

**MAPLE LAKE CITY COUNCIL**  
September 21, 2021 Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Todd Borell.

**ROLL CALL**

**Council Members Present:** Deb Geyen, John Haack, Brian Fondurulia and Kristen Logas.

**Absent:** none

**Others Present:** Renee Eckerly, City Administrator; Phil Gravel, City Engineer (Stantec); Deputy Weinzetl, Wright County Sheriff; Steve Peterson, Fire Chief; Nick Pawlenty, David Anderson, City Attorney (Kennedy & Graven); Jackson Groskreutz and Jamison Quast, Cable Commission; Mike Messina, State Representative Marion O’Neill, and Katie Friedman, Messenger

**OPEN FORUM**

No one was present

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

*A motion was m/s/p, Logas/Fondurulia to approve the agenda with changes noted. All present voted in favor.*

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approval of 9/21/2021 Disbursement List, September Check Register, September Financials and Liquor Financials
- b. Approval of Engineer’s Report
- c. Approval of P & Z Report
- d. Airport ALP and Master Plan Update
- e. Liquor Store Report – Ang Berthiaume
- f. Maintenance Report – Jerry Sawatzke
- g. Contractor’s Request for Payment #3 – St. Project \$ 484,227.16
- h. Contractor’s Request for Payment #2 – Lift Station \$ 88,801.53
- i. Knights of Columbus Father’s O’Brien Council 3613 Gambling license for Feb. 5, 2022 alternate date March 12, 2022
- j. Resignation of Gerald Sawatzke, Public Works Director last day Nov. 30, 2021(retiring)

*A motion was m/s/p, Logas/Haack to approve the consent agenda. All present voted in favor.*

**Wright County Sherriff’s Department**

Deputy Weinzetl was present and gave a verbal statics report on the type of incidents they have responded to in August 2021.

**Department Reports**

- a. **Administrative Report**

Renee Eckerly, City Administrator reported was submitted in writing.

Council requested the status of the repair of the fence at the Water Treatment facility.

## New Business

### a. **Fire Relief Association Benefit Increase – Steve Peterson, Fire Chief**

Peterson reported the Fire Relief Association is the retirement fund for firefighters. The investments for the last year received about 4.5% interest rate. The balance in this account should be able to pay out all firefighters if they were to all retire at the same time. At retirement, the firefighter would get \$2,500 per year of service. The State Fire Aid is deposited into this account in October of each year which is approximately \$46,000. The fund currently is around 1 million dollars.

A motion was m/s/p, Borell/ Geyen to approve the annual benefit increase from \$2,300 to \$2,500 for Fire Relief Association. All present voted in favor.

Peterson reported that Rescue 12 which is a utility pickup is on the truck replacement schedule for 2022. Lundeen has a chassis for \$35,000.00 but State Vendor bid contract expires at the end of September and the new contract is \$3,000 more. The Firefighter board is meeting tomorrow night to go over the specifications. The money is in the truck replacement fund. Council is having a meeting September 28, 2021 get information to Eckerly and the Council would approve up to a specific amount.

### b. **Michelle Smith regarding Jude Hall (Smith called to have removed)**

### c. **Resolution 2021-22 Accepting ARPA funds**

This is \$227,279.00 which the city will receive half in 2021 and half in 2022. Then the city has until 2024 to spend the money. She has a webinar tomorrow to find what the money can be spent on. Wright County would like the city to donate any funds we are not going to use to them for broadband expansion.

A motion was m/s/p, Borell/Logas to approve Resolution 2021-22 Accepting Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Established under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA funds). All present voted in favor.

### d. **Airport Ground Lease – EAA #878**

Eckerly reported that the EAA would like to sell their old hangar to the city for \$6,500 to \$10,000 then would like the city to demolish it so that two more hangars could be built and that hangar needs to be removed so planes from the new hangars can have access to the runway. Further discuss at the October workshop. Hangar cleanup is continuing.

A motion was m/s/p, Logas/ Geyen to approve the Airport Ground Lease – EAA #878 for hangar designated as F-3. All present voted in favor.

### e. **Railroad Quiet Zone**

This is on the agenda to determine who the Council wants at the workshop. Gravel reported that in 2019 the Council decided not to have Stantec prepared a report regarding the costs. Haack stated that funding is available from the State of MN and Wright County. Gravel reported that there are no other funding sources other than the taxpayers of Maple Lake. Gravel suggested a meeting during the day with a couple of council members and the professionals and then the group could report back to the full council. City has researched this numerous times and the cost was estimated at \$125,000. For two crossings. Eckerly reported that the City of Buffalo was planned over 10 years and received no other funding except taxpayers.

A motion was m/s/p, Geyen/Fondurulia to invite professionals such as Phil Gravel, and Tom Deomres to the October 5, 2021, workshop to discuss Railroad Quiet Zone. The vote was 4 in favor and 1 abstained (Haack).

## **Old / Other Business**

### **a. Library Donation**

Haack reported from attending the Library Board meeting that the city in the past has donated in 2018 \$10,500. (old building), 2019 \$15,000, 2020 \$10,000 and 2021 \$15,000 in the budget to the library. Currently the library is operating in a deficiency due to not being able to do the annual fundraising because of COVID. He stated that the City Council was aware that the library was moving to a new location prior to the actual move. The library has received the \$10,000 donation in 2020. A request of \$20,000 in 2021 which would be \$5,000 for 2020. This would keep every year at \$15,000. Geyen disputed when the city was informed of the library moving. Eckerly distributed the general ledger account on library donations. It was stated no payment for 2021 because no invoice/letter requesting the money has been received. The libraries rent is \$21,500. Pawlenty and Messina recapped the history of donations from the city. The Library board has submitted financial documents to city. Board is grateful for any donation from the City. Messina stated that if the library budget remains in a deficient in 8 -9 years the doors to the library will be closed. Library Board will get their letter into the Administration office so the check for \$10,000 can be cut for 2021. Wright County donates \$5,000 to the library each year. But it must be requested. It was questioned if ARPA funds can be used to make donation to library. The Board will be holding a fundraising dinner on October 2, 2021 at \$30.00 presale ticket or \$35.00 at the door.

