



Home of Como Falls

MINUTES

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

October 4th , 2016 / 6:00 pm

- **CALL TO ORDER :** Completed at 6:04 pm
- **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Completed
- **ROLL CALL:** Bissen, Vetsch, Lonkoski, Walsh. Albrecht absent.
- **ACTION TO CHANGE AGENDA:** City Administrator Blank introduced an updated Agenda. Council member Vetsch added a bill for E-Dispatches of \$474 to City Clerk Leitzen to be paid.

1. Consent Agenda: Motion by Vetsch, second by Lonkoski rollcall all approve.

All items listed under the consent agenda are considered routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

1.1	Minutes:	September 6, 2016
1.2	Bills Payable Through:	September 30, 2016
1.3	Consolidated Balance Sheet:	September 30, 2016

2. Water/Waste Water/City Engineer :

Maintenance Head Oliver reported the city systems are back to normal following the recent flooding.

3. Library/City Hall: Fall/Winter Report from Hokah City Librarian Shari Carlson

Carlson presented a new fall/winter activities announcement for the Library, including a Thursday after-school program, expanded Saturday hours starting in November, and upcoming fundraisers. Librarian Carlson also spoke on new grants she has been pursuing in conjunction with other local libraries, and on the possibility of installing Little Free Libraries around town. Finally, Carlson extended her thanks to Maintenance Head Oliver for constructing the new library loft, which is garnering community praise. Motion for city to look at places for Little Free Libraries by Lonkoski, second by Bissen, all approved.

4. Police Dept.: Presentation by City Attorney Wieser – Parking Ordinance.

Attorney Wieser spoke regarding the city ordinance regulating parking in municipal parking lots. Discussion involved both size of vehicle in the lot and the amount of time a vehicle can stay within the lot. The ordinance presented by Attorney Wieser limited vehicles to 48 consecutive hours parking in a city lot, and one parking space per vehicle. Violations were classified as petty misdemeanor offenses, meaning no fine amount above \$300, no jail time possible, and a trial by judge. Exemptions were debated for city departments and vehicles. Council member Bissen raised objections to the multi-parking-space section. Attorney Wieser offered to remove a portion of the section mandating the number of parking spaces taken, and to add in an exemption for city departments and vehicles. Council member Bissen motioned to those changes, second by Lonkoski. Vetsch no. Motion carried on a 2-1 vote, Mayor Walsh did not vote.

Second action by Attorney Wieser was to authorize a summary publication of the ordinance in the Houston County News. Motion by Lonkoski, second by Bissen. All approved.

5. Streets / Maintenance : Maintenance Head Oliver Presentation

Chris Oliver presented bids for two new door openers for the city garage. Council member Vetsch asked if there was budgeted money for the preferred purchase from La Crosse Overhead Door of \$2,262. Oliver replied that money taken in for pumping fees would cover most. Council member Bissen objected to the pumping money being directly invested into the purchase. Council member Vetsch made the motion to approve the purchase, Lonkoski second. Bissen no. Motion carried on a 2-1 vote.

6. Recreation Board: Park Board Establishment

City Administrator Blank mentioned that the absent Council member Albrecht had asked for the council to look into the establishment of a Park Board in the interest of developing the city parks and playgrounds, including remodeling of the bathrooms and ADA compliance. Administrator Blank asked the council to think on the issue for the next meeting.

7. Planning Commission / Zoning :

Council member Vetsch reported a meeting with Tommy Bernsdorf regarding the fill-in of a hillside by the city parking lot, extending the area by roughly 20 feet. City Administrator Blank requested more information regarding retaining the fill before moving forward.

8. Items for Consideration:

8.1 Pam Fahy request

Administrator Blank read a request from Pam Fahy requesting that a side street located on her property be vacated as the street is unusable. Fahy is concerned that the side street area not being vacated would lead to difficulty in trying to sell the house. The vacated portion of land would be split between Fahy and the surrounding property's owner. Attorney Wieser gave options to the council on how to best proceed; the council chose to seek the approval of the majority of property owners via petition. A resolution will be prepared for the November meeting.

8.2 City Clerk Leitzen – 2017 Budget Adjustments

Clerk Leitzen proposed changing some of the budgeted amounts for the 2017 year, as some of the regular expenses of the city were beginning to approach their budgetary limits already in October. As the 2017 budget has not been finalized, he will have the amounts changed by the final budget meeting in December. Council member Lonkoski motioned to approve the budget changes, all approved.

9. Council Member's Comments:

Council member Bissen spoke regarding an incident at the river dike at 8:00am on Friday, the 23rd of September. Council member Bissen said he spoke to Maintenance Head Oliver regarding the raising water, and at 10:30am Council member Bissen reported water coming over the dike. Council member Bissen then spoke with City Clerk Leitzen, who called Oliver. Council member Bissen spoke with Oliver who said there was nothing that could be done via City Administrator Blank. Council member Bissen then offered to order some of his own rock to prevent further water over the dike. Council member Bissen and Tommy Bernsdorf began to haul rock as Council member Bissen again spoke to City Clerk Leitzen, this time requesting sandbags. City Clerk Leitzen replied that Administrator Blank was on his way. Council member Bissen waited for 15 minutes and then went to work on the dock from 12:00 to 6:00pm, laying rock on top of the dock to keep water from coming over. Council member Bissen said the next morning that the water had been contained and there was no local flooding. Council member

Bissen said that he added six inches of rock to the dike, which he considered maintenance.

