer, and Toys for Tots. A new classification system has been implemented for tracking calls and other police activity. Reclassification of the past five years was completed to provide data that is comparable. The report will be available on the department's website and facebook page. Radio replacement will begin in the next budget year with current equipment be phased out due to state changes in communication. The state also announced last week that the operating system currently being used on department computers will no longer be compatible. An IT firm is reviewing the system to determine what is needed to bring the system up to speed.

Operations report: Ren Pape, Public Works Director, introduced new Waste Water - Streets Maintenance employee Jason Wagner to the council and audience. His first day was January 2. Wagner told a little about himself and that he will work to get his sewer license as quickly as the process allows sighting on the job time requirement, and CEUs needed to be ready to take the Grade I test. He will be working with Jason Sullivan, affidavit operator, each week to gain the basics and take training as it is available. Pape discussed snow plowing and that lighter snows hadn't been plowed but that the crews will be out sanding hills and intersections in the future even during light snows. The old concession stand at Turner Park has been moved onto the parking lot in preparation for the splash pad project this summer. The Turner Park Committee is holding a silent auction for the structure until the end of January. Proceeds will go to the Splash Pad project.

Mayor Troester opened a scheduled public hearing to take comments regarding the proposed disposal of Lot 12 Ohmer Subdivision. The lot is being donated to NEICAC for construction of a lease to own home in furtherance of the City's promotion of affordable housing. No comments were heard at the meeting and none were received at city hall. The hearing was closed. A second public hearing that was to have been held for Turner Park Splash Pad will be rescheduled as documents were not completed in time for this meeting.

Jake Deaver, MSA Professionals, presented the preliminary plans for the splash pad including future location of the rest room building. Plans and specifications, opinion of cost and form of contract will be finalized for the February meeting. Bid documents will go out to allow at least 20 days in advance of the February meeting. Bids will be opened the afternoon of February 19, the hearing held at the council meeting that night and bids considered following the hearing. Echard moved, seconded by Carroll to set a public hearing for February 19, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. to take comments regarding Turner Park Splash Pad plans, specifications, opinion of cost, and form of contract. Roll call vote: Ayes – all. Motion carried.

Katie Nolte, UERPC, addressed the council to thank them for their continued support of the NEIRHTF. The council has pledged \$5,000 annually to assist with home rehab or for down payment assistance. That money stays locally and is matched with funds from the trust. Echard moved, seconded by Carroll to approve making a pledge to NEIRHTF for the 2021 budget year in the amount of \$5,000. Roll call vote: Ayes – all. Motion carried.

Mayor Troester informed the council that he, councilman Carroll and city administrator McManus had attended the dock commission meeting last week. The commission had approved a motion to send a recommendation to the council to revise Chapter 26.05 Section 6 Applicant to allow owners of property with single family residences or business property to be eligible to apply to lease a boat house slip in addition to those who are full time residents. The minutes had not been sent to the city yet but will be forthcoming. Halvorson moved, seconded by Scott to authorize the city attorney to prepare the recommended ordinances revisions for consideration at the February meeting. Roll call vote: Ayes – all. Motion carried.

Council considered a policy for memorials in city parks that was presented by park board chair, Maria Brummel. The policy had been discussed for quite some time and is being established to provide guidelines to those interested in donating trees, park fixtures, or other amenities in memory of a family member or friend. The policy will allow for consistency within the various parks, addresses memorial plaques, other signage, trees, fixtures, ADA compliance, and responsibilities of the park board and the donor. Hallberg moved, seconded by Scott to approve the park board policy for memorials with minor corrections. Roll call vote: Ayes – all. Motion carried. Hallberg moved, seconded by Echard to approve Resolution 01-01-2020 Authorizing Disposal of an Interest in Real Property by Granting NEICAC an Option to Purchase Lot Twelve of Ohmer Ridge and to Deliver a Deed Upon Exercise of the Option. Roll call vote: Ayes – all. Motion carried.

