

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
BUHL CITY HALL
5/21/2024

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

6:30 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER by Mayor Carter at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Councilors: X Hadrava X Kealy X Loeffler X Towner
Mayor: X Carter

Administrator: X Jeffries
Public Works Foreman: Pink
Attorney: X Kearney
Engineer: Jamnick
Police Chief: Manner

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Add additional business item: Consider approving "Congratulations Graduate!" publication in the Mesabi Tribune.

Motion by Towner to approve the agenda as amended.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Administrator Jeffries:

Noted that the 2024 legislative session has now concluded, and highlighted that a bonding bill was not successful in being approved, therefore there will be no bonding funding available for any of the projects submitted by the City for consideration. The Administrator did note, however, that the City did receive \$500,000 for infrastructure improvements through the Mineral Article of the Tax Bill. Also highlighted was that the City's wastewater treatment plant (CIRSSD) also received \$ 1.2 million for improvements through the same Mineral Article.

Gave a summary of the summer events in the city, including:

June 10 -13;	City-Wide Clean-Up;	7 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.;
June 21-22;	City-Wide Garage Sale;	8 a.m. – 5 p.m.;
June 22;	Independence Day Celebration	9 a.m. – 12:01 a.m.;
August 6;	National Night Out;	4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.;
August 10;	Great River Energy Mesabi Trail Tour;	7 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.;
August 22;	Buhl Beach Blast;	3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Noted the Iron Range Tourism Bureau (IRTB) would like to have Buhl advertise on new ATV trail maps which are in development at this time and anticipated to be release in mid-summer of 2024. The Administrator will approach BEDA with this request.

Indicated that CampLife has been identified as a provider of a computerized campground reservations system with an estimated minimum investment of approximately \$300 for 2024. Furthermore, if this software gets implemented, the City may be in a position to contribute a (3%) lodging tax from campground stays to the IRTB.

6. CITIZENS FORUM:

Mark LaMourea, 500 Wanless Street, Buhl, MN

Noted that the former car wash located on Pennsylvania Avenue continues to become more deteriorated and questioned what can be done about it.

Conversation included potential avenues to address this issue.

Noted that there were youth climbing onto the roof of the former Short Stop located on Pennsylvania Avenue and that this should be addressed.

Melody Staffaroni, 3231 Culver Avenue, Buhl, MN

Offered comments regarding a potential lease agreement with B2 Bank for a future youth center proposed to be located in the former First National Bank of Buhl on the intersection of State Street and Jones Avenue, and indicated that before the City signs any agreements, interested Buhl taxpayers would like to know:

- 1) Whether a current air quality report has been done on the bank building, as it has been vacant for a while and it would not be a surprise to note that mold may be present in the building;
- 2) Whether the building is handicapped compliant, noting that any public building, no matter what the use, must be handicapped accessible, including restroom facilities;
- 3) Whether, if the building is not handicapped compliant or has a negative air quality report, if the bank is prepared to bring the building into compliance at their expense prior to a lease being signed; and
- 4) Who would be responsible for all utilities.

Noted that her present understanding of funding sources awarded or secured for infrastructure improvements, including water tower initiatives, include:

\$ 1.45 million in state funds for a new water tower only is sitting and waiting;
 \$ 500,000 in state funds for infrastructure improvements is sitting and waiting;
 \$ 3+ million in federal funds (with a \$750,000 match) is sitting and waiting.

Inquired as to when is the current city council going to get old estimates and reports that are on file in City Hall or at the City Engineer's office, and proceed with completing an up-to-date engineering study, and seek out bids needed for a new water tower;

Highlighted that the Administrator and Engineer need to get a directive from the City Council before they can proceed; and

Stressed that money is sitting and waiting, and time is ticking on -

7. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

- i. Regular City Council Meeting – May 7, 2024

B. Claims:

i. Payroll #10 \$ 14,790.15

ii. A/P \$ 81,033.77

TOTAL \$ 95,823.92

Motion by Towner to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. BUSINESS:

A. Presentation from the Iron Range Tourism Bureau (IRTB).

The Iron Range Tourism Bureau (IRTB), of which the City is a member, is this area's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO).

