

**August 20, 2024
Jackson, Minnesota**

The Jackson City Council met in regular session in the meeting room at the Jackson Fire Hall located at 305 Sheridan Street in Jackson and also by Teleconference and Zoom at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 20, 2024 with the meeting called to order by Mayor Marcus Polz. On the roll call, the following persons were present in-person, Mayor Marcus Polz and Aldermen Mark Titus, Chris Naumann, Brandon Finck, Nathan Peterson, Sara Mix and Joe Pell. Also attending in-person were Interim City Administrator Rick Almich, City Attorney Brad Anderson, Luke Ewald of Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services, Jackson Public Works Director Tony Oxborough, MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Tony Nitchals, Jackson Ambulance Director Grant Landbo, Jackson Fire Chief Dave Bond, Engineer Troy Nemmers of Bolten and Menk, Engineer Cody Woessner of HDR, Kim Benes, Stephen Foster, Cay Gjertson, Liliana Becerra Castillo and Janette Simon all from the Jackson Center for the Arts, John Weland, Cheryl Harnden Yadloski, City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff and Justin Lessman of the Jackson County Pilot.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Polz announced the Pledge of Allegiance would be recited before the City Council meeting was called to order. All those attending in-person and by Zoom and Teleconference recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Polz called the regular meeting of the Jackson City Council to order. He said the roll call showed all Councilmembers were present.

There were no Public Hearings, Bid Lettings or Open Forum.

Unscheduled Guests:

Mayor Polz asked if there were any unscheduled guests in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Polz again asked if there were any unscheduled guests in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Polz asked for a third time if there were any unscheduled guests in the audience.

Seeing and hearing no unscheduled guests, Mayor Polz said the Council would move onto the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Polz entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Alderman Joe Pell asked to pull Consent Agenda Item 7(P) for discussion regarding approving the update in Grant Landbo's hourly rate from EMT to Paramedic effective on August 10th, 2024.

PETERSON/TITUS moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented except for Consent Agenda Item 7(P) for Council discussion regarding approving the update in Grant Landbo's hourly rate from EMT to Paramedic effective on August 10th, 2024.

Pell asked if the update in Jackson Ambulance Director Grant Landbo's hourly rate from EMT to Paramedic had gone through the Personnel and Finance Committees. He said he's OK with the proposal, but just wanted to know if it had gone through the proper channels.

Mayor Polz said the proposal had never gone through a formal Committee.

Alderman Brandon Finck concurred with Mayor Polz.

It was the consensus of Councilmembers that the proposal regarding the update in Grant Landbo's hourly rate from EMT to Paramedic should first go through a Committee.

Mayor Polz entertained a motion to table action on Consent Agenda Item 7(P) pending Committee review.

PELL/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to table action pending Finance and Personnel Committee reviews regarding Consent Agenda Item 7(P) pertaining to approving the update for Grant Landbo's hourly rate from EMT to Paramedic effective on August 10th, 2024.

Following discussion on whether the issue should be referred to the Personnel or Finance Committee, or both for review, Pell amended his motion to send Consent Agenda Item 7(P) to the City's Personnel Committee for review.

PELL/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried that Consent Agenda Item 7(P) to approve the update in Grant Landbo's hourly rate from EMT to Paramedic effective August 10th, 2024 be referred to the Personnel Committee for review.

KIM BENES – REQUEST FOR BURN PERMIT

Kim Benes said he was requesting a burn permit for the property at 101 Petersburg Drive. He said due to the flood, there are pallets, a lot of logs and brush that got caught up in the trees.

Benes said the debris is located out in the open and away from homes. He said he had already touched base with Sheriff Shawn Haken and Fire Chief Dave Bond who didn't see any problem with the request to burn.

Benes said he was looking for approval to burn from the City Council.

Mix asked Fire Chief Dave Bond if the Fire Department was OK with Benes' request.

Bond said he was fine with Benes' request.

Benes said he will be conscious of the wind direction in planning when he's going to burn.

PETERSON/MIX moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Kim Benes' request for a burn permit.

