

PROCEEDINGS OF LOWDEN CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2015 5:30 PM CITY HALL

The regular meeting of the Lowden City Council was called to order by Mayor Barry Hoffmeier.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Council members present on roll call: Galen Conrad, Rex McCreight, Dean Hamdorf, Josh Hamdorf, Allen Helmold. Visitors: Kirk Steinke, Pat Kroemer, Dale Axline, Bill Norton, Tom Fitzgerald, Phyllis Fitzgerald, Jane Drewelow, Aaron Horman, Jan Olsen, Tony Harms, Ryan Hamilton.

M/S McCreight, Helmold to approve the consent agenda including the minutes of the 1-5-15 and 1-6-15 meetings, bills, and financial reports. Ayes: All.

Tony Harms, Iowa Pump, presented information to the council for a wastewater plant alarm system. It would be programmed to the pumps and monitor them. The alarm would notify City personnel of high levels or a power failure at the wastewater plant. Cost would be \$4676 for the alarm system. Tony Harms said Springville has the same alarm system and is happy with it. Council decided Kirk and possibly Rex will go visit Springville and see how the alarm system works. The alarm system could also be used on a new lift station if the City proceeds with that project.

Ryan Hamilton was present and told the council he had a higher water bill than usual, about double his normal usage. Kirk Steinke did a profile on his usage and it showed one day in particular with high usage. Ryan said he wasn't home that day and Kirk suggested a toilet running may be the problem. Ryan wondered if something was wrong with the meter. Council asked Kirk to run another profile to check the usage and the subject will be placed on the March agenda for discussion.

Aaron Horman, LEDCO, said they own the property on Main St. where the old meat market was located. The City gives LEDCO \$2500 a year. LEDCO is paying for snow removal and lawn mowing at the property. Since basically they are using the money the City gives them every year to pay for those services, they asked if the City would take over ownership of the property.

After discussion, M/S Dean Hamdorf, Conrad to not take over ownership of the LEDCO lot on Main Street. Ayes: All.

Aaron Horman and Jan Olsen, Park Board members, told the council they will be going out for bids for mowing the Park this summer. They asked if they should advertise for Park shelter cleaning and restroom cleaning also. Council thought they should advertise for one position to include mowing, restroom cleaning and Park shelter cleaning.

Aaron also reported to the council that the North Cedar School had received a notice from their insurance company last year the bleachers at the softball and baseball diamonds in the Park are not in compliance. They have no railings and there is too much space between the boards. Aaron said the school and the City both have the same insurance company. The question is, what is the City's obligation to bring the bleachers up to specifications. If nothing is done, it is possible there may be an annual insurance liability rider for the non-compliant bleachers. If the bleachers are fixed, would the school pay for one-half and the City one-half. Council decided to get an estimate of what it would take to fix the bleachers. Dean Hamdorf

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and Aaron Horman will meet this month to check what needs to be done to bring the bleachers into compliance. They will report back at the March meeting.

Bill Norton along with Tom Fitzgerald and Phyllis Fitzgerald were present to update the council on the Fitzgerald Development. Their engineer has been working on how best to handle storm water in and near the development. Tom said the storm sewer would be routed behind the addition to the north. Council suggested any water off roofs and sump pumps should drain on the lawns not into the storm sewer. Bill Norton asked if the City would contact their engineer to look at the plat and discuss the plans and storm water concerns with Fitzgerald's engineer. Mayor Hoffmeier will contact Steve Noack, MMS Consultants, to discuss this with Fitzgerald's engineer. Bill Norton also said they want to have the development in a TIF area and are working on that.

M/S Dean Hamdorf, McCreight to approve the final plat for the Conrad Second Addition on 1st St. Ayes: McCreight, Dean Hamdorf, Josh Hamdorf, Helmold. Abstain: Conrad.

Council discussed wages increases for employees for FY16. Kirk Steinke asked for an increase in the monthly phone stipend currently at \$25/month. Council felt that was not necessary.

After discussion, M/S McCreight, Conrad to increase wages for City employees by \$.35/hr. for FY16. Ayes: Conrad, McCreight, Josh Hamdorf, Helmold. Nays: Dean Hamdorf.

M/S MCCreight, Dean Hamdorf to pass Resolution #15-1 for the 28E agreement with Olin, Oxford Junction, Lowden, Clarence, and Mechanicsville for the vacuum truck. Ayes: All.

Kirk Steinke told the council something needs to be done about some nuisance properties in Lowden. He has had many complaints about several properties in particular. Mayor said in April the City will address nuisance properties. Iowa League of Cities will also be contacted for suggestions on proceeding with nuisance abatements effectively.

Kirk also said the Good Times would like to place a dumpster on the edge of McKinley Avenue for more convenient use. Council said a dumpster will not be placed on the street. Kirk will discuss with the Mayor and Clerk before the March meeting about using FEMA funding for upgrading some of the flood projects.

Kirk asked the council to clarify the new ordinance adopted at the Jan. meeting concerning the \$25 fee for being on the delinquent shut off list. He felt people that do not have separate water shut offs and cannot be disconnected, should be charged an additional \$25/fee. Council said that additional fee can only be charged if the water is actually disconnected and then reconnected.

Kirk said there is a problem with apartment complexes or duplexes whereby individual units cannot be disconnected if one renter is delinquent on a bill. There may be only one shut off for the whole building. It was decided the Mayor will send a letter to the apartment complex owner on Washington Avenue requesting they assume responsibility for payment of each individual apartment water bill. They can then pass the charges on to their renters. Or, individual shut offs for each apartment will have to be installed at the property owner's expense.

Kirk also reported people are blowing snow into the streets after the City has cleared them and that should not be done.

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The City had contacted Alliant Energy about the downtown light poles leaning over. Mayor learned the poles are owned by Alliant Energy. Alliant will get back to the City on what can be done to fix the problem.

Mayor Hoffmeier attended a Cedar County Solid Waste Commission meeting last week and was told there will be no increase in dumping fees for Lowden.

City Clerk Peggy Kedley announced she will be retiring in September after 27 years. She wanted to give the council sufficient time to advertise for the position and allow time for training a new person.

M/S McCreight, Josh Hamdorf to adjourn at 7:55 PM. Ayes: All.

Next regular meeting is March 2, 2015, 5:30 PM..

Barry Hoffmeier, Mayor

Peggy Kedley, City Clerk