

**MINUTES  
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
BUHL CITY HALL**

Tuesday, January 5th, 2021.

6:30 p.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** By Mayor Klarich at 6:30 P.M.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Councilors Lehman, Carter, Kuechle and Mayor Klarich. Also, in attendance: Clerk Pervenanze.
3. **COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:** None.
4. **CONSENT AGENDA:**
  - A. Minutes:
    - i. Regular Meeting December 15th, 2020.

B. Claims:

i. Payroll #1	\$ 9,868.12
ii. A/P 2020 End	\$ 15,688.15
iii. A/P	<u>\$ 40,724.69</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 66,280.96</b>

Motion by Lehman to approve the above consent agenda. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. BUSINESS:**

- A. Resolution 21-01 (Mayor Pro-Tem). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Klarich to approve resolution 21-01 naming Councilor Lehman as the Mayor Pro-Tem. Supported by Carter. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Resolution 21-02 (Newspaper). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Carter to approve resolution 21-02, designating the Hometown Focus as the official newspaper for the City. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously.
- C. Resolution 21-03 (Depositories & Collateral). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Kuechle to approve resolution 21-03, naming the First National Bank of Buhl and its strategic financial partners as the official depositories for the City and accepting assignment collateral. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.

- D. Resolution 21-04 (Certificated of Indebtedness) Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Lehman to approve resolution 21-04, authorizing the Mayor & Clerk to sign certificates of indebtedness on behalf of the City. Supported by Carter. Motion carried unanimously.
- E. Resolution 21-05 (Weed Inspectors). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Kuechle to approve resolution 21-05, naming Mayor Klarich & PW employee Lyle Pederson as the weed inspectors for the City. Supported by Carter. Motion carried unanimously.
- F. Resolution 21-06 (Elm Tree Board). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Carter to approve resolution 21-06, naming Trent Pink as the City's representative to the Elm Tree Board. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
- G. Resolution 21-07 (City Attorney). Approve/Reject. Motion by Klarich to approve resolution 21-07, appointing Mike Kearney as the attorney for the City. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously.
- H. Resolution 21-08 (Disbursement of Public Funds) Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Lehman to approve resolution 21-08, authorizing the Mayor & Clerk to sign disbursements of public funds on behalf of the City. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously.
- I. Resolution 21-09 (City Engineer). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Lehman to approve resolution 21-09, appointing John Jamnick and JPJ Engineering as the Engineer for the City. Supported by Carter. Motion carried unanimously.
- J. Resolution 21-10 (Polling Place). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Kuechle to approve resolution 21-10, designating the Buhl/Kinney Senior Center as the official polling place for the City. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
- K. Resolution 21-11 (Extend Local Emergency). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Clerk Pervenance stated that it is important to maintain the local emergency declaration in the event that State or Federal Funds become available similar to the funds the City secured through the CARES Act. Motion by Cater to approver resolution 21-11, extending the local emergency. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously.

- L. Council Resignation. Approve/Reject. Motion Klarich to accept the resignation of Jim Milich from the Council. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
- M. Resolution 21-12 (Council Vacancy). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Lehman to approve resolution 21-12, declaring a vacancy exists on the Council. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously.
- N. Council Seat Posting. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Clerk Pervenanze stated that the Council can fill the vacancy by appointment or special election. Due to the high cost of a special election, appointment is recommended. Motion by Kuechle to approve posting for the open seat with letters of interest and resumes due by 4:00 P.M. on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
- O. 2021 Councilor Schedule. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Clerk Pervenanze stated that the only changes to the normal schedule would be holding 1 meeting in July and holding the budget meetings at 6:30 P.M. Motion by Lehman to approve the 2021 Council Schedule. Supported by Carter. Motion carried unanimously.
- P. Part-Time Temporary Employee Hire. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Clerk Pervenanze recommended hiring Patty Marks to assist with organizing, digitizing, and archiving old City documents. This was a budgeted item for 2021. Motion by Klarich to hire Patty Marks at a rate of \$15/hr up to \$5,000. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
- Q. BEDA Appointment. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Lehman to appoint Tom Hewett to BEDA. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously.
- R. Library Board Appointment. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Lehman to appoint Stephanie Dowell to the Library Board. Supported by Carter. Motion carried unanimously.
- S. Personnel Committee Appointments. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Klarich to appoint Councilor Kuechle, Clerk Pervenanze, and Mayor Klarich to the personnel committee. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
- T. Long Range Planning & Zoning Appointments. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion Kuechle to appoint Councilor's Lehman & Carter to the Long-Range Planning & Zoning. Supported by Carter. Motion carried unanimously.