Benes thanked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers.

Mayor Polz thanked Benes.

JOSE LOPEZ – REQUEST FOR PEDDLER’S PERMIT FOR FOOD TRUCK – TACO BRAVO

City Clerk Dave Maschoff said he received a text from Jose Lopez that he was currently tied up with his food truck. He said the Council may need to revisit this agenda item later in the meeting.

JACKSON CENTER FOR THE ARTS – STREET CLOSURE REQUEST AND GRANT APPLICATION – CAY GJERTSON

Cay Gjertson, Director of the Jackson Center for the Arts, said the Arts Center is hoping to have a Fiesta Party on Thursday, September 26th, after the Farmers and Makers Market that day.

Gjertson said the Arts Center has a Tex/Mex band called Los Rebeddes which means “the rebels” in Spanish. She said the ESL (English as a Second Language) Class that meets at the Jackson Center for the Arts has volunteered to make Mexican food which will be available for samples for a free-will donation to the Arts Center.

Gjertson said the Arts Center would like the street closed in front of the Arts Center longer than is normal. She explained the street is normally closed to traffic for the Farmers and Makers Market but it’s felt the street will be need to be closed on September 26th until 9 p.m.

On another topic, Gjertson referred to information that was distributed to the Mayor and Councilmembers regarding a grant the Arts Center had reviewed that may benefit the City.

Gjertson said she understands the City may take down the former Coast to Coast building in Jackson. She asked if a date has been set for demolition.

Gjertson said the Arts Center has found a \$25,000 grant they would like to apply for along with some of the other institutions in town. She explained the grant, if awarded, would need to be used within three years. Gjertson said that’s why they would like to know when the City is planning to take the former Coast to Coast building down.

Gjertson explained the Arts Center would like to apply to the grant organization to receive funding in order to hire landscape architects and then create a design for a building.

Janette Simon of the Arts Center distributed pictures to Mayor Polz and Councilmembers of a green space area that was developed in Guttenberg, Iowa.

Gjertson said the Arts Center would like to use the \$25,000 grant, if awarded, to fund a green space the City could use for concerts, get-togethers and all kinds of different things.

Mayor Polz explained where the City was at regarding the former Coast to Coast building. He said first, the building had to be removed from the Register of Historical Places which Mayor Polz said he believes has been completed. Mayor Polz said he also knows the City was seeking a grant from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development to assist in the removal of the building. He said he would refer to the Jackson EDA when it comes to the timeline regarding the building. Mayor Polz said the EDA has applied for grants and things of that nature and some things may overlap. He informed Gjertson that he could supply her with the contact information for the EDA.

Gjertson explained the purpose of the Laura Jane Musser Fund grant is to encourage collaborative and participatory efforts among citizens in rural communities that will help to strengthen their towns and regions in a number of civic areas including, but not limited to, economic development, business preservation, arts and humanities, public space improvements and education. She explained only programs in Colorado, Hawaii, Minnesota, Wyoming and limited counties in New York and Texas may apply. Gjertson explained the Arts Center would like to apply for the grant to assist the City with development of a green space.

Mayor Polz asked Gjertson when the grant application needed to be submitted.

Gjertson said the Laura Jane Musser Fund grant application is due by October 3rd.

Mix said the Arts Center's ideas are great, but thinks the City also needs to make sure it's in line with what the City's future plans are for the former Coast to Coast building site. She said she doesn't know if the City has any plans for the site at this point. Mix said the Park Board also needs to take a look at the proposed plans by the Arts Center because they will be the ones that will ultimately end up taking care of it if it's decided that's the route the City is going to go. She said whatever plans are decided upon, it should align with the plans for the site. Mix said the proposed ideas presented by the Arts Center are beautiful and would be amazing to have. She said she just wants to make sure that everybody is on board.

Titus said he loves the Arts Center's idea. He said it's pretty certain that the building is coming down, but in terms of what the use of that space will be is another question. Titus said the Arts Center's idea is a great idea and needs to be considered.

