



MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
August 1, 2017 6:00 pm

- **CALL TO ORDER: Completed at 6:00pm by Mayor Walsh**
- **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Completed**
- **ROLL CALL: Vetsch, Bissen, Albrecht, Pfiffner, Walsh**
- **ACTION TO CHANGE AGENDA: None noted.**

Minutes by E. Leitzen:

The Hokah City Council met for its regularly schedule meeting at 6:00pm on Tuesday, August 1, 2017. In attendance were Mayor Walsh, City Administrator Blank, and City Council Members Vetsch, Bissen, Albrecht, and Pfiffner. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the council approved the agenda for the evening (Pfiffner motion, Vetsch second, unanimous approval) and moved on to city reports. There was nothing to report for the Water, Wastewater, and Police Departments, as Maintenance Chief Chris Oliver deferred to Administrator Blank and the Personnel Committee. Blank read the results of a Personnel Committee meeting that took place on July 24, 2017.

The committee, which included Blank, former City Clerk Ernest Sloan, Council Members Bissen & Pfiffner, and Chris Oliver, interviewed three candidates to replace Allen Kirchoff as a City Maintenance Worker. After the interviews, the committee unanimously recommended to extend an offer of employment to Dustin McNamer at the wage of thirteen dollars an hour with an 80/20 benefit package and a probationary period of one year. Mayor Walsh raised a question about licensure for the new hire, and Blank replied that training and licensures will be available after one month on the job. Pfiffner motioned to approve the hire, Albrecht second, vote unanimous. Oliver reported to the council that sealcoating for the city parking lot will be done for a bid of \$2,995, and cautioned against sealcoating any later in the year than September in the future.

Council member Pfiffner spoke on behalf of Parks & Recreation, noting that the Hokah Pool has recently hired a new supervisor, Tanner Holzer, following Joelle Arentz's departing for another job. Pfiffner also mentioned the end of season pool party and dog swim event after the pool season has concluded. The council

then heard from Planning & Zoning, where Blank reported on the previous meeting's approval of a variance dependent on proper classification by Houston County. Mari DeJarlais was asked to speak regarding the Hokah Building Committee, but deferred to librarian Shari Carlson, who spoke regarding her concerns with the committee. Carlson spoke to the council regarding a report she had received from the Building Committee citing proposed recommendations for the library. Carlson said she had questions about the logistics of the process of decision making regarding the possible moving of the library from its current place in City Hall to the newly-purchased school building.

Carlson asked for clarification on the identity, function and scope of the committee, saying that she felt "as though this is a committee to decide where the library is going to go, not a committee that is to decide how the overall scheme of all of our buildings are being utilized."

Mayor Walsh replied that he organized the committee, that Administrator Blank was chair, and that the function of the committee was "informational" regarding the function of all city buildings. Walsh also said that the committee is to report to the council, and the council is to make final decisions. Walsh replied that he did not know why the meetings wouldn't be open, and that he could not speak to a meeting schedule as he was not on the committee itself. Walsh expressed a desire to use the committee moving forward, which Carlson questioned, citing a lack of representation from the library staff or board and questioning whether the right people were on the committee. Carlson then asked the council to direct the committee further. Carlson then reported on the construction of Little Free Libraries and the transport of \$80,000 worth of extra shelves from the Rochester Public Library for use in Hokah. Carlson then mentioned a possible EDA partnership with Houston County to bring small business resources into the community, and the positive response to extended summer hours at the library. Carlson also noted a meeting with county commissioners regarding the library's three-year budget, but it still waiting for a response from that meeting.

After comments from the gallery, Mari DeJarlais gave her report from the Building Committee. DeJarlais detailed the previous committee meeting at the old school, where the committee toured the building while noting that there were still questions regarding the roof condition. DeJarlais commented that the building was in good shape, and that the committee is looking to possibly rent out some of the upstairs rooms to generate revenue for the city. DeJarlais then said that, after talking with the library, she no longer agreed with the committee's previous recommendation to move the library to the lower level of the school

building. She noted that on her first visit many years ago, the library was an "uninviting space," but now finds the space "inviting." DeJarlais continued that after visiting the library, she believes that the city needs to make a decision that has the "least financial impact" on the city's taxpayers while putting the building to good use. DeJarlais mentioned that, after touring the library and speaking to library staff, she believes it is making good use of the space and only receives 35% of its operating funds from the city. DeJarlais said the library was the "heart of the city" and that the city should "carefully consider where we are going to put our library," saying that she had spoken to members of the community on this issue and welcomed any comment at future Building Committee meetings.

