



Goodhue City Council Meeting Minutes
6:15 pm, December 27, 2023

In-Person Meeting, First Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Council Members Present: Mayor Ellen Anderson-Buck, Patrice O'Reilly, Joe Benda, Jason Thuman, Chris Schmit

Council Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: Jason Mandelkow

Guests: Cailin Richard, McCrae Olson, Kyle McKeown, Dale Johnson

Call to Order

6:17 pm

Adoption of Agenda & Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented two amendments to the agenda, creating Other items 5(a) Hold a Public Hearing on the Goodhue Business Subsidy Policy, and 5(b) Approve the Goodhue Business Subsidy Policy. With a motion from Schmit and a second from Benda (5-0-0), Council unanimously adopted the amended agenda and approved City Council Meeting Minutes from October 25, 2023, City Council Meeting Minutes from November 29, 2023 and City Council Special Meeting Minutes from December 6, 2023.

New Business

Dale Johnson, Ag Partners Senior Operations Manager, approached City Council to share their plans to develop additional office space. Johnson shared he has been working with Public Works Director Mandelkow and Goodhue County, and the building permit had been issued. Johnson provided information on the development, sharing that the agronomy team would be moving to the new building as the existing building was reaching capacity. The new addition would be about 6,000 square feet and have 15 offices in addition to conference rooms and a break room. Council member Benda requested that Ag Partners consider natural gas heating instead of propane, which Ag Partners agreed to consider. With a motion from Thuman and a second from Benda (5-0-0), Council unanimously approved the **Ag Partners addition** concept.

City Engineer Sudtelgte provided an **engineering report**. Engineer Sudtelgte recommended the City develop a capital improvement plan to budget for future public improvements. Engineer Sudtelgte recommended the City review and update their zoning code, which was adopted in 1970, in order to make changes for the current development climate. Council member O'Reilly inquired about the types of homes the City would allow in an updated zoning code, and Engineer

Sudtelgts recommended that instead of focusing on types of housing, the City should reevaluate the lot dimension requirements, such as lot sizes and widths. Engineer Sudtelgte recommended the City develop short- and long-term plans for growth and development. In the short term, Sudtelgte shared the City was limited on large-scale growth until the sanitary district was in place, as too much development would be a burden to the system. Engineer Sudtelgte recommended the City implement a fee schedule for development to offset the cost of utility improvements. Public Works Director Mandelkow inquired about low water pressure in houses on County Road 9, and what solutions were available. Engineer Sudtelgte shared two options, installing a booster pump or having individual lots purchase pressure tanks. Based on cost and number of houses impacted, Council unanimously agreed to have individual lots purchase pressure tanks. Engineer Sudtelgte recommended the City consider additional zoning requirements, including amenities to ask for in large-scale developments such as parks. Mayor Anderson-Buck shared she would sit down with City staff to begin developing strategic plans.

Mayor Anderson-Buck provided an update on the **City Administrator Clerk and Administrative Assistant job search**, sharing drafts of a job description and job posting for both positions. The Mayor clarified that the job postings were a brief overview of the job that would be shared on job sites and local media platforms, whereas the job descriptions included details of the position and highlighted job duties and desired qualifications. There was discussion amongst Council on changes to be made to the drafted documents, including reporting structure and job close dates. Mayor Anderson-Buck shared what avenues the City would be utilizing to advertise the position. With a motion from Schmit and a second from O'Reilly (5-0-0), Council unanimously approved the drafted job postings and descriptions, with proposed amendments.

Public Works Director Mandelkow provided an update on the **water tower negotiations with Verizon**, sharing that the project had been put on hold in 2023 but Verizon was looking to move forward in 2024. Director Mandelkow shared that Verizon wanted to put three additional antennas on top of the water tower, which was in compliance with their lease and the City's height ordinances. Director Mandelkow shared that he was initially uncomfortable signing the consent letter to move forward to the next step of the project since welding would take place on the tank, but through negotiations Verizon has agreed to pay for a pre-welding and post-welding inspection inside of the tower. The City could pay to have a maintenance company complete an inspection as well for \$7,800.00, which Council unanimously agreed not to do. Director Mandelkow shared that if damage did occur, Verizon's insurance would pay to repair it; however, if damage were to exacerbate existing issues, the City would be liable for those repair costs. There was discussion amongst Council on the construction process on the tower, what pieces would be removed and replaced and how much work would take place outside of the tower. There was additional discussion amongst Council on if the City was getting a fair price for

leasing their water tower space to Verizon, and what other communities were charging for rent. With a motion from O'Reilly and a second from Benda (5-0-0), Council unanimously agreed to have Director Mandelkow sign the letter of consent to move the project forward.