Mayor Polz asked Gjertson what's the repercussion if the City receives the Laura Jane Musser Fund grant but the City isn't ready with a plan.

Gjertson said all work would have to be completed within three years so the City does have some time. She explained there are two grants. Gjertson said one is a Planning Grant for \$5,000. She suggested proceeding with applying for the grant to avoid reapplying and going through the application process again. Gjertson said the second grant, the Product Grant, is actually getting things done and that would need to be completed within three years.

Gjertson said the Arts Center is hoping to partner with the Garden Club, Des Moines Valley Health and Human Resources, the Chamber of Commerce and the Rhythm of the River. She said they would like to make this a community project.

Simon said the grantors like collaboration. She said the more people that can get on board and be involved in the project will be favorable in being awarded the grant.

Pell said the Arts Center's idea is a really good idea and he likes it. He said he's talked about it in the past about looking at the possibility of preserving the front of the former Coast to Coast building similar to what was done with the Flour Mill in Minneapolis and incorporate the front façade of the building with the green space.

Titus noted the front of the original building is behind the current façade and it would be nice to preserve it if it's still there and is feasible to save.

Almich said the Arts Center's idea is a very worthy project based on his experience working with other towns. He said these types of planned open spaces are very successful. Almich said they're needed in the community. He said he agrees that not every event should be on Main Street with the streets barricaded. Almich said he thinks the green space would draw a lot of people to the community. Since there's some flexibility of time when the project has to be completed, Almich suggested the City Council authorize the Arts Center to submit the grant application to get into the grant cycle.

Almich said, of course, there's other interested parties that the Arts Center's idea needs to be discussed with such as the EDA, the Planning Commission, other groups and the community in general. He said he wouldn't pass up this opportunity to maybe get some seed money or a substantial amount of money to proceed.

Mix asked if the Arts Center has to specify a specific spot when the grant is applied for or can just the community of Jackson be listed.

Gjertson said she didn't know if a specific address had to be identified in order to apply for the grant. She said as long as there's a green space available in the community.

Simon said the grantor is probably more apt to want to know the size of the green space for a project and doesn't know if a specific address has to be identified. She said it would probably be more advantageous in receiving the grant if a designated space was identified.

Finck asked if two spaces could be listed in the grant application.

Simon said two spaces could be listed.

Finck noted the City already has designated space at Memorial Park which has already been committed as a park. He asked if Memorial Park and the former Coast to Coast building site could be listed so planning could be done and proceed accordingly. Finck said the funds could be procured but they may be used at either site.

Titus asked if it was known when the City was going to receive information regarding whether the City's grant application to DEED (Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development) for demolition of the former Coast to Coast building was approved.

Mayor Polz said Assistant EDA Director Shelley Pohlman is on vacation this week. He said he will have to follow up with Pohlman regarding the status of the DEED grant when she returns.

Naumann recommended Finck’s proposal to apply for the grant and include two possible locations for a green space area. He noted that way if the funds are granted, a project could proceed at either location.

Titus said the City could certainly utilize the river front more than they do.

Mayor Polz asked if the City Council would like to take action.

NAUMANN/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried for the Jackson Center for the Arts to proceed in applying for the Laura Jane Musser Fund Grant.

PETERSON/NAUMANN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Jackson Center for the Arts Center’s request to close Second Street (Main Street) in front of the Arts Center on Thursday, September 26th from the start of the Farmers and Makers Market until 9 p.m.

Mayor Polz thanked Gjertson.

LUKE EWALD – REPORT ON TOBACCO AUDITING REPORTS FOR JACKSON AND JACKSON COUNTY

Luke Ewald of Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services said every four years the Minnesota Department of Health will ask all 87 counties in the State to voluntarily conduct a tobacco retail audit.

Ewald reported the Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) team conducted tobacco retail audits in March of 2024. He said across Minnesota, 55 counties participated in the same retail auditing between March and June of this year.

Ewald said he wanted to share information pertaining to the City of Jackson and Jackson County. He explained the data collected consisted of the store type and location, number of different flavors that exist at the retailer, whether they offer menthol flavored tobacco, price and promotion and the youth appeal.

