

PROCEEDINGS OF LOWDEN CITY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024 - 5:30PM CITY HALL MEETING ROOM

The meeting of the Lowden City Council was called to order by Mayor Derrick Lange.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Council members present on roll call: Kristof, NLange, Poppe, Jones and ALange.

Visitors: Sue Hall, Kevin Knoche, Gene Hamdorf, Joan Scheer and Jester Insurance.

M/S Jones, Kristof to approve the Consent Agenda, Treasurers report, Minutes, Bills, Financial Reports, Utility Billing. Ayes: All.

Mayor DLange reported 1 fire call and 14 rescue calls.

Ann Harms, Library Director, was not present. Mayor DLange updated council on Library events including 3 new computers and upcoming programs for the community.

M/S ALange, NLange to open the **public hearing for Budget Amendment # 3**. The City Clerk covered the required amendments to the current budget. No changes to property taxes. Changes due to sale of the daycare and final loan payoff of the daycare mortgage, insurance changes, cellular read fees. No comments were received.

M/S Jones, Kristof to close the public hearing and return to regular session. Ayes: All.

Mayor DLange read **Resolution # 24-04 - Budget Amendment # 3** for the current budget. M/S NLange, Poppe to adopt **Resolution # 24-04**. Ayes: All.

Deputy Sheriff Kevin Knoche updated council on a recent theft of copper from the radio tower just outside of Lowden. No arrests were made at this time.

Joan Scheer, Sheer Insurance on behalf of EMC and Keith from Jester Insurance discussed the FY25 insurance package rates. Initially the thought was that our insurance would increase 10-15%, but after discussion with the City Clerk on rates and the removal of the Lowden Daycare, the city policy total increase will be 4-5%. Premiums are driven by claims and Lowden has a lower claim history than other towns. Weather events are also causing changes to policies with increased costs. Keith suggested that the city can increase its deductible to also offer additional cost savings. Council discussed. Motion made by Jones, seconded by Poppe to change the linebacker policy deductible to \$2500 and the building insurance to \$12 million. Nay - ALange. Ayes: Kristof, NLange, Jones and Poppe. Motion passed.

Mayor DLange and the City Clerk discussed the CDBG Grant - ECIA would write the grant for \$2,000 and then withhold \$30,000 from the CDBG award per federal and state rules for reporting requirements. Gene Hamdorf said the city should consider doing more work going all the way down towards 710 5th Street. He said we should replace the water lines in addition to sewer and probably close the bridge off permanently. He then asked council how they would pay for that. Council discussed and the clerk covered general bonding information. PWD Steinke will speak with the City Engineer as he believes that area was not engineered and that would require additional costs to be considered. No further action was taken until more information is known.

Gene Hamdorf on behalf of the Tree Committee asked council for money towards a tree program for the town and for 6-8 trees to be added at the park. NLange asked Hamdorf to try for grants and then they would revisit later.

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Mayor DLange said the Cemetery Board met and received 4 bids for mowing. The bids were - Dan Kessler - \$15,000, Raptor Turf - \$22,500. Connor Scheer - \$10,800 and Doug Deerberg - \$9,000 per year. The term is a 2-year agreement. The cemetery board awarded the agreement to Doug Deerberg pending proof of his liability insurance.

Council discussed the City Attorney interest letters from the prior month. The current City Attorney was selected to continue with the city. The City Clerk also discussed the Nuisance Abatement program offered by ECIA, so they could see what costs are incurred for this type of work.

Mayor DLange discussed the need to update its Mitigation Plan, which is handled by Jody Freet at the county. He asked council to review and make comments by the April meeting for any necessary changes.

Mayor DLange said the city has received liquor license renewal requests from 3-30 Club & J&D Enterprise pending dramshop. M/S NLange, Kristof to approve both license requests pending dram shop. Ayes: All.

The City Clerk and Mayor discussed a draft agreement with the school to cover the updates to the city park. The school is going to put in a new concession stand and bathroom. Council discussed some additional updates and Mayor DLange will go over the draft agreement with Mark Dohmen, North Cedar in due course. Questions on security cameras, electricity, and internet services were part of the discussion and then once parties are agreed, the city attorney will update the draft agreement for everyone to sign. The school requested the agreement runs for 20 years.

Mayor DLange and Clerk discussed 701 Jefferson Avenue. The resident had written to the clerk to work on a payment agreement with the city for a large water bill. Council discussed and decided the resident needs to keep paying down the debt before the city will turn the water back on.

NLange, ALange and DLange discussed delinquent water bills. The clerk explained the billing process and what occurs when bills are delinquent. The Clerk also discussed the ongoing issue with the meter head change outs to radio reads and the delay for the March bills due to a software issue caused by the meter vendor. The problem is now resolved, and the water bills were mailed out a couple of days later than normal, but the clerk adjusted water bill due dates to compensate.

Mayor DLange discussed the Corner Café Nuisance with council - No action.

The city will hold two separate meetings on March 25th. The first meeting will be for the FY25 Property Tax Levy Public Hearing @ 5:30pm and then later a separate meeting will begin at 6:15pm for a council meeting and FY25 Budget review and hearing date decision.

Building Permits -202 5th Street - to add a garage. Council said that no approval will be given until they have reviewed this permit as the building sits to close to the alley and placement of the doors is a concern.

408 10th Street - Deck Permit. M/S Jones, Poppe to approve the deck permit. Nays: NLange. Ayes: ALange, Kristof, Jones and Poppe. Motion Passed.

PWD Steinke asked council to bring in a third party to review and repair the flagpole at city hall. Cost for a 1-man crew @ \$130.00 per hour. 2-man crew @ \$220.00 per hour plus travel time. They can look at the pole when they are working in this area. Replacement cost of the pole is estimated at \$5500.00 if a repair cannot be made. PWD Steinke said Vista Sewer can do some city camera work @ \$275.00 per hour. The city would need about

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1390 ft. Including storm sewer to have camera work completed. He said the city lagoons became blocked with an excessive amount of cleaning cloths and with the recent rain this caused both lagoons to fill up and become plugged. They were able to get one lagoon down by 2ft. The Engineer suggested as a last resort to get a diver in to clear the blockages but had some other ideas as well. PWD Steinke asked council to approve 2 port-a-pots for the park. They told him to order.

Mayor DLange - No updates.

The City Clerk reminded council that she is on jury duty for the month of March and thanked Kim Jones and Peggy Kedley for helping at City Hall last month.

M/S NLange, Kristof to adjourn meeting at 8:15p.m. Ayes: All.

Mayor, Derrick Lange

Attest:

Sarah Carlson, City Clerk