City Attorney Vose provided an update on the **Albers Split**, sharing that the family was seeking to split their land into three parcels and create a subdivision, in order to convey some of the land currently held in a trust to a corporate entity. Attorney Vose identified Parcel A as the homestead, Parcel B as existing farm buildings and Parcel C as tillable land, with Parcel B as the parcel the family is looking to have owned by a separate entity. Attorney Vose shared that this request was part of the subdivision law the City has in place, and the City needed to sign off on the creation of the subdivision for the County to move forward. Attorney Vose recommended approval, with the requirement an easement is granted in favor of Parcel B to provide access to the County road. With a motion from Thuman and a second from Schmit (5-0-0), Council unanimously approved a three-lot subdivision with the condition that Parcel B receives an easement across Parcel A to gain access to County Road 9.

Mayor Anderson-Buck provided an update on **Election Judges**, sharing that the City would need to find a head judge and additional judges to assist with the upcoming elections in March, August and November. Mayor Anderson-Buck has a list of previous judges and interested individuals that she will reach out to and invite back, and asked Council to send any additional recommendations to her. Mayor Anderson-Buck shared that training would be provided in addition to a stipend for their services. There were questions from Council on details of the training, the amount of the stipend and what requirements there were for individuals to be judges. Mayor Anderson-Buck stressed the time-sensitivity of getting election judges in place.

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented an item to **appoint a Council representative to the Goodhue Gas Commission**, sharing that she was stepping down from the Commission and Council Member Schmit had volunteered to be the new representative. With a motion from Benda and a second from Thuman (5-0-0), Council Member Chris Schmit was formally appointed as the City Council representative to the Goodhue Gas Commission.

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented an **amendment to the Employee Handbook** to incorporate the new sick & safe time leave law, going into effect on January 1, 2024. Mayor Anderson-Buck shared details of the law with Council, including which staff would receive time and how time was accrued. Mayor-Buck shared that the City would have to put a tracking system for sick & safe time in place. City Attorney Vose shared that the law doesn't have to be purely additive, but the City can make their current rights broader to cover the law. There will be additional work to amend the Handbook, and it will be brought back in front of Council for review and approval.

Mayor Anderson-Buck shared an update to the **Vacation and Sick Time Accrual process**, sharing that employees are currently front-loaded with time and will be moving to an accrual process, based on time worked, in 2024. Council member O'Reilly shared that unused time will carry over and accrual will build upon it. Mayor Anderson-Buck shared that she will do the math to figure out what the accrual number will be, and that a system will be put in place so longer term employees get more time. Council member Schmit requested Council discuss the number of accrued hours at a work meeting. There were questions from Council on how employees will track their hours, and Mayor Anderson-Buck shared that each employee would have a tracker on their paycheck. With a motion from O'Reilly and a second from Schmit (5-0-0), Council unanimously agreed to begin the new vacation and sick time accrual process in January.

Mayor Anderson-Buck provided a **Mayoral update**, sharing that the 2024 tax levy was filed and accepted by both the County and the State, the CEDA contract was signed and returned, the Red Wing Technology contract was signed and returned, the City's report of outstanding indebtedness is being completed and the special assessment for past due utilities was certified and submitted.

Approval of Bills

There were questions from Council on a bearing repair at the sewer plant, number of pages in bill reporting, the senior living tax abatement, a reimbursement to the gas commission for extra charges in 2023, phone costs, whose phone number is tied to authentication requests and an invoice from SEMMCHRA for the Small Cities Development Program. Mayor Anderson-Buck shared that the City received \$55,182 in Public Safety Aid from the state. With a motion from Schmit and a second from O'Reilly (5-0-0), Council unanimously voted to pay the bills as stated.

Other Items

With a motion from O'Reilly and a second from Benda (5-0-0), Council **opened the public hearing to discuss the Goodhue Business Subsidy Policy**. No members of the public addressed Council as part of the public hearing. With a motion from Schmit and a second from Benda (5-0-0), Council closed the public hearing to discuss the Goodhue Business Subsidy Policy.

There was discussion amongst Council and EDA staff on what a Business Subsidy Policy was and why the City needed one in place. With a motion from Thuman and a second from Schmit (5-0-0), Council unanimously adopted the **Goodhue Business Subsidy Policy**.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made at 7:53 pm by Thuman and seconded by O'Reilly (5-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,
Cailin Richard, EDA Coordinator