

MINUTES
BUHL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
BUHL CITY HALL
8/6/2024

Tuesday, August 6, 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: Kearney
Engineer: Jamnick
Fire Chief: Lehman
Police Chief: Manner

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA/COUNCIL ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None.

Motion by Towner to approve the agenda as presented.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Administrator Jeffries:

Made special note that City Engineer, John Jamnick, of JPJ Engineering, had experienced an unexpected loss of a life in his family, and out of support and

understanding the City is respecting the family's needs for privacy and that Mr. Jamnick was asked to be not in attendance at this meeting -

Noted several items, including:

1. That Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/St. Louis County (SLC) Disaster Relief may be available for STRUCTURAL DAMAGE from flooding in June 2024 – and to contact the SLC Assessor's Office to schedule an initial inspection – 218-471-7147 -
2. That Paul Bunyan Communications fiber optic installation construction work was being wrapped up and all should be all back to normal soon -
3. That recent electrical outages/brown outs were on Mn Power's end of the system and not within the City of Buhl's control; and that no long-term effects have been noted -
4. That recreation equipment at Burton Park has been vandalized – (2) new height-adjustable basketball hoops (immediately upon installation), and (3) handicap accessible picnic tables (beyond repair) –
5. That the Great River Energy - Mesabi Trail Tour is scheduled for Saturday, August 10, and that Buhl is the start/finish location -

Noted that the tour is a fundraiser for the Mesabi Trail and Club Mesabi, the "Friends" of the Mesabi Trail -

Offered MANY THANKS to the Mesabi Trail for including Buhl in these activities! and

6. Provided a reminder and update – a City Council Working Session is scheduled for Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall.

6. CITIZENS FORUM:

Cheryl Kivi, 612 Woodbridge Ave., and Melody Staffaroni, 321 Culver Ave., Buhl

Spoke regarding the paving of Woodbridge Avenue (and other streets) – wondering about a schedule of construction activities -

Noted that Jola & Sopp had recently been doing work on the project near Burton Park, but that then that work was stopped and Jola & Sopp had left town again –

Stated that she was told the City staff had pretty much told Jola & Sopp to not do anything right now, and was questioning what was going on –

The City Council indicated that this was the first they heard of it –

The Administrator indicated that this was new news to him and the staff, that this was absolutely the first time he had heard about it, and that in no way would City staff consider telling the contractor not to go forward -

Linda Pulford, 305 Seville Ave., Buhl

Spoke regarding who takes care of the tornado (civil defense) siren – and wondered why it is not announcing on test periods –

The Administrator indicated that only after the scheduled test period of July 3, 2024 was it discovered that there remained system-wide hardware and software issues with the (regional) system which effects Buhl, and measures were being taken and scheduled to repair these issues –

The next testing period is scheduled for August 7, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes:

- i. Regular City Council Meeting – July 9, 2024

B. Claims:

i. Payroll #14	\$ 15,576.39
Payroll #15	\$ 17,894.90
Payroll #7 (July 2024)	\$ 2,350.00
ii. A/P #1	\$ 86,069.61
A/P #2	\$ <u>86,302.26</u>
TOTAL	\$ 208,193.16

Motion by Kealy to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Supported by Towner.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. BUSINESS:

- A. Presentation from Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) on Community First Impression Report.

Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) recently awarded Buhl with a Rural Capacity Program Grant to assist in exploring siting a childcare facility in the community.

CEDA works with cities, counties, organizations, and small businesses to help them be proactive and strategic about their development aspirations.

The City has previously stated its desire to attempt to locate a child care facility in the community.

Joshua Schuetz, Community and Business Development Specialist with CEDA, is the point contact and CEDA representative working with the City on this initiative.

Mr. Schuetz has travelled to Buhl and has previously introduced himself, CEDA, and its Rural Capacity Program. One of the initial project milestones is the compiling and preparation of a First Impression Report, which will share initial impressions of the City and this project, and any insights identified for moving this initiative forward.

This First Impression Report has been prepared and made available, and is shared and distributed for continued information.

Mr. Schuetz addressed the City Council on the material in this report, and was available to discuss these items.

Informational only.

It was noted that with regard to the downtown area, the report identified this area as a candidate for future economic development efforts as a focus to attempt to develop this area as a service-based business district neighborhood -

Mr. Schuetz suggested the City consider preparing a tourism brochure or visitors' guide to highlight the City's recreational and other amenities to a more highly exposed level -

It was generally concluded that the City is an excellent candidate to continue to attempt to site a (regional) childcare facility, as it would appeal to several markets at once –

It also appears that there is a good chance that if a facility were sited, that it would be and remain viable for a goodly amount of time -

This First Impression Report will be placed on the City website for public consumption.