Councilor's Comments:

- Councilor Lehman welcomed Councilor Carter to the Council and thanked Councilor Milich for his service. The Fire Dept. has been meeting via zoom and have adjusted maintenance checks of equipment due to Covid. The Fire Dept. also held their Santa Event in December and attended a RAMS meeting.
- Councilor Kuechle congratulated Councilor Carter and welcomed him onto the Council. Councilor Kuechle thanked Jim Millich for his service on the Council.
- Councilor Carter thanked the Council for welcoming him and looks forward working with everyone.

### Mayor's Comments

This Mayor's Comments will address the potential development of land bordering Burton Park into housing. The City Council has been discussing this for over a year now and is researching lot sizes, sewer, water, power delivery, and road development. We are fortunate that the public utilities are all nearby keeping costs to a minimum. Lot sizes would be decided by whether town homes or single unit homes are going to be constructed. The area is already zoned R-1-residential eliminating any rezoning needed for housing and a public hearing. This housing option is being considered as economic development for the City of Buhl as we have limited space available in our Whiteside and South Industrial Park for new businesses or relocation of existing businesses throughout Minnesota. The City does own land behind the Martin Hughes School of approximately 75 acres, but this land is undeveloped for either housing or business location/relocation at this time. The cost to develop this land is estimated at more than \$2,000,000. We are continuously looking for new tenants for both of our developed areas as well as the vacant land behind the school. We have sold 6 of 12 lots bordering Stubler Pit and are currently working with a developer to build houses on the remaining unsold lots.

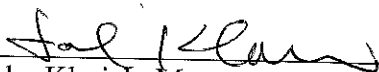
Residents may question why I use the term economic development in building and developing a new residential area in town. The answer is quite simple. With limited economic business development at this time, we must seek other remedies to attract new residents to our City which may in turn allow for some new small business ventures to start up. The main benefit of the new housing is an increased tax base and utility usage to bring in new revenues to the City coffers. Lacking a new increased residential/business tax base will lead to substantially higher taxes, utility, and service costs. New revenues generated by the Burton Park/Stubler Pit utility billing will also help moderate potential utility increases. It is hoped this new housing development alone will generate approximately \$16,000 in new tax revenues along with about the same from the Stubler Pit development for a total of approximately \$32,000 to help with aging infrastructure costs including roads, water tower re-painting, preservation, and/or possible replacement, City Hall, Library, and Fire Halls repair and upgrades. This amount will be made available every year and will increase accordingly by increases in the local levy. I have met with the mayors of many Iron Range Cities and a large majority are looking at developing residential

areas to deal with retirees downsizing their homes, with an influx from outside of our geographic areas to avoid rising crime, higher taxes, overcrowding, traffic congestion, and increasing pollution of air and water. To attract new home buyers, the time to move on this is now, while new housing is still a premium on the Iron Range area.

The City is well positioned to develop these lots as the area has sewer, water, power, and roads on two of three sides needed for development. There would be minimal earthwork to level the land area. An estimated cost is approximately \$300,000 which we could not duplicate. The City has also reached out for grant dollars to assist in this project. As I stated earlier, land behind the Martin Hughes School could run potentially into several million dollars to develop.

I have followed some of the concerns on the "All Things Buhl" Facebook page and hope I have addressed some of the concerns listed. In closing, the area was developed into athletic fields focusing on baseball and softball. The fields are no longer used by the Mt. Iron-Buhl School District and looks like they will never be utilized again. The City no longer sponsors any recreational softball or baseball programs for our children and adults and no longer has any civic or organizations to sponsor such activities. Burton Park will still be a great place for children and families to enjoy as updates and new equipment purchases are being explored. The bocce ball courts were revitalized this past summer. The picnic area will remain untouched including the wooded area to the north. The disc golf course, which was ranked as the #3 must play course in the State of Minnesota, is still viable. The basketball and skateboard facilities are still available. Also, the space was not developed to teach children to ride wheelers, dirt bikes, or snowmobiles. It leaves the City legally exposed to liability suits from injury due to accident or reckless horseplay. Speaking of which, we just had a snowmobiler destroy a stand of many young trees on the border of the ballfields. The police have investigated, and charges will be filed. I was also disturbed that a comment was made about losing the area for bow practice. Under no circumstance should bow practice ever take place in that area because of potential serious injury to children/adults using Burton Park, let alone motorized vehicles legally using the roadway for its intended purpose, but also those out walking on the roadway for exercise.

6. **ADJOURN:** Motion by Lehman to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 P.M.

  
John Klarich, Mayor

  
Ryan Pervenanze, Clerk-Treasurer