

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

Tuesday, December 15th, 2020.

6:00 p.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** By Mayor Klarich at 6:00 P.M.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Councilors Lehman, Markas, Kuechle and Mayor Klarich. Also, in attendance: Engineer Jammick, Attorney Kearney, & Clerk Pervenanze.
3. **PUBLIC HEARING DELINQUENT UTILITIES:** William Hertzfeldt addressed the Council stating that he does not own or is responsible for the property he is receiving utility bills for. Attorney Kearney stated that bills will continue to be sent but under a different name. The amount past due will still be certified onto the property tax rolls.
4. **COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:** Motion by Lehman to add PPE #4 and Union Employee pay to the agenda. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously.
5. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

A. Minutes:

- i. Regular Meeting December 1st, 2020.

B. Claims:

i. Payroll #25	\$	10,008.00
ii. Payroll # 26	\$	10,644.61
iii. PR December	\$	2,642.00
iv. PR Fire Meetings	\$	2,150.00
v. PR Fire Calls	\$	2,570.00
vi. A/P	\$	<u>82,792.02</u>
<b>Total</b>	\$	<b>110,806.63</b>

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

6. **BUSINESS:**

- A. Resolution 20-56 (Delinquent Utilities). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Klarich to approve resolution 20-56 certifying delinquent 2020 utility account onto the 2021 property tax rolls. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
  
- B. Dave Berg Rate Study Presentation. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Dave Berg with Dave Berg Consulting presented the rate study report to the Council. Highlights include rates for 2021 will not be increased. Rates through 2025 will only require minimal adjustments to account for increased O/M and personnel costs. The City is well positioned to finance the remainder of the CIP along with other projects including needed repair/replacement to the water tower, add-alternates associated with the CIP, and a water line loop in the South Industrial Park, among others. Motion by Kuehchle to approve the rate scheduled as outlined in Buhl's rate study report. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
  
- C. Resolution 20-54 (2021 Budget). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Mayor Kalrich thanked City staff for all the hard work that went into this year's budget. Motion by Lehman to approve resolution 20-54, setting the 2021 budget for the City of Buhl at \$983,586. Supported by Markas. Motion carried unanimously.
  
- D. Resolution 20-55 (2021 Levy). Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Kuechle to approve resolution 20-55, set the 2021 levy for the City of Buhl at \$385,000. Supported by Klarich. Motion carried unanimously.
  
- E. Skating Rink/Public Facilities Update. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Clerk Pervenanze updated the public and council on the following: Skating Rink, flooding has begun, and the rink should be available for use in the next week. Due to Covid restrictions the skating shack will not be open in 2021. Senior Center & Curling Club remain closed and are not allowing rentals currently. City Hall will remain closed to the public in order to protect City employees and maintain operations.
  
- F. Precious Paws Agreement. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Clerk Pervenanze stated that the City is still waiting on clarification on portions of the agreement. Motion by Kalrich to remove this item from the agenda. Supported by Markas, Kuechle opposed. Motion carried.

- G. Year End Bills. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Lehman to authorize City staff to pay the normal and regular year end bills. Supported by Markas. Motion carried unanimously.
- H. Mining Effects. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Clerk Pervenanze stated the mining effects dollars the city receives annually must be used for something that benefits the public. Past practice has been to use these funds for infrastructure. Motion by Klarich to use the mining effects funds for the CIP. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
- I. Short Stop Tobacco License. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Motion by Klarich to approve the tobacco license for Short Stop. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
- J. Costin Group Agreement. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Clerk Pervenanze stated the terms of the agreement with Gary Cerkvenik & Jeff Anderson of the Costin Group remained unchanged for 2021. Cost will be \$1,250 per month. Both were instrumental in helping the City secure 1.5 million through the bonding bill. Motion by Lehman to approve the agreement between the City of Buhl and the Costin Group for 2021. Supported by Kuechle. Motion carried unanimously.
- K. Attorney Authorization. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Clerk Pervenanze presented screen shots of accusations against the City and staff. These unfounded accusations and outright lies damage the credibility of the City and staff. These accusations were proactively forwarded to the Auditor who will address them in the 2020 audit. Clerk Pervenanze also noted that his wife and himself will be among the highest taxed residential properties in Buhl along with the others scheduled to be built in the Stubler addition. Motion by Kuechle to authorize the City attorney to draft and send cease and desist letters to the individuals making these unfounded accusations. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously.
- L. PPE #4 CIP. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Engineer Jannick stated that this will be the last pay estimate until construction begins again in the spring. Motion by Markas to approve PPE # 4 in the amount of \$39,025.34. Supported by Keuechle, Motion carried unanimously.
- M. Union Employee Pay. Discussion. Approve/Reject. Attorney Kearney clarified language in the union contract relating to overtime pay. No action taken.