Ewald said Countywide, all the stores sold some kind of tobacco product whether it was cigarettes or chewing tobacco. He said the stores in the audit that sell tobacco products included convenience stores, grocery stores and mass merchandisers. Ewald said the stores appeared to have some type of tobacco advertising such as price promotions on the types of products that were sold. He pointed out the most common flavored tobacco products and the rise in oral nicotine use, especially with youth.

Ewald said the most common tobacco products in Jackson County includes cigarettes at 100 percent, cigarillos at 91 percent and smokeless tobacco at 82 percent which has declined since the last audit was done in 2020.

Ewald said communities in Jackson County with tobacco retailers include Jackson, Lakefield, Okabena and Heron Lake. Regarding the E-Cigarettes/Vaping flavors, he noted 50 percent of retailers sell 6 to 10 flavors, 38 percent sell one to five flavors and 13 percent sell 11 to 20 flavors.

Regarding pricing, Ewald said the average cheapest price for a pack of cigarettes in Jackson County was \$9.21. He said the average cheapest price for E-cigarettes/vapes was \$9.24 and the cheapest price was \$7 for cigarettes and \$4.99 for E-Cigarettes/Vape products.

Ewald said when it comes to price promotions, cigarettes lead the promotions at 64 percent, menthols at 45 percent, E-Cigarettes/Vapes at 38 percent, oral nicotine at 14 percent and cigarillos at 10 percent.

Ewald said what is a little discerning is the appeal to youth by retailers. He said 18 percent of tobacco products were located in stores near eye-catching youth-oriented products such as candy or something fun that youth would like to purchase. Ewald noted 13 percent of E-Cigarettes/Vapes were in self-service displays.

Ewald said through licensing and related regulations, local governments such as cities and counties, have the opportunity to broadly regulate the sale of commercial tobacco and related devices and products, such as electronic cigarettes, in the retail environment.

Ewald said that was an overview of the Jackson County Tobacco Retail Audit Summary. He said his presentation was informational and no action was needed by the City Council.

Mayor Polz thanked Ewald for his presentation.

AIRPORT PAY APPLICATION NO. 8

Engineer Cody Woessner of HDR explained Airport Pay Application No. 8 is for the Taxiway Project at the Airport. He said Pay Application No. 8 is mainly for finishing up the paving. Woessner said all the paving is now completed at the Airport. He said a lot of the electrical items are now completed as well.

Woessner said the remaining work left to be paid for will just mainly be minor electrical items, some grading work and seeding. He said he just returned from the Airport and all the taxiway lights were being tested. Woessner said all the taxiway lights and electrical items were all looking good. He reiterated all the paving at the airport has been completed.

Mayor Polz entertained a motion to approve Airport Pay Application No. 8.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Airport Pay Application No. 8 in the amount of \$234,999.30 to Svoboda Excavating, Incorporated of Jackson, Minnesota.

BELMONT HEIGHTS PAY APPLICATION NO. 5

Mayor Polz asked if anyone was present at the meeting representing Belmont Heights.

Seeing no representatives at the meeting representing Belmont Heights, Mayor Polz said he was inclined to ask the Council to table Pay Application No. 5 until more information is made available.

FINCK/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to table Belmont Heights Pay Application No. 5 pending receiving further information.

STREET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE QUOTE TO REMOVE AND RE-PAVE TERRACE DRIVE

Public Works Director Tony Oxborough said the Street Committee met on July 31st. He said the Street Committee recommended moving forward with re-paving Terrace Drive this year. Oxborough noted there about six homes along Terrace Drive which is a dead-end road. He said if the City Council approves the quote from Duininck's, letters will be sent to the homeowners about the re-paving project that will be taking place this fall.

Oxborough said Terrace Drive is so far gone that removing the current asphalt and repaving is probably the best way to handle upgrading that street.

Oxborough said the quote from Duininck's to repave Terrace Drive is \$48,898.20.