Park Board chair Maria Brummel provided council a summary of park board activities for the past year. The budget for the park board is set up in a separate fund and will be used for revenues and expenses of memorials. Ashley Kishman, Chamber Director, addressed council

with an update of chamber activities for January. The chamber website is being updated with plans to make a more uniform advertising plan for our communities that would include branding. The budget was also provided for council review. Kishman thanked the council for their continued support. Librarian, Michelle Pettit, was present to provide a report for 2019. Many of the items on the report have experienced an increase over the past year. Book sales and the basket auction both showed increased revenues. A new book shelf is being installed with the memorials received for Marsha Bickel, 42 year member of the library board. The budget was reviewed with most line items holding steady with increases for wages and benefits. Pettit thanked the council for their support. Bonnie Pruett made the annual report to the council for activities of the McGregor Marquette Center for the Arts and the Left Bank Gallery. Art programming for the year was very successful including children's programs and adult art workshops. The Left Bank will be open year round with limited hours through the winter. The gallery is now capable of online sales as well and for 2019 sales increased to \$60,000. The awning will be replaced with a grant from UMGC. Pruett thanked the city for its support and requested continued funding of \$10,000 for the center. The dock commission budget was reviewed.

Chief Millin presented the 2020-2021 police budget which was approved by the commission at its January 8 meeting. The City of Marquette approved the budget at its January 14 meeting. The total budget is up only slightly over last year's budget, however, a line item for replacement radios has been added increasing the budget an additional \$16,500. Hallberg moved, seconded by Halvorson to approve the 2020-2021 police budget as submitted in the amount of \$273,640. Roll call vote: Ayes – all. Motion carried. The budget is a 50/50 cost share with Marquette.

Echard moved, seconded by Halvorson to approve the draft RFP for the annual examination. Roll call vote: Ayes – all. Motion carried. The RFP will be sent to four firms and to the state auditor who has completed the city's audit and exams the past several years. Council reviewed a summary of sewer billings for Cody Larson, 611 Main Street, for the period prior to discovering his service line had not been reconnected during construction on C-Street and 6th Street. Council asked that the summary be sent to the insurance company to include with other costs of the matter. The contractor's insurance is being contacted for failure to connect the line.

Council discussed a proposed revision to the employee handbook to offer employees who have health insurance coverage through their spouse or other family member the option to waive coverage through the city and instead receive a stipend of 50% of the cost of that employees insurance. The personnel committee, mayor and city administrator had met with the insurance agent to discuss the process. They are aware of several cities that provide this option to employees. There would be a substantial savings in health insurance cost to the city of between \$200 and \$500 dependent on the employee's cost of insurance. The stipend would need to be included as a payroll item and taxable. Scott felt this was not necessary to offer employees as she was not given that option at her place of employment. Mayor Troester responded that this is a benefit that would not only save the city money, but that would in return benefit the employee. Hallberg reminded council that past employees that have been covered by their spouse continued to take city insurance even though they planned to remain on and use their plan provided by their spouse's employer. Halvorson questioned how they came up with 50%, which was arrived at after comparing varying costs to employees. Bonnie Troester suggested that they look at schools

and other public employees in addition to cities and they would understand how common this practice is and how it makes sense. Carroll moved, seconded by Hallberg to approve revisions to the employee handbook, adding an option to eligible employees to take a 50% stipend in lieu of health insurance, payable as a payroll item subject to taxes, adjustable annually according to policy premiums in affect for the renewal plan. Roll call vote: Ayes – Carroll, Halvorson, Hallberg, Echard. Nays – Scott. Motion carried.

Mayor Troester thanked all of the groups for attending and for their hard work to make McGregor an even better place to live and visit. He informed the group that Senator Grassley's office had contacted city hall this week in response to a letter he had sent requesting assistance for the Main Street project. A letter had also been sent to Abbey Finkenaur but have had no response from her yet.

City Administrator McManus informed the council and audience that she had met with representatives from SooGreen last week. Their company is planning a project that would bury underground transmission lines in the railroad right of way that would transport solar and wind power in DC form from Mason City to Chicago where the energy can be sold to east coast buyers. There will be meetings held at the county level for the cities affected and later there will be public meetings held in each community to provide details of the project. There will be a franchise agreement with a pre determined and negotiated amount paid on a one time basis to the city. There is a possibility that they can also bury any facilities such as overhead lines at the same time and was given MMU's info to discuss the project with them as well. Planning will take place with the chamber to assist with promoting McGregor during the upcoming Main Street sewer/water project. McManus asked the chamber director to speak with Bob Moses at PDC chamber regarding the promotions that were offered during the Marquette Rd closings over the past few years. The council may wish to participate in cost to run advertising and do promotions and place additional signage at key locations to let people know they can access the businesses.

With business concluded, Scott moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Echard. Ayes – All. Meeting adjourned.

Lyle J. Troester, Mayor

Attest:

Lynette L. McManus, City Administrator