Mayor Walsh took the opportunity to ask if the Building Committee has a set schedule, and Blank replied that, like other city committees and commissions, they do not meet if there is not a reason to meet. With DeJarlais unable to present her findings at the last council meeting, a future committee meeting was tabled until this report could be made. Additionally, like other committees and commissions, the Building Committee is not bound by law to make posting of its meetings in advance, as it meets on a case-by-case basis.

The council then moved on to Action Items, looking at the offer from SolarStone to purchase a block of energy from solar farms in Winona County. Council member Albrecht made a motion to refer the information to the city attorney to move forward with the agreement, Vetsch second. Ayes: Vetsch, Albrecht, Pfiffner, and Walsh. Abstain: Bissen.

The council then heard comments from the public, beginning with a question to the status of curb & gutter repair. Oliver & Walsh replied that they have not heard from the contractor as of yet, and a large amount of rain has delayed the project. Walsh resolved to talk to the contractor to move the project forward. The council also heard comment about the condition and cleanliness of the City Hall building in 2003, and a proposal for Krause Construction on concrete repairs to the sidewalk and front of the building. The city approved the repairs for the amount of \$10,990. The council approved the spending: Motion by Bissen, second by Walsh. Ayes: Vetsch, Bissen, Albrecht, Walsh. No: Pfiffner.

The mayor had no comments for the meeting, so the meeting moved to council member comments. There was no comment from council member Vetsch. Council member Bissen commented on the school building, saying "in my opinion, the city has no use for the building." He expressed doubt that the city could bring in revenue through the new building, wanting instead for the

building to be made private to collect tax, water, and sewer revenue. Bissen also expressed worry about the condition of the roof, parking lot, and HVAC systems. Bissen also expressed frustration the city getting into the "rental business." Bissen concluded that the maintenance of the building will incur more costs to the city.

Council member Albrecht spoke about the Great River Rumble canoe event that had taken place at the Fire Hall on July 31, featuring reporting from many local news media outlets. Albrecht extended thanks to the volunteers, the Recreation Board and the Fire Department for the event and the dinner served, citing the event as a great chance to promote the city to people from places like Colorado, New York, and California. Albrecht said that events like this allow Hokah to benefit from hosting similar events. Albrecht related that event participants called the meal served in Hokah the best they had had in 17 years of operation, and praised the "warm culture in our community" for making the event a success. Albrecht praised the work done by the Houston girls' basketball team and the local Boy Scout troop to help unload the canoes, saying the extra assistance "set the bar a little higher" according to the event attendees. Albrecht also mentioned the Relay for Life that was scheduled for the first time in Hokah on Friday, August 4, honoring cancer survivors and loved ones lost with several events at the Fire Hall.

Council member Pfiffner asked if the council was going to schedule its annual budget meetings. After deliberation, the council agreed upon 6:00pm at August 15 & 22 for its budget meetings. Administrator Blank then produced a proposed contract with Sanden Realty to put the current administration building at 102 Main Street on the market for the asking price of \$39,999. Blank noted that with the current plans to move city administration offices, the city should look into selling what will be a vacant building. Blank also reported to the council that the school building needs to start being occupied to avoid an increase to insurance charges. Blank also mentioned the Building Committee's recommendation from its last meeting to move the Police, Administrator and Clerk onto the property. The council looked over the contract and council member Pfiffner made a motion to list the building, Vetsch second. Ayes: Vetsch, Pfiffner No: Walsh, Bissen, Albrecht. The building was not listed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm, motion by Albrecht, second Vetsch. Vote was unanimous. The council will have its next regular meeting at 6:00pm on Tuesday, September 5, 2017 at the Hokah Fire Hall.