B. Consider Approving Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) Buhl MN Child Care Feasibility Study Analysis and Executing CEDA Rural Capacity Program Request for Awarded Funds.

Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA), through an awarded Rural Capacity Program Grant, has been assisting the City in exploring siting a childcare facility in the community.

Joshua Schuetz, Community and Business Development Specialist with CEDA, through findings and conclusions included in CEDA's recently delivered First Impression Report, has suggested the City consider conducting a child care feasibility study and analysis, and that the City apply for additional CEDA grant funding to assist in this effort.

CEDA's current Rural Capacity Program includes initiatives with potential grant funds available for eligible projects related to several economic development areas.

Staff and CEDA have identified a potential community partner to further these initiatives; the aforementioned child care feasibility study will provide valuable information regarding the potential viability of such a partnership.

Additionally, if approved, the City will need to submit a request for awarded funds to CEDA, and commit that any funds received will be applied to the feasibility study and will be used only to further efforts associated with CEDA's rural capacity program.

Recommendation is to approve conducting this feasibility study and to apply for additional CEDA grant funding to support this initiative.

Motion by Towner to approve CEDA's conducting a Child Care Feasibility Study and to apply for additional CEDA grant funding to support this initiative.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Question was raised as to whether there would be costs of this associated with the City – the Administrator responded we do not know yet, however, as usual, efforts would be to maximize the amount of service the City could provide while minimizing resident or taxpayer financial impact and burden to achieve this –

Question was raised as to who would run or operate this – the Administrator indicated that is desired, if not apparent, that this would be a private operation -

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Update on and Distribution of Sanitary Survey Report for Buhl Public Water System (PWS) from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) requires that public water systems in Minnesota at least every 18 months to evaluate the adequacy of the facilities for producing and distributing safe drinking water.

A review of the water source, facilities, equipment, operation, maintenance, and monitoring compliance of a public water system are all elements of a Drinking Water Sanitary Survey.

The most recent survey was conducted on June 13, 2024, and the results and report are now available.

The Public Water Supply Inventory Report, as well as the Sanitary Survey Report, were attached for information and public consumption.

Please note the following highlights of the report(s):

1. Providing standby power through an auxiliary generator for times when primary power is interrupted is recommended;
2. A crack on the exterior of the supporting wall of the ground storage tank is required to be repaired (already previously scheduled for repair);
3. Minimizing dead ends in the distribution system is recommended;
4. Initiating a valve exercising and replacement program is recommended; and
5. Bacteriological results and chlorine residuals at six (6) independent sampling locations were non-existent or nondetectable for Coliform Bacteria, E. Coli, Free Chlorine, and Total Residual Chlorine.

Informational only.

These materials will be placed on the City website for public consumption.

D. Resolution 24-20 for the City to Accept a Donation from the Buhl Curling Club Inc.

The Buhl Curling Club Inc. has offered a donation of \$1,500.00 to the City as a financial contribution to help offset costs related to the operation and maintenance of the Buhl Curling Club.

Recommendation is for the City to accept this donation.

Motion by Towner to authorize for the City to Accept a Donation from the Buhl Curling Club Inc. to offset operating costs related to the Buhl Curling Club in the amount of \$1,500.00, to execute Resolution 24-20 concerning the same, and to acknowledge this donation with appreciation.

Supported by Hadrava.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

**Roll call vote: Hadrava – Aye, Kealy – Aye, Loeffler – Aye, Towner – Aye;
Carter – Aye.**

Motion carried unanimously.

- E. Consider Approval of JPJ Engineering Invoice 22-059 #4 for Damian Addition Phase III Professional Engineering Services in the Amount of \$5,675.00.

The City has been invoiced for professional engineering services and other professional activities performed by JPJ Engineering, Inc., for services related to the Damian Addition Phase III project (JPJ Project No. 22-059).

This invoice is related to services rendered for the Invoice Period of May 2024 through June 22, 2024, and includes services related to the above-referenced project.

Specifically, these charges are identified as professional engineering services rendered under “Construction Management/RPR” (\$3,845.00) and “Staking” (\$1,830.00).

City Engineer John Jamnick, P.E., of JPJ Engineering, Inc., was to be in attendance and available to answer any questions that may arise with regard to these services and the associated invoicing, however was not able to attend this meeting.

Recommendation is to remit to JPJ Engineering, Inc., invoice No. 4 for professional services related to Project No. 22-059 in the amount of \$5,675.00 upon validation of the services performed.