The organization encompasses eleven (11) cities and townships across the Mesabi Iron Range in its service area, from Hibbing to Hoyt Lakes, and from Embarrass to Fayal Township.

The City of Buhl is a party in a joint powers agreement which effectively solidifies Buhl's membership status in the IRTB.

The IRTB attempts to visit with all of its members on an annual basis to highlight current and future matters and initiatives, as well as review valuable information from the past year.

Beth Pierce, IRTB Executive Director, was in attendance to review items of note from the past year, and to highlight some of the IRTB's current and future efforts and initiatives for the betterment of its service area.

Informational only.

A1. Consider Approving "Congratulations Graduate!" in Mesabi Tribune.

Motion by Hadrava to approve the publication of "Congratulations to our Graduates!" in the Mesabi Tribune at a cost of \$18.75.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approve Hiring of 2024 Summer Beach Attendants.

The City has previously publicly posted and published advertisements for 2024 City of Buhl Public Beach at Stubler Pit Attendants.

Posting and eligibility for these positions will remain open until sufficient personnel are sourced to cover the needs of the City.

Three (3) additional applications have been received to date for “beach attendant”, and all of these applicants have fulfilled pre-employment paperwork requirements.

None of these applicants have previously been employed by the City as summer help; all are first-time applicants.

Recommendation is to approve the hiring of the applicants as 2024 Beach Attendants.

Motion by Kealy to approve the hiring of Laila Gundy, Lola Gundy, and Austin Uggerud as 2024 Beach Attendants contingent upon the successful completion of all employment and pre-employment requirements.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consider Removing Certain Items from the City of Buhl Asset Listings, Retroactive to December 31, 2023.

As a portion of the 2023 annual audit of the City financial records and performance, the City Auditor, Sterle & Company, LTD, requested the City review its current Asset Listing(s) to determine whether or not these listings should be amended or modified.

Specifically, this review focused on reviewing current items on the Tax Asset Detail listings to determine whether any items are no longer in service, disposed of, or otherwise are no longer in the City’s possession. City staff, including Finance Manager Thronson, Public Works Foreman Pink, Lead Library Tech Oberstar, Fire Chief Lehman, and Administrator Jeffries participated in this review.

This review resulted in the identification of twelve (12) items which are candidates for removal from this listing, as noted on the attached Tax Asset Detail reports.

Items which are still in the City’s possession will be offered for sale to the general public – these items include:

Electric Department: Locator from 2005; and
1989 Trailer Jetter.

All other items will be disposed of (if applicable), are no longer in the City’s possession, were sold, or have no remaining value.

Recommendation is to approve removing these former assets from the asset listings, retroactive to December 31, 2023.

Motion by Towner to approve removing the assets highlighted on the current Tax Asset Detail reports, retroactive to December 31, 2023.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was suggested that an appraisal should be obtained on a 1976 Ford that is one of the items on the asset list; the Administrator will look into this.

Motion carried unanimously.

- D. Consider Approval of and Authorization to Apply for a Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant from the Mn Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division.

The Forestry Division of the Mn Department of Natural Resources administers the (Minnesota) Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program.

The Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program is a matching grant program which provides financial and technical assistance to Minnesota fire departments in cities or communities with a population under 10,000.

The program's primary objectives are saving lives and protecting property in rural areas.

Priority is given to fire departments with the greatest need and participating in a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) or a county all-hazard mitigation plan.

Awarded grant amounts range from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Full application is due by July 1, 2024.

Recommendation is to authorize the Administrator to work with the Fire Chief to determine applicability and eligibility for this program, and to submit a full application for a Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant from the Mn Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division if determined to be eligible.

Motion by Hadrava to authorize the Administrator to submit a full application for a for a Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant from the Mn Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division if determined to be eligible, and to accept and expend said funds for these eligible and specific purposes if awarded.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

The Administrator indicated that the intent is to assist the Fire Department.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Continue to Consider Formal Creation of Internal Audit Committee.

