**March 12th, 2013**

**Regular Council Meeting**

**Pledge:**

Mayor Juanita Mitchell and Council Members: Alex Weego, Donald Fitzgerald, Jim Opelia and Alice Melzer were all present. Guests included: Douglas Host and Darlene Fah

**Minutes:** February 12th, 2013 Regular Council Meeting:

Alex made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Fitz, all in favor, motion carried.

**Financial Reports:**

Alex asked about the USA Blue Book bill. Aaron stated that it was for a water membrane and two test kits. Alex asked when the first LGA payment would be this year. Juanita said that she thought that it would arrive in May or June. Alex asked about the water & sewer balances. Michael stated that accounts 93, 106, 127 and 556 would be red tagged tomorrow if a payment wasn’t left in the box overnight. Clerk Dagen said that the balance on account 30 would be assessed to their taxes since they hadn’t responded after receiving a certified letter. There was a discussion in regards to the accounts that were over 60 days past due. Michael also stated that a certified letter was sent to account 80; giving them until April 1st to pay their balance or face tax assessment. Alex made a motion to refer to audit, all in favor, motion carried. Michael reminded the council that they should list the check #’s that would be paid; per instruction from the auditor. Alex withdrew his first motion. Fitz made a motion to refer to audit and pay checks 13324-13341, Alex second, all in favor, motion carried.

**Maintenance Report:** Aaron Fore stated that Hawkins Chemical would like to do some tests with the water to try a different phosphate blend. Aaron said that they may be able to remove the white scum that you see in the water when you make coffee. Mr. Fore said that he thought it was worth looking into. Jim asked what caused the white scum. Alex said that it was dead bacteria and Aaron answered that it was bio film which wasn’t too far off from Alex’s statement. Mr. Fore suggested that this year’s clean up day be May 18th. Aaron said that the fee schedule would stay the same. Fitz made a motion that May 18th be the date for City cleanup, Alice 2nd , all in favor, motion carried.

Juanita asked if the City could ever collect the scrap metal from clean up day to raise money for the City. There was a discussion about the Mayor’s statement and it was decided that the Council would watch what comes in at clean up day this year to see if it would be worthwhile.

**Mayor’s Report:** Juanita told Aaron that an access road would need to be plowed at the Community Center so that the fuel oil truck can get to the tank behind the building. Mayor Mitchell stated that there is a rental of the Community Center on March 27th and they would also like to have the front parking lot plowed.

Juanita brought up MN Statutes 171.02 subd. 5: Exemption for certain back up snowplow drivers which states; “a person who operates a commercial motor vehicle for the purpose of removing snow is not required to hold a commercial driver’s license if the person is operating within the boundaries of the local unit of government”. Michael noted that this statute is authorized in the attached: Public Law 104-59 which states; “a state may waive the requirements…with respect to a vehicle that is…being used by a unit of government…for removing snow...in a case where the licensed employee who ordinarily operates the vehicle is unable to operate…or is in need of additional assistance due to a snow emergency”.

**Clerks Report:** Michael told the Council about the training listed in his notes which will be held on March 27th in Alexandria with a $20 attendance fee. Dagen stated that the City’s ambassador to the League of MN Cities Sev Blenkush contacted him and encouraged his attendance. Alex asked if the training was only for Clerks and Michael said no. Clerk Dagen asked for help with organizing the Council meeting minute binders from the past 7 years in the office. Mr. Dagen said this process would give us a chance to scan in and archive all of the resolutions that have been passed through out this time. Michael asked for permission to close the office at 4pm on Tuesday March 19th and in exchange he would work until 6pm on Thursday the 21st. The Clerk then reviewed the rest of his notes. Dagen said that the new animal tags are in and that he would inform the Citizens of this with a note on their next water bill. Michael brought up that the charge for the City website has been raised from $10 a month to $25; with a scheduled billing in April & Oct. Juanita asked if the City had been informed of this change and clerk Dagen said no. There was discussion in regards to the City’s website. Mr. Dagen stated that he would look into the cost for the City to host their own website through Wordpress.

**Unfinished Business**:

**Bertha Hewitt Post Prom Request:** (Original post prom request was made in Dec. 2012, but the item was tabled due to lack of Charitable gambling funds.) Darlene Fah made a presentation on behalf of the Bertha Hewitt post prom committee. There was a discussion of how much money the City should donate. It was stated that the City of Hewitt donated $500 to the post prom last year, but that there is only $491.22 in the charitable gambling account at this time. Jim made a motion to give $400 to the Post Prom Committee, Alex second, Alex, Jim and Juanita in favor, Fitz & Alice no, motion carried.

**Fee Schedule Addition for Man lift Rental:** Juanita asked if anything had been figured out yet and Aaron said no. There was a discussion about adding a fee to the schedule for renting the man lift. Aaron said that Adam would like to rent the man lift, tripod and harness as a package deal. Mayor Mitchell suggested that Aaron and Adam just figure out a charge that would be fair.

**Removal of the Mill**: Juanita stated that the City has received signed permission from the owners to burn the old mill. Alex stated that Fire Chief Steve Peterson is working on coordinating the burn.

