

City of Brownsville
Minutes of November 1, 2023 Regular Monthly Council Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Brownsville City Council was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Jean Meyer. Council members present were Barb Hurley, Pam Walhovd, and Tim Klug. Also attending were Clerk, Steve Schuldt, Treasurer, Jenna Knight and Maintenance Dean Twite. Guests in attendance were Ben Novak and Brandon Frank with Brownsville Fire-Rescue, Kaitlin Longhauser with Fillmore County Journal, Rose Korabek with the Caledonia Argus, Joe Driscoll, Jim Hakes, Brian Ross, Richard Cordes, Andy Moen, Jean Stables, Tony Kath, John Kohlmeier, Ben Lampert, Dave Wennes, Katie McCabe, Cindy Lager, Jason Storlie and Carol Sweeney-Marnach.

Jean Meyer opened the joint Brownsville City, Brownsville Township and Crooked Creek Township fire districts meeting by explaining the rules of decorum for the meeting. Ms. Meyer then introduced Brandon Frank who provided a brief history of the relationship with the city and townships. He explained where the fire department receives its income. He then demonstrated the sources and percentages of the receipts with pie charts. He explained that there hasn't been a standardized formula that city fire departments use in determining amounts to charge townships. It was explained that Brownsville Fire and Rescue would like to adopt a formula recommended by the state and currently being in use by Hokah Fire Department. A township resident questioned fees for calls and when they're levied. It was explained that in 2023 fees for calls were discontinued. Carol Sweeney explained that the 2020 census for Houston County showed 2.26 residents per household rather than 3 as being used in the formula. Brandon Frank replied that he would follow up and correct as needed. Dave Wennes questioned \$12,375 PERA budget entry which Brandon explained was a pass thru entry where the funds are contributed by the State of Minnesota and paid directly to Minnesota PERA without ever passing thru the City of Brownsville's books. Jason Storlie questioned a \$12,000 entry which was explained as estimated wages paid to fire department personnel. Jean Stables also questioned \$12,359 revenue and \$12,000 wages. It was explained that \$12,359 is the PERA disbursement in the report and \$12,000 is estimated wages. A resident questioned past agreements. Pam Walhovd expressed to the group that volunteer fire personnel receive minimal pay for their roll as a fire and rescue volunteers and expressed that their service is appreciated. Jason Storlie expressed that the township doesn't have an issue with funding the fire department but would like to have residents more involved in the process. Jean Meyer agreed and explained that the city has been funding the fire department for years without any kind of formula or agreement. Tim Klug expressed that in the future, maybe there could be an independent fire department made up of the people being served. Carol Sweeney-Marnach recalled that last February a contract was presented with incremental increases rather than an immediate lump sum increase. She questioned how is it that now a payment of \$12,000 is due. Brandon Frank explained that at Brownsville Township's March 2023 meeting a levy of \$12,000 was requested and if that amount wasn't acceptable, what would be the preference. Andy Moen, Crooked Creek Township clerk, explained their process for increasing the amount needed to satisfy the agreement. Jean Stables questioned how much Brownsville Township will be billed at the next annual meeting. Brandon Frank answered \$10,400 but explained that he will be adjusting amounts due to new information. He anticipates being able to provide an accurate amount in February 2024 prior to the township's March annual meeting. Group discussions centered on the number of residents per household in the township which will be researched. Jason Storlie questioned if the formula accounts for tax exempt properties, railroad property and boathouses which are not considered. Daren Ideker questioned how much the levy costs per \$100,000 of property value. Carol Sweeney-Marnach questioned the \$10,000 levy for capital improvements and since there are no planned purchases, could that be discontinued. It was explained that the \$10,000 levy is being used to service debt for a fire truck purchase. Tim Klug expressed that Brownsville Township has many personnel on the fire department and thereby provides input toward requests which have been largely approved by the city council. Group discussion questioned when budgets are prepared and if township participation is a possibility. It was agreed by consensus that a budget will be ready in advance of annual township meetings. At 8:14 pm, Mayor Jean Meyer adjourned the joint township and city meeting.

Jean Meyer called to order the regular city council meeting and convened a closed session of council members at 8:17 pm for discussion of filling the vacant council position. At 8:34 pm Jean Meyer reconvened the regular meeting of the city council and explained that a decision for appointment to fill the vacancy will be made at the December 6 council meeting. All current letters of intent will remain valid and additional letters of intent are to be accepted until December 1. Attending the regular council meeting were

Clerk, Steve Schuldt, Treasurer, Jenna Knight and Maintenance, Dean Twite and Ben Novak with Brownsville Fire-Rescue. Guests in attendance were, Kaitlin Longhauser with Fillmore County Journal, Rose Korabek with the Caledonia Argus, Jerry Walhovd, Jeff LeJeune, Joanne Kletzke, Kathy Phillips and Jim Hakes.

ROLL CALL of council was taken with a quorum being present.

CONSENT AGENDA: Council reviewed the consent agenda which includes the agenda for today's meeting, the minutes of October 4, 2023 and claims payable. Barb Hurley moved, seconded Pam Walhovd and the motion passed to approve the consent agenda.