Councilor's Comments:

- Councilor Lehman stated that he attended a RAMS meeting and Santa will be at the Fire Hall in the coming days.
- Councilor Kuechle thanked Councilor Markas for all he has done for the City throughout the years.
- Councilor Markas thanked the Council and staff and is available to help in any way he can with the projects that are upcoming and ongoing throughout the City.

### Mayor's Comments

This meeting's Mayor's Comments will cover issues concerning the onset of winter and how it affects the City of Buhl entering 2021. The onset of winter means that calendar parking is now in effect and violators may be ticketed or towed based on City ordinance. This has generated many comments on Facebook in the past that were misleading. One comment was that there was no City ordinance about parking on the boulevard and printed on page 7 of the ordinance and no prohibition of boulevard parking was listed. If the author of that comment had turned to page 8 it is clearly prohibited. Once again calendar parking is for public safety to allow streets to be cleared in an orderly and safe manner. This also assists our fire department and ambulance service a direct, timely and unblocked route to their emergency. The City has included information in previous newsletters and will in the future to clarify the ordinances. I highly encourage all residents to read this newsletter as much City information is discussed.

Recently residents were concerned about the skating rink and if it was going to be made available. Due to the slow freeze this year, the city crew was not able to begin preparing and flooding the rink until Monday, December 7. This had been discussed at previous City Council meetings along with opening the curling club and the Senior Citizens Center. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the skating shack, curling club, and Senior Citizen Center will not be open at this time until it is safe to do so. The City will flood the skating rink but not the hockey rink. We ask that parent's when possible supervise their children as there will not be a rink attendant or open warming shack. We also recommend skating during fair weather and daylight hours.

Unfortunately, inclement weather forced an early end to our sewer and water line replacement in October. It has caused a hardship with above average temperatures the last several weeks causing slick and muddy conditions, especially on Pennsylvania Avenue and State Street, especially near the Post Office. We ask everyone (vehicular and pedestrian) to exercise care when navigating these areas. The project will resume in late spring and early summer. Through the valiant effort of Senator David Tomassoni sponsoring a specific Buhl Bill in the Senate and our lobbyist firm The Costin Group (Gary Cerkenik and Jeff Anderson) we were able to access \$1,500,000 in the State Bonding Bill to assist in the total cost of this project. This will allow us to potentially complete some portions of the City which we bid out but could not award due to federal

government restrictions. I will overview the entire scope of the project in a future Mayor's Comments report.

If you are unaware, the City sold the Martin Hughes (Buhl-Kinney) School in November for \$89,000. The decision did not come easy but came down to a matter of economics. In the past we were able to receive requested annual assistance from the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) under the guidance of Commissioner Mark Phillips, but this funding was set to expire. To continue to pay utilities, maintain the grounds (grass cutting and snow plowing) and conduct weekly walk-throughs would have set the City back a minimum of \$150,000 yearly or about a 40% tax increase to our residents and businesses. The Council voted 4-1 with me voting no to sell. I did so as I was a graduate, my mother taught Kindergarten there for 27 years, and the gymnasium was named after my father. The building needed to be sold and was sold to Service Dogs LLC for the purpose of training canines. The owner of the property has graciously allowed the City to keep our recycling bins on his property. With that in mind please be respectful as individuals who illegally dump garbage in or around those bins could jeopardize the current arrangement. In addition, the school and grounds are now private property and no longer available for public use.

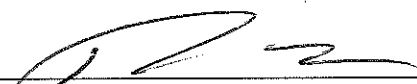
On behalf of City Staff and the Council I would like to thank Councilor Markas for his service to the City both as a former employee of over 20 years and for the past 8 years as a Councilor. John's vast knowledge on everything from our electrical system and infrastructure to planning & zoning has been invaluable for the City. Numerous entities such as Minnesota Power, Minnesota Energy, and countless others still reach out to John and ask questions that only he knows the answers to. John throughout his career has maintained our electrical grid and passed on his knowledge to our current foreman which has saved residents countless dollars compared to other cities who do not maintain their own grid. Councilor Markas was also instrumental in our Capital Improvement Project which began in August. On behalf of the City, I wish Councilor Markas all the best and thank him again for all that he has done for our community.

At the last City Council meeting Councilor Stuart Lehman with support of Councilor Kuechle motioned and had approved a City Holiday Lighting Contest with 5 (five) \$50 prizes. Good luck to all contestants. Also, on December 17<sup>th</sup> from 5-7 Santa will be joining our Fire Department members & the Buhl/Chisholm PD for a drive by event. All our welcome.

On behalf of the City employees, City Council, and myself I would like to wish everyone Happy Holidays and New Year.

7. **ADJOURN:** Motion by Kuechle to adjourn the meeting. Supported by Lehman. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 P.M.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Klarich, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ryan Pervenanze, Clerk-Treasurer