Mayor Polz asked for a motion to approve the Street Committee's recommendation to remove the asphalt and repave Terrace Drive.

FINCK/MIX moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Street Committee's recommendation to remove the asphalt and repave Terrace Drive for the quote from \$48,898.20 from Duinck Incorporated of Prinsburg, Minnesota.

DECLARE A COMMUNITY FESTIVAL FOR THE AUGUST 29TH 2024 JACKSON CRUISE-IN EVENT

Mayor Polz entertained a motion to declare a Community Festival for the August 29th Jackson Cruise-In event.

PETERSON/TITUS moved and it was unanimously carried to declare a Community Festival for the August 29th, 2024 Jackson Cruise-In Event.

JOSE LOPEZ – REQUEST FOR PEDDLER'S PERMIT FOR FOOD TRUCK – TACO BRAVO

City Clerk Dave Maschoff said Jose Lopez was busy with his food truck and was unable to be present at the City Council meeting.

Maschoff reported Lopez has submitted all of his required paperwork and has paid his fees. He said hopefully, Lopez may be available to introduce himself at the next Council meeting.

Maschoff suggested the Council could approve Lopez's Peddler's Permit.

MIX/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve a Peddler's Permit for Jose Lopez's food truck – Taco Bravo.

FLOODING UPDATE WITH TONY OXBOROUGH

Public Works Director Tony Oxborough said there are a number of things going on regarding the flooding that occurred during June in Jackson.

Oxborough reported he filed a letter with the Army Corps of Engineers for assistance to update the model of the river shed, watershed and floodway pertaining to the Des Moines River itself. He explained that information is necessary before the City can make any updates regarding adding new dikes and adding to current dikes. Oxborough said engineering firm HDR is basically working with the Army Corps of Engineers to help update those plans to determine how everyone will be affected upstream and downstream if new dikes are installed in Jackson. He said the Army Corps of Engineers anticipate they will have the Des Moines River model updated within the next month. Oxborough said in order for the City to get reimbursement money from FEMA for installing new dikes or improving dikes, the projects have to be completed in 18 months. He said things are moving forward.

Oxborough said Hydrologist Tom Kresko of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources also visited Jackson. He said it was a visit to discuss preliminary plans and the clean-up process. Oxborough reported there was a lot of shoreline that was eroded in Ashley Park that got close to the walking trail. He said the eroded area will be backfilled with rock which is approved to use. Oxborough said Kresko offered some good direction.

Oxborough said sand was washed into Benes Park as the Des Moines River migrated through the park during the flood. He said the question was what could be done with the sand. Oxborough said he contacted Wetlands Specialist Dan Bartosh from the Soil and Water Conservation Office in Lakefield. Oxborough said Bartosh explained a section of Benes Park are wetlands and that the sand needed to be removed. He said Bartosh explained what can and can't be done regarding the sand. Oxborough said it's kind of a lengthy process to figure out what the next steps are going to be. He said they will keep working on that. Oxborough said this fall, the City may hire contractors to remove the sand from Benes Park because City staff is still cleaning up from the flood.

Oxborough said he has spoken with an official from the U.S. Geological Survey regarding the stream gauging on the Des Moines River. He said those conversations pertaining to the information received from the river gauges is getting started.

As far as flood cleanup around Jackson, Oxborough said work is just about completed. He said the bike trails have been cleaned up and will be swept on August 21st. Oxborough said it's been kind of somewhat piecemeal for cleaning up after the flood just because the Public Work Department is trying to get back to normal operations. He said they have been trying to fit in as much street patching as possible because that season is coming closer and closer to an end.

Regarding Ashley Park, Oxborough said Safety First will be in Jackson on Wednesday, August 28th, to basically remove all the wood chips and replace them with new wood chips and also redo the border around the play equipment.