City Administrator Blank replied that the dike was most recently maintained in June, and that the city if in regular correspondence with the DNR to maintain it. Blank said the DNR had instructed the city to only fill the levee back to its original level. Blank spoke to his experiences on the morning of the 23rd. He said City Clerk Leitzen had called him at 10:57am and told Administrator Blank that Council member Bissen asked him to get to the office. Administrator Blank said he reached the office within 12 minutes of the phone call, as he had to report to the office for a meeting soon afterwards. Blank said he remained at the office until 1:00pm, but Council member Bissen did not show. Blank concluded that, as the city, we cannot do anything to the dike. However, if Council member Bissen was acting as a private citizen, it becomes a different matter.

Council member Bissen asked how the dike level was determined, and Maintenance Head Oliver detailed the meeting he had with himself, the Corps of Engineers, the DNR, Soil Conservation and Council member Bissen to determine the level. City Administrator Blank spoke further about the issues in the area since the construction of 7 Rivers Surplus, and reiterated that the DNR requires the dike to be set at a certain level. Council member Bissen replied that the DNR was also limited by what the City says, and Oliver replied that there is a City Ordinance for maintaining the dike. Oliver explained that certain areas cannot be changed without action from the City Council, Soil Conservation, the DNR, the Corps of Engineers, and so on. Both Oliver and Blank insisted the issue was not personal, but there are steps and protocols that must be gone through. Council member Bissen expressed frustration that no one will sandbag the dike, and Oliver related a story he had heard of frustration from a citizen at the local Kwik Trip. Oliver concluded by reiterating that there are channels to go through for this issue, and subverting those channels could cost him his job.

Administrator Blank asked Council member Bissen to confirm he was acting as a private citizen and not as a City council member. Council member Bissen confirmed it. Blank reiterated that there are channels he has to go through as well that have been put in place through several years of experience. Council member Bissen appealed to audience members to give their recollections of the flooding. Administrator Blank asked Council member Bissen if he had filled in private land, and not land owned by the city. Council member Bissen said he did not know. Questions were raised about the ownership of a corner section, and Mayor Walsh said he believed it was owned by Mike Moore. Administrator Blank asked why Council member Bissen did not contact him via mobile phone, and Council member Bissen replied he did not have his phone with him. Administrator Blank reiterated that he stayed in the office waiting for Council member Bissen until 1pm, but had to leave for his child's wedding that day.

There was a question from the gallery asking whether or not the city would remove what was placed on the dike by Council member Bissen acting as a private citizen. Administrator Blank replied that the city would not touch it. Blank related numerous conversations he has had with local hydrologists as to different situations and regulations with different area dikes. Blank suggested that, even without regulation, any private citizen looking to increase a dike level should speak with the hydrologist before acting. He also detailed an unsuccessful city attempt to buy some of the land in the area. Maintenance Head Oliver related that it was a complaint that had brought the DNR down to Hokah initially, and there was of yet no complaints submitted regarding the events of September 23. Administrator Blank spoke very clearly and finally to the fact that the events of September 23 were not carried out by the city in any capacity.

Council Member Lonkoski asked Oliver if he could go through channels to raise the dike level. Administrator Blank mentioned that previous bids had been offered for \$98,000 at the lowest. Oliver mentioned that any of these bids would involve the full removal of the existing dike and the installation

of a completely new construction.

10. Mayor's Comments:

11. Staff Correspondence:

12. Correspondence Received:

A citizen in the gallery asked if the city would move to reimburse Council member Bissen for money spent raising the dike. Mayor Walsh replied that in doing so, the city would risk involvement or approval of the work, which could lead to trouble for the city. Council member Lonkoski raised a question of whether or not it is legal to act as a private citizen regarding the dike level, and Administrator Blank replied that he did not know. He again stated that the City of Hokah officially had nothing to do with the dike level on the morning of September 23, 2016. He mentioned again that the city had looked into levee work in the past, citing the \$98,000 figure again, and that the city had chosen not to act. The citizen spoke again, citing frustration with government regulatory agencies regarding the dike level.

13. Announcements Next Council Meeting: November 1, 2016 6:00pm.

14. Items for next Agenda: the establishment of a Park Board from Council member Albrecht

15. Closed Meeting:

Administrator Blank requested a closed meeting to perform an evaluation of City Clerk Leitzen as his probationary employment period sunsets on October 6. City Clerk Leitzen approved the closing of the meeting. Council member Lonkoski motioned to close the meeting, Vetsch second. All approved.

Administrator Blank related that at 11:30am on September 23rd Clerk Leitzen, Maintenance Head Oliver, Council member Albrecht, former City Clerk/Administrator Sloan met as a Personnel Committee to discuss Clerk Leitzen's performance in his first year as City Clerk/Treasurer. The Personnel Committee ruled to extend the probationary period for six months, until April 2017, on the condition that Leitzen will pursue further financial education and certification in continuing education. Classes for continuing education were approved to be reimbursed by the council after Clerk Leitzen had completed them. Lonkoski motion, Vetsch second, all approved.

16. Adjournment: by Walsh. Motion by Vetsch, second by Lonkoski, all approved. 7:48pm