Motion by Towner to approve payment of Invoice No. 4 for Project No. 22-059 to JPJ Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$ 5,675.00.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Discussion ensued regarding the schedule of this work and the protracted schedule of this entire project –

Discussion also ensued regarding the scope of this invoice; since City Engineer John Jamnick was not available for questions or comment, that the item should be removed from this agenda and tabled until a later date; the motion sponsor and its support were agreeable to this action –

RESTATED MOTION by Towner to table payment of Invoice No. 4 for Project No. 22-059 to JPJ Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$ 5,675.00 until such time as the City Engineer is available to field questions.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consider Approval of JPJ Engineering Invoice 23-207 #1 for Buhl Business Block Professional Engineering Services in the Amount of \$13,600.00.

The City has been invoiced for professional engineering services and other professional activities performed by JPJ Engineering, Inc., for services related to the Buhl Business Block development project (JPJ Project No. 23-207).

This invoice is related to services rendered for the Invoice Period of December 2023 through April 16, 2024, and includes services related to the above-referenced project.

Specifically, these charges are identified as professional engineering services rendered under “Engineering Design” (\$10,800.00) and “Topographic Survey” (\$2,800.00).

Although these lands are owned and held by the Buhl Economic Development Authority (BEDA), the City Council authorized these activities (recommended by BEDA) on December 5, 2023, and has assumed control and authority over this project.

City Engineer John Jamnick, P.E., of JPJ Engineering, Inc., was to be in attendance and available to answer any questions that may arise with regard to these services and the associated invoicing.

Recommendation is to remit to JPJ Engineering, Inc., invoice No. 1 for professional engineering services related to Project No. 23-207 in the amount of \$ 13,600.00 upon validation of the services performed.

Motion by Towner to approve payment of Invoice No. 1 for Project No. 23-207 to JPJ Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$ 13,600.00.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that this is a step toward developing a “new” business district -

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Update on Infrastructure Request from the Minnesota Public Assistance Program for Reimbursement of Costs Realized in Mitigating Damages Caused by Recent (June 2024) Weather Events.

The recent severe weather events of late June 2024 resulted in damage to Whiteside Road, including a wash-out of the road and associated drainage culverts.

Mitigation and remediation efforts were initiated to continue to allow this road to be in a serviceable condition, including replacement of the aging and dilapidated corrugated steel culverts with larger polyethylene culverts with a greater flow capacity.

Miscellaneous minor damages were also experienced throughout the city as a result of these weather events; no major repair or mitigation was required.

These events have been declared a Severe Storms and Flooding Disaster, as of June 28, 2024.

The Administrator has been working with FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) and the Minnesota Division of HSEM (Homeland Security and Emergency Management) to seek potential Federal and State disaster reimbursement for public infrastructure.

At this time it appears that all costs and expenses related to these mitigation and remediation activities will be considered eligible expenses, and it is anticipated that the City will receive 100% reimbursement on its actual costs of these activities.

Additionally, cost recovery programs aimed at individual homes and businesses are expected to be initiated in the near future; information will be disseminated as it becomes available.

Informational only.

Question was raised that if by chance cost recovery to the City was not available or approved, would the City seek out BEDA to cover these costs –

The Administrator responded that although that would be a reasonable alternative, that due to an uncertainty regarding ownership of this roadway,

at this time it is uncertain as to whether BEDA would be the appropriate avenue –

H. Consider Approval of AMI Consulting Engineers P.A. Proposal to Conduct a Structural Steel Inspection and Condition Assessment of the Buhl Water Tower.

As the City continues to evaluate options for improvements in the City water storage and distribution infrastructure, additional technical evaluation of the existing system is prudent to more completely understand the existing system's overall condition.

A condition assessment of the existing elevated water storage tank was conducted in the fall of 2023, and findings and conclusions on this assessment provided to the City in January 2024. This information suggests a long remaining useful tower life.

Please note that, although this was a comprehensive condition assessment, evaluation of the current structural condition of the supporting superstructure was not a part of that scope; the condition assessment included the water storage vessel and its ancillary components exclusively.

A thorough structural evaluation of the supporting superstructure will provide valuable information on the condition of the existing tower superstructure, and receive recommendations on potential future use. The City Engineer supports this initiative.

A proposal has been received from AMI Consulting Engineers, P.A. for this evaluation.

Recommendation is for the City to approve this proposal to provide additional relevant information concerning the condition of the existing elevated storage tank superstructure which services water storage needs for the City of Buhl.

Motion by Kealy to approve the Proposal of AMI Consulting Engineers, P.A. to conduct a structural inspection and condition assessment of the superstructure of the existing elevated storage tank serving the City of Buhl's water distribution needs, in the amount not to exceed \$ 8,000.00.

Supported by Hadrava.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was noted that these activities are eligible costs in infrastructure appropriated funding.

Motion carried unanimously.