**New Business**

**Audit:** Doug Host from Clifton Larson Allen presented the City’s 2012 audit. Doug stated that with this risk based audit their responsibility is to issue an opinion on the City’s financial statement. Mr. Host said that there were a couple adjustments, but nothing out of the ordinary. Doug presented graphs of the City’s financials from 2010-2012. There was discussion about the different graphs and the auditor’s findings. Alex asked how the City was doing. Doug Host said that the City appeared to be healthy and that he would give them the letter grade of B+ or A-. Alex said that at least we are on the honor roll. Juanita said that there is always room for improvement.

**Fire Contract Billing**: Juanita stated that there isn’t much to discuss since none of the townships are here. Clerk Dagen asked when the Council would like him to transfer the City’s payment for the Fire Department service. There was a short discussion about the Fire contracts. Juanita suggested that Clerk Dagen wait until after the City received their LGA payment.

**Terry Melzer Building Permit Extension**: Fitz made a motion to extend the building permit for one year. There was a short discussion about the building permit extension. Jim seconded the motion, all in favor, Alice abstained, motion carried.

**Church of Nazarene Letter:** Juanita stated that the Church of Nazarene had sent the City a counter offer for the lot on the south corner of 210 and Front Street. (The City offered to buy lot #35-0021100 in August of 2012 for $2500) Alice mentioned that a gas station used to be located on that property and that the land had never been cleaned up. Mrs. Melzer said that when they would change oil it would just go on the ground with nothing to catch it and they didn’t dispose of it properly. Juanita stated that it had been cleaned up a few years back and Alice stated that they had only dug up the tank. Councilwoman Melzer said they dug up the dirt, piled it up; leaving it sit for a year to year and a half before it was just spread around again without being cleaned up. Juanita said she thought it would be an ideal spot for a tractor pull. There was then a strange discussion ranging from a replica of the Washington mall but with a giant pickle to a statue of Paul Bunyan’s girlfriend Harriot the Harlot of Hewitt being located at this spot. Juanita stated that the taxable market value of the land was more than the $4000 the church was asking. There was a discussion of where exactly this lot was located. Alex made a motion that the City purchase this land with $500 earnest money down, with full payment by July 15th, Fitz second, Alex, Jim, Fitz and Juanita in favor, Alice Nah, motion carried. Juanita asked that Michael draft a letter to the Church of Nazarene.

**C.C. Ludwig Leadership Award Letter request:** Fitz explained that he would like to nominate Juanita for the C.C. Ludwig Leadership award which has a $1000 prize for the winning City. Mr. Fitzgerald said that there doesn’t need to be a motion made, but the Council needs to ok the application. There was a discussion about the Cities that have won the award including Wadena. The Council agreed to nominate Juanita for the award and they asked Michael to draft a letter explaining this fact.

**Flood Plain Management Training:** Juanita stated that this training is Little Falls on March 20th starting at 9 am. Aaron stated that he has never been to one of these trainings. There was a discussion about if the City was in a flood plain and it was stated that yes they have been listed once again as being located in a flood plain. It was asked how much the training cost and it was stated that the training was free, but lunch was extra. Alex said that maybe he (Alex) should go and Juanita said that since the training is free he doesn’t need the Council’s permission.

**Water Tower Painting bids:** There was a discussion in regards to the bids that the City received to paint the water tower. Alice stated that she liked the Urethane bid from Tri-State out of Wadena for $31,800. Aaron stated that he didn’t receive a quote for applying Urethane from any of the other bidders because he didn’t ask for it. Michael informed the Council that he had received a call from Tri-State on Monday and that they stated that they had thought the water tower was larger than it actually is, so they lowered their bid to $22,000 for the Urethane and $20,000 for the sprayed acrylic. Juanita made a motion that the City go with option one from Tri-State once we receive an updated bid on paper for no more than $25,000, Fitz second, all in favor, motion carried.

**Duane & Denise Hanson Water & Sewer Complaint**: Fitz and Aaron stated that when the water was turned on it was leaking past the water meter. Councilman Fitzgerald suggested that the Hanson’s account be prorated for the days the service was in their name. There was a discussion in regards to connection and reconnection fees. Juanita said that currently; there isn’t a turn on fee for new accounts, but asked if there should be. Fitz said that he remembers when he moved to town he was charged $15 to have his water hooked up. There was a discussion of how long the account was in the Hanson’s name before they sold the property and the name on the account was changed. It was stated that the Hanson’s be charged for the 14 days that the water was in their name; which changes their balance due from $44.70 to $22.35.

The meeting was then closed to discuss a Volunteer Firefighter issue.

Fitz made a motion to open the meeting back up, Jim seconded, all in favor motion carried.

**Volunteer Firefighter issue**: Jim made a motion to send Volunteer Firefighter Beau Byman a letter requiring Beau to prove that he is once again living in Hewitt by April 1st or else he will face termination from the Fire Department due to the fact that he is living beyond ten minutes of the City which is required in the Hewitt Fire Department bylaws, Alex second, all in favor except Fitz, motion carried.

Jim made a motion to approve the two applicants to the Fire Department Brandon L. Benning and David Laudon for future hire at the discretion of the Fire Chief, Alex second, all in favor except Fitz, motion carried.

Fitz made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alice, all in favor motion carried.