As far as homes that were affected in the flood plain, Oxborough said those homes are held to a higher standard because they are located in the flood plain. He said the City staff are Flood Plain Managers basically by FEMA standards. Oxborough explained for anything built in the Flood Plain, if 50 percent of the value of the home is damaged, the property owner needs to bring the home up to code. He said easy math, if there's a house valued at \$50,000 and it has incurred over \$25,000 worth of damage, it then needs to be picked up and clay put underneath it to raise it above the flood plain. Oxborough said the City's Building Inspector Harry Jenness has been inspecting what the damage is in the houses that were flooded. He explained the City has then had an outside third-party appraiser determine what the value of the structure was, not the land, prior to the flooding. Oxborough said once they have all that information, it will then be determined which property owners have to come into compliance or who does not. He said some property owners have indicated they would like to sell their property if that's an option. Oxborough said conversations will be held with FEMA regarding reimbursements for the City's expenses due to flooding on the City's properties and discussions about the purchase of properties by the City to mitigate buildings that were heavily damaged and are in the flood plain.

Mayor Polz noted that one of the reasons Jackson was in the flooding situation that it was is because the stream gauges up stream in the Des Moines River were under water so officials in Jackson received inaccurate information. He said Jackson officials did not get the timely data where they would have had a 24-hour period to react and had to become very reactionary because they didn't have the data. Mayor Polz said the lack of accurate river level information put Jackson in more of an urgent state than anything.

Oxborough agreed that Jackson officials were depending on the information from the stream gauges in determining when the river was going to crest in Jackson. He said according to that information, it was anticipated the crest would be occurring on Thursday, June 27th. Oxborough said information from a Sheriff's Deputy on Saturday, June 22nd that a large amount of water was coming towards Jackson helped Jackson officials start to prepare for the flooding. He said without the Sheriff Deputy's information, we would have been sitting ducks.

Mayor Polz asked Oxborough if he knew what the City was doing for homeowners that were affected by the flooding utility-wise.

Oxborough said there were a couple of houses that were flooded by water. For example, in one home, Oxborough said the water heater broke loose so the property owner had a high-water bill. He said that high water bill was forgiven as recommended by the Utility Commission. Oxborough said for those homes where sump pumps had to be used and electric bills were high, those customers will receive a \$100 credit on their utility bill.

Regarding the residents on River Street, Oxborough said Building Inspector Harry Jenness and the outside third-party appraiser are still compiling their reports on each property on River Street. He said once those reports are generated, things will move forward. He said the inspections and appraisals are completed. Oxborough explained it takes about a day to compile a report per building that's been inspected.

Mayor Polz asked how many buildings had to be inspected.

Oxborough said there were about 30 buildings that were inspected. He said there's a lot of things in the works to try and keep everything moving forward.

Mayor Polz noted Small Business Administration officials and FEMA officials are still in Jackson to assist residents and businesses.

Oxborough noted FEMA Officials will be in Jackson until Sunday, August 25th.

Cheryl Harnden Yadloski asked about the \$100 credit that residents affected by flooding will receive on their utility bills. She pointed out that electric bills for residents that had flooding were quite a bit higher due to running sump pumps.

Mayor Polz asked if the City is looking at reviewing the utility usage to see if there are further reimbursements.

Oxborough said further reimbursements can be looked at if that's the recommendation from the City Council.

Oxborough noted the Utilities Commission approved credits on utility bills for customers who had major water leaks. He said there were some utility customers who had \$14,000 worth of water go through their water meter because their hot water heater broke away from the pipes and floated because their basement was fully flooded. He the City reimbursed those customers for that. Oxborough said those were the houses that were actually underwater.

Mayor Polz asked if the Utility Commission could come up with a recommendation for a dollar amount for reimbursement for homeowners.

Oxborough said for the homeowners who had floodwaters that impacted their house and had a high-water usage, those high-water usage costs were forgiven. He said there were only a handful of those cases. Oxborough said there were two types of utility reimbursements.

Finck asked about the houses that were flooded by backed-up sewers. He asked if the utility bill the month prior to the flooding was looked at compared to the month of the flooding. Finck said for example, what if the utility bill is up \$400. He asked if a recommendation has been made on how the City is going to handle situations like that.