Council mentioned that \$10,000 was also budgeted for the school liaison officer.

Today's accident was a medical condition, not caused by road conditions.

Council discussed a process on inviting people to council meetings. Geyen invited Marion O'Neill. Eckerly reported that when she spoke to MNDOT they were suggesting a traffic impact study, which Eckerly spoke with Gravel after the last Council meeting to see what could be arranged since there are not enough accidents or deaths for the intersection to show up on MNDOT radar to warrant any safety concern.

### **b. Highway 55 & Spruce Street Intersection**

State Representative Marion O'Neill stated that she is willing to assist the city with getting the intersection addressed and a plan to improve the safety conditions. She is willing to hold a meeting with the head of MNDOT District 3 Head Engineer. MNDOT does look at accidents, fatalities, and the growth in the area (250 homes). She would like to know what MNDOT can do, not what they won't do. She needs the City Council to tell her what they need. Make sure to include the Highway 55 Corridor group. Possibly something can be placed in the State of Minnesota's bonding billing. Eckerly reported the most current traffic study data is from 2018. Stantec is going to do a traffic impact study which will give the group the most current data. The traffic can not cross at this intersection and the traffic at the stop light on Fridays is backed up to the veterinary clinic. Wright County was willing to use the State of MN safety money to put in a a median and turn lane, but MNDOT doesn't have data to support the project. Representative O'Neill stated to contact her when Stantec gets the traffic study done and she will get the meeting planned.

### **c. Public Works Director Position**

Review job description and which duties Hudek, Johnson and Wicks would be doing. Council in favor of promoting from within. Council would prefer to promote from within instead of advertising. Council would like to schedule a special Council meeting just to address Public Works staff, job descriptions and wages on October 6, 2021.

### **d. Update on Accounting Clerk Position**

Eckerly reported that there were 3 applications and only 1 that was qualified. DesMarais was interviewed and doesn't have experience working in government but does have experience working with payroll, accounts payable and different funds. Eckerly would like to recommend hiring DesMarais. She may be available to start on Monday. This is the first step over \$20.00 per hour.

A motion was m/s/p, Haack/Fondurulia to hire Shannon DesMarais for the Accounting Clerk position at Grade 6 Step 8 at \$22.27 per hour based on the 2021 approved wage increase scale. All present voted in favor.

**e. Resolution 2021-23 Setting the Truth & Taxation Public Hearing**

A motion was m/s/p, Borell/Logas to approve Resolution 2021-23 Setting the Truth & Taxation Public Hearing for December 7, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. All present voted in favor.

**f. MN Department of Aeronautics Grant Offer**

Eckerly reported on information and process for decertification of an airport. Maple Lake does not qualify for any Federal funding. Eckerly notified seven State of MN grant applications have been funded. This will be put on the October workshop to discuss the future of the airport. The deadline is October 8, 2021 to accept the funding. Gravel suggested that the Council could reply to MNDOT that we are interested in these and we will follow up with grant requests down the line and that will keep the city in the que. These projects on the capital improvement plan would get 95% state funding. Item of concern is the possible requirement of land acquisition within 5 years which has a potential of \$3 to \$5 million cost. If the property owners don't want to sell, then you have to decide on eminent domain. The airport is in the red, so hangar lease payments and fuel is not covering the costs. Then the next step in the grant process would be to submit a formal request for the grant. If it comes to December and the city doesn't want to do it then don't do it. Each grant states how long the city has to continue to operate the airport due to accepting the money.

**g. Update on MNSPECT**

Eckerly reported that MNSPECT has been acquired by SAFEbuilt from Loveland, Colorado. No changes in current MNSPECT staff. Council discussed status of complaints and why there isn't more happening.

**h. Committee Reports**

- Council Workshop – 9/7/2021

Mayor Borell stated that at the workshop the Council discussed Quiet Zone, Sawatzke retiring and the step program for Accounting Clerk position and the beach.

- Airport – 9/1/2021

Logas stated EAA hangar for city to purchase and then demolish. This should have further discussion at the October workshop.

Council commended the Gear Head Get Together Committee for fabulous event.

**10. Dates to Remember / Announcements**

- a. League of MN Cities - 2021 Fall Forum (will need mask and vaccination form)
- Special City Council 9/28/2021, at 4:30 pm (preliminary budget only)
  - City Council Workshop, 10/5/2021, at 6:00 pm
  - Liquor Store Committee Meeting, 10/11/2021 at 5:00 p.m. (tentative)
  - Planning Commission Meeting, 10/12/2021 at 7:00 p.m.
  - City Council 10/19/2021, at 7:00 pm

The only item on the Liquor Store committee agenda is purchasing a generator to operate the store in the event of a power outage. The quote is \$40,000. Have the Liquor Store Committee meeting in November instead of October.

Meeting on Friday, September 24, 2022 at 1:00 pm at the boat launch at Maple Lake to discuss the fishing pier with the DNR and Bruce Ballweber. Eckerly will post.

**Adjournment**

*A motion was m/s/p, Haack/Logas to adjourn at 8:56 p.m. All present voted in favor.*

Attest,

Renee Eckerly  
City Administrator