I. Consider Appointing Various Individuals as 2024 Election Judges.

The City continues to assemble a panel of community members to serve as election judges for the 2024 election cycle.

To date, several individuals have indicated a willingness to serve; more may be considered in the future.

Individuals not previously identified for these roles at present include:

Sue LeTendre.

Recommendation is to approve and appoint the above individual(s) as election judges for the 2024 election cycle.

Motion by Loeffler to appoint Sue LeTendre as an Election Judge for the City of Buhl for the 2024 election cycle.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

J. Consider Billy's Pit Stop Pub 'n Grub Street Closing Request for Buhl Honor Guard Bean Bag Tournament Fund Raiser on August 17, 2024.

Billy's Pit Stop Pub 'n Grub will be the host site of the Buhl Honor Guard Bean Bag Tournament fundraiser scheduled for Saturday, August 17, 2024. The event will be held on State Street on the 100 block of State Street which fronts Billy's.

Carla Dombrowski of Billy's has requested to have that block of State Street closed from 12:00 p.m. to about 4:00 p.m.

The use of barricades has also been requested.

It is in the best interests of the City to demonstrate goodwill and partnership with its residents and business community and to support economic development events in the city.

Recommendation is that the City grant the request of Carla Dombrowski and Billy's Pit Stop Pub 'n Grub.

Motion by Kealy that the City grant the request of Carla Dombrowski and Billy's Pit Stop Pub 'n Grub to close the 100 block of State Street from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on August 17, 2024, and to assist with traffic control by allowing the use of barricades.

Supported by Loeffler.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

Motion carried unanimously.

K. Consider Request from FEMA for Facility Use of a Space to Serve as a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is seeking the use of space for a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC). The DRC is intended to be a one-stop-shop for homeowners and businesses to seek financial and other forms of assistance from the June flood disaster. St. Louis County will only have one DRC in operation, which will be open 6-7 days/week for 12 hours/day until the demand has subsided.

The criteria set forth by FEMA regarding suitability of a facility to serve as the DRC appears to be met by the Buhl Community Center, located at 2 Jones Avenue. St. Louis County has authorized to pay for any costs incurred with the use of a facility – including rental or upkeep.

FEMA Individual Assistance has been declared and applications for assistance for homeowners and renters are being accepted. The two forms of financial assistance will be for structure repair and for personal belongings lost due to flood damage.

Approximately 600 private damage reports have been received, which will serve as the baseline list to assist helping homeowners and renters get an initial application in seeking financial assistance or relief from FEMA. Please note that these services are available to all affected St. Louis County residents - a flyer is attached describing this program more fully.

Recommendation is for the City to offer the use of the Community Center to FEMA until such time the facility is needed to convert to the Curling Club for the 2024-25 curling season.

Motion by Towner to approve offering the use of the Buhl Community Center to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) for a period not to extend beyond October 31, 2024 in the amount of \$ (to be determined) per calendar month.

Supported by Kealy.

Discussion. Approve/Reject/Table.

It was discussed that the potential financial charge item would only come into play if the facility would be deemed suitable by FEMA, and it may be more appropriate to determine the amount of this financial charge item, if any, subsequent to learning of interest in utilizing this facility from FEMA -

Language related to the amount of a financial item was modified to become "to be determined" in the final motion -

Motion carried unanimously.

L. Other Business.

None.

M. Councilor's Comments.

Councilor Hadrava –

Noted that he was bothered by the recent playground and park vandalism, and –

Noted that things like this do not need to happen, and that one should have a little bit of pride in their town, and -

Encouraged residents to speak up and have parents speak to their children -

Councilor Kealy –

Noted that there have been several instances of very young individuals (7-8 years old) driving golf carts in town and texting while doing so – with other youth standing on the rear of the golf carts –

Noted that this a situation that should be avoided at all times -

(Comments from the public ensued regarding whether there should be an elevated police presence in the city -)

Councilor Towner –

Noted that August 20 (Tuesday) is the date set for the Beach Blast at Stubler Beach in partnership with the Recreation Board and St.

Louis County Youth-In-Action – with food, beverage, fun, games, etc.

N. Mayor's Comments.

Highlighted that Representative Dave Lislegard received a League of Minnesota Cities Legislator of Distinction award, and congratulated him on behalf of the City for this distinction!

And noted that he has done a lot for the community, and thanked Representative Lislegard for all of his efforts with regard to Buhl and the region –

Offered condolences to City Engineer John Jamnick and his Family on behalf of the entire community –

9. ADJOURN:

Motion by Kealy to adjourn.

Supported by Towner.

Motion carried Unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.



Brandin Carter, Mayor

ATTEST:


Tony Jeffries, City Clerk