Finck said he would like to make a recommendation that the City look at the utility bills for those who had their sewer backed-up. He said the utility bill could be looked at and compared to what the bill was a month prior to the flooding and averaged out. He suggested just keeping it simple.

Mayor Polz said for example, if the utility bill was \$200 the month before the flooding and \$400 the month of the flooding, then the resident's utility bill would be averaged back to \$200.

Yadloski thanked Finck for his recommendation. She said her utility bill exactly doubled and the increased usage came in two weeks' time. Yadloski noted it's actually two months involved with the utility bills.

Finck recommended then two months of utility bills could be monitored to determine what the averages are.

Yadloski noted she had five sump pumps operating at her residence, some residents had two sump pumps operating and some walked away from their residence.

Oxborough asked Councilmembers if they would like a proposal to consider at their next City Council meeting.

Finck asked if Oxborough could investigate the increased utility bills for those that had a backed-up sewer and bring a proposal back to the City Council with dollar amounts per household. He said he understands the dollar amount will be different for each property.

Oxborough said he will present two options for the City Council to consider at their next meeting.

Mayor Polz asked if Finck's recommendation could be stated in a form of a motion.

FINCK/NAUMANN moved and it was unanimously carried for Public Works Director Tony Oxborough to present two options to the City Council at their next Council meeting regarding reimbursements for residents who experienced higher than usual monthly utility bills due to operating sumps pumps and the like because of backed-up sewers during the flooding in June, 2024.

Other:

Alderman Mark Titus

Alderman Mark Titus asked if there was any new information regarding the former Prairie Winds Motel property.

City Attorney Brad Anderson said a lot has happened. He said Judge Bentz ruled to deny a motion by the defendant to reopen the case and reinstated the original court order ordering the City to go ahead and remove the buildings on the property. Attorney Anderson said demolition could begin after September 23rd. He said he spoke with Blue Earth Environmental and they're ready to mobilize. Attorney Anderson said September 23rd would be the last date available for the defendant to appeal Judge Bentz's decision.

Attorney Anderson said the City received a phone call from someone interested in buying the property, but doesn't think that person is interested anymore.

Attorney Anderson noted a newspaper also expressed interest in the story regarding the property.

Attorney Anderson said there's a lot that has happened over the last four days. He said right now, September 23rd is the final day for the property owner to appeal the Court's decision. Attorney Anderson said Blue Earth Environment is preparing to mobilize either on September 23rd or that week.

Attorney Anderson said he plans on sending the property owner a letter and having her personally served as we draw closer to the September 23rd date just as a reminder that it's going to happen and this is when it's going to happen so there's no surprises and the property owner has plenty of time to prepare for it.

Fire Chief Dave Bond said he doesn't know if it's true, but he's been informed that there's been squatters on the property. He said he's also seen the owner spending time at the property. Bond said if there was a fire in the building, it could be fatal for someone staying there.

Attorney Anderson said there had been some squatters on the property and they were chased away about a week to 10 days ago. He said he didn't know if there has been a subsequent incident of squatters since then. Attorney Anderson said the Building Inspector has looked at the building and hadn't seen any evidence of someone staying there. He said the Building Inspector said there were a few people at the property, probably removing some personal items.

Alderman Chris Naumann

Alderman Chris Naumann reminded everyone to fill out the surveys regarding the swimming pool and send them in.

Alderman Brandon Finck

Alderman Brandon Finck said in light of the flooding, he thinks the City really needs to go back in reviewing their softball/baseball complex facility that they were looking at. Finck said Albertus Field is a great field and he understands the passion, but flooding seems to be occurring historically more often. He said to continue investing dollars into Albertus Field long term seems to be challenging in order to keep that field functioning like it should be.

Finck said he just brings up the issue as food for thought as the City is discussing the swimming pool and the cost of that. He noted at one point, there were sales tax dollars approved to be used for a softball/baseball complex which would have funded about 67 percent of the project. At some point, Finck said he would like to see the City Council again look at the softball/baseball complex project. He noted not to abandon Albertus Field, but he doesn't think that's a long-term solution regarding a softball/baseball complex for the community.