FLOOR CORRESPONDENCE: None

OLD BUSINESS: Council discussed a resident survey addressing comprehensive planning. Pam Walhovd commented that the survey should have more community involvement. Barb Hurley commented that community members should be involved in developing the survey. Pam Walhovd spoke of her conversations with several community residents that may be interested in joining the study group. Pam Walhovd moved to form a committee of five to seven residents with varied demographics and backgrounds. The motion was seconded by Barb Hurley. Jean Meyer and Tim Klug voted against the motion and the motion was an impasse. Barb Hurley suggested the survey should be broken down into sections and then followed up with more targeted questions. Pam Walhovd expressed that there should be an explanation of what a comprehensive plan is and why it's needed. Jean Meyer moved to have a committee of herself and Barb Hurley to prepare an acceptable survey plan. The motion was not seconded. Tim Klug stated that he is not in favor of the survey. Barb Hurley moved to table the survey proposal until the January meeting. The motion was seconded by Tim Klug, but he expressed that there be no future date for discussion of the survey but to simply table the discussion. Pam Walhovd moved that the comprehensive plan discussion be addressed again at the January 3rd meeting. Tim Klug called for "point of order" and stated that there is already a motion on the floor. Jean Meyer reiterated the motion made by Barb Hurley to table discussion of the comprehensive plan until January 3rd and recognized a second by Pam Walhovd. The motion passed with Tim Klug voting in the negative.

Jean Meyer introduced Jeff LeJeune for discussion regarding an additional pickle ball court in the community center. He explained that pickle ball has become very popular with people on the sidelines waiting to play. Additionally, Jeff suggested adding two cornhole courts between the pickle ball courts. Tim Klug moved to approve the addition of a second pickle ball court and adding two cornhole courts in the community center. Second by Pam Walhovd and the motion passed unanimously. Joanne Kletzke stated that pickle ball has been mostly used by adults and could it be available to non-adults? Council agreed by consensus that the community center be available to everyone so long as there is a responsible adult available to lock the facility when users leave the building.

Council reviewed a building permit application to construct a house at 299 South Marina Drive submitted by Quincy Giese as contractor for property owner Holzer Investments, LLC. Tim Klug moved to approve the building permit application as submitted. The motion was seconded by Jean Meyer and passed.

NEW BUSINESS: Council reviewed a building permit application submitted by John Holzwarth to construct a 10' X 20' greenhouse. Tim Klug moved, second by Barb Hurley and the motion passed to approve the building permit.

MAINTENANCE REPORT: Dean Twite presented a prepared written maintenance summary for the month of November which is attached hereto and made a part of these minutes. Mr. Twite verbally reviewed the report with council members.

FIRE/RESCUE DEPARTMENT: Ben Novak reported that a new thermal imaging system has been purchased. He also stated that quotes are being obtained to replace turnout gear which is funded by a \$37,000 grant. Fire truck #1630 is being equipped with a topper and slide out unit, after which the old #1630 unit, a 2000 Chevrolet 4 door, will be decommissioned. Dean Twite informed council that a salvage vehicle used for fire and rescue training at the maintenance yard is to be removed by the weekend.

CITY CLERK: Steve Schuldt presented council with budget reports for ongoing review. Council was concerned that the sewer budget operates at a deficit. Council was informed that sewer charges will need to be increased but at this time the budget is being monitored to determine an equitable monthly charge. Jean Meyer informed council of an available grant for up to \$600,000 to make improvements or rehabilitation to the sewer system. She iterated that in conversations with Dean Twite there is \$250,000 identified as needed improvements. Council was informed that the grant requires a 20% cost share by the

city for the project. Following discussion, Barb Hurley moved, second by Tim Klug to apply for a sewer improvement grant. The motion passed.

Council reviewed a list of unpaid sewer and garbage user fees to be certified to taxes. Pam Walhovd moved, second by Barb Hurley to approve the certification to taxes. The motion passed.

Council reviewed a liquor license renewal submitted by Saxon Hall 2.0, LLC for 2024. Tim Klug moved, seconded by Pam Walhovd and the motion passed to approve the license renewal, subject to possible fee changes in January.

Council was informed of \$24,725 in public safety aid to be received December 26, 2023 from Minnesota Management and Budget. Additionally, a \$37,000 grant has been received to purchase turnout gear for the fire and rescue department.


Council was informed of a request by Shawn Colsch to install a septic tank on his property without a drain field which would require occasional pumping. Council agreed by consensus that there is insufficient information to act on the request. Jean Meyer moved, second by Barb Hurley and the motion passed to table the septic tank installation request until additional information can be obtained as to use of the tank and information regarding a proposed security light installation on the property.

Council was informed of a small claims litigation set for December 8 against Kurt Cavanaugh to be conducted via a Zoom hearing.

Council was informed of prosecution charges in city limits invoiced by attorney Alex Roverud. It was explained that this is a criminal matter and the City is responsible for prosecuting the charge.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, Tim Klug moved, second by Pam Walhovd and the motion passed to adjourn at 9:44 pm.


Steve Schuldt, Clerk


Jean Meyer, Mayor