At the May 7, 2024 City Council meeting, this item was tabled for further discussion.

The original informational narrative is included below for reference.

At the February 15, 2024 City Council Working Session, the question was raised regarding whether there should be an internal audit committee to review all bills/invoices/checks at times other than at a City Council meeting -

Other sets of eyes on these matters reflects good business acumen -

Existing city policy recognizes that the municipality is too small to realize a clear segregation of duties amongst city administrative staff – and the policy allows for city council members to meet with staff periodically to review bank activity and any other relevant accounting activities, and compile summary briefs on these findings.

Although there does not appear to be a clear need for additional formal audit review, this oversight is welcome as it provides additional sets of eyes on all disbursements originating on procured items and City spending.

Staff supports and is firm that checks-and-balances are welcome and encouraged to provide residents and the public with greater transparency in all business affairs.

Recommendation is to consider formally creating an Internal Audit Committee comprised of members of the City Council; specifics can be established later.

Motion by Kealy to formally create an Internal Audit Committee comprised of members of the City Council to periodically review all business and financial activities of the City, and to direct Staff to create the scope of duties of this committee.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It will be good policy to try and identify and catch any unbudgeted items which may come to the table.

Appointments to this committee will be determined in the near future.

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Notice of RAMS Available Board Vacancy for the Remainder of 2024.

The Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS) has announced that, due to a board member's resignation, there is a vacancy on the RAMS board.

The term of this vacancy will begin on or about June 27, 2024, and ends on December 31, 2024.

A Notice of Vacancy was posted by RAMS on May 17, 2024, and nominations will be accepted until **Thursday, June 20, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.**

Nominations may be submitted to RAMS at rams@ramsmn.org.

Note that nominees are required to possess a qualifying election certificate from the City.

Any questions should be directed to the RAMS office (218-748-7651) during normal business hours.

Informational only.

G. Reminder of 2024 Election Candidacy Filing Period.

As an ongoing reminder, 2024 is an election year including the national Presidential election.

Two (2) City Council seats and one (1) mayoral seat are up for election in Buhl and will be on the ballot.

The municipal general election shall be held on Tuesday November 5, 2024.

The primary election will be held on Tuesday, August 13, 2024; there will be a local municipal primary election conducted at that same time.

In order to be considered for candidacy of any office, individuals must file with the City during a prescribed filing period.

The filing period for candidacy for a Buhl municipal office (both councilor and mayor) **IS NOW OPEN** (as of May 21, 2024) and will remain open for a two-week (2-week) period, until 5:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, June 4, 2024**.

PLEASE NOTE that this is the only period available for candidate filing.

Filing for election must be done through City staff at City Hall.

Anyone interested in filing for municipal public office will need to obtain an Affidavit Of Candidacy from City Hall during regular City Hall business hours (Monday – Thursday 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Friday 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.), complete this, and file this with the City Clerk prior to the expiration of the filing period.

Any questions should be directed to City staff during normal business hours.

Informational only.

H. Other Business.

None.

I. Councilor's Comments.

Councilor Kealy –

Noted that the condition of the Lakeview Cemetery road is deteriorating and in bad shape, and suggested this be looked into.

Noted the the latest Buhl Youth Center event was very good!
Hoped people will take advantage of these good events and attend these activities.

Suggested that the Fire Department have a booth at the June 22 Independence Day celebration, and encouraged that this be done in Burnett Park.

(Mark LaMourea)

Noted that there will be a car show at Cornerstone Villa on June 11 from 2 p.m.- 4 p.m.

Noted that Billy's Pub 'n Grub will have their car show on July 20th from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Councilor Towner –

Highlighted events planned for the Independence Day celebration on June 22, including

Parade at 3 p.m.;
Activities in the park (Burnett Park) afterward; and
Dunk tank!

J. Mayor's Comments.


Congratulated the City on receiving \$500,000 for infrastructure improvements!

9. ADJOURN:

Motion by Towner to adjourn.

Supported by Kealy.

Motion carried Unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.



Brandin Carter, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tony Jeffries, City Clerk