Alderman Nathan Peterson

Alderman Nathan Peterson said he would like to thank the City workers for putting the flags up for the Jackson Nationals and taking care of that. He said everything looked grant.

Peterson also noted the Ambulance Department has their first ALS transfer for the City of Jackson on August 20th. He said things are moving forward for the Ambulance Department.

Alderwoman Sara Mix

Alderwoman Sara Mix noted the Liquor Store's new digital sign is up and running.

Alderman Joe Pell

Alderman Joe Pell reiterated for people to send in their pool surveys. He said as of August 20th, there has been an overall 12.6 percent response rate Pell said 442 people have responded. He said surveys will be accepted until August 26th. Pell said the company conducting the survey said a 12.6 percent response rate so far is very good. He said he didn't have the exact numbers with him, but residents in the City of Jackson have responded well so far.

Pell asked if there's been discussion about a search for a new City Administrator.

Mayor Polz said it has not been discussed.

Pell asked if it's going to be discussed. He said he would hate to be a year down the road and not have chosen a City Administrator.

Mayor Polz said it will be discussed in due time. He said work has been done to find a couple different search firms and compare rates and quotes. Mayor Polz said with somebody like Almich, with his knowledge and experience, we're taking a little break and don't want to rush it and take time to evaluate what we have as a City. He said in a sense we're auditing our strengths and weaknesses and looking for some recommendations from an experienced individual to help the City in that hiring process so wise choices can be made. Mayor Polz said he imagines it will be happening in the upcoming weeks.

Finck concurred with Pell. He said the process will take 30 to 90 days to interview search firms and then another six to eight months beyond that to hire the right candidate.

Mix said quotes from two search firms have been received so far and another two more quotes will be received by September 1st. Mix said there will be a search plan by September 15th.

Interim City Administrator Rick Almich

Interim City Administrator Rick Almich said a lot of time has been spent and progress has been made recently on personnel matters.

Almich said he will be meeting with City Department Heads on August 21st regarding starting work on the 2025 City Budget. He said the City Council needs to set their Preliminary Levy by September 30th.

Public Works Director Tony Oxborough

Public Works Director Tony Oxborough said the Electric Department gets all the praise for putting up the flags for the Jackson Nationals.

Mix thanked the Electric Department.

Jackson Ambulance Director Grant Landbo

Jackson Ambulance Director Grant Landbo noted the Ambulance Department had their first ALS transfer on August 20th.

Landbo explained the Jackson Ambulance Department has been a Basic Life Support Service (BLS) and is transitioning to an Advanced Life Support Service (ALS) which means the Ambulance is providing a higher level of care. He said currently they can only do that in a hospital-to-hospital transfer. Landbo said in the past the Ambulance has had to take a nurse with them from the hospital for the transfer. He said on August 20th the Jackson Ambulance was able to take a pretty stable patient, that had a couple different medications running, independently of a nurse to Sioux Falls. Landbo said it's good for the community, good for the hospital and it's good for the Ambulance Department. He said it was a big step for the Jackson Ambulance Department.

Mix congratulated the Jackson Ambulance Department and said that's awesome.

Mayor Polz thanked Landbo for his explanation.

City Clerk Dave Maschoff

City Clerk Dave Maschoff said he wanted to thank the Street Department staff. He thanked Randy Schubert, Kody Kolander, Neal Carlson and the young man that was working with him for setting up and tearing down the voting booths for the Minnesota Primary Elections on August 13th. Maschoff said he appreciated that. He said we'll look forward to the November 5th Elections and there will be twice the number of voting booths to be set up.

Maschoff thanked the Street Department staff for their help.

Question from the audience

A resident asked the Council if the Ice-Skating Warming Trailer is still going to be used again this winter season for skaters.

Oxborough said the Skating Warming House will again be used this winter.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mayor Polz asked for a motion to adjourn the City Council meeting.

PELL/NAUMANN moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Jackson City Council meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Mayor Polz said the City Council meeting was now adjourned.

David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

Nathan Peterson, Mayor Pro Tem

