

**November 21, 2023
Jackson, Minnesota**

The Jackson City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers of City Hall and also by Teleconference and Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 with the meeting called to order by Mayor Marcus Polz. On the roll call, the following persons were present in-person, Mayor Marcus Polz, Alderwoman Sara Mix and Aldermen Mark Titus, Chris Naumann, Brandon Finck, Nathan Peterson and Joe Pell. Also attending in-person were City Administrator Matt Skaret, City Attorney Brad Anderson, John Weland of the Jackson County Animal Protection Society, Engineer Troy Nemmers of Bolton and Menk, Luke Ewald of Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services, Galen Kaufmann and Sharlett Glidden of Rebuilding Together Minnesota, Donnie Schoenrock, City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff, Joshua Schuetz of the Jackson County Pilot and Mathew Grisham of KKOJ/KUXX Radio. Attending the meeting via Zoom and Teleconference were First Assistant Fire Chief and Park Board Chairman Michael Haeffner, Jeff Anneke of the DBS Development Group and Shelley Pohlman of Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA). (All Councilmembers were present.) (A quorum of the City Council was present.)

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 as listed.

TITUS/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Council Discussion Items

BELMONT HEIGHTS SUBDIVISION LOAN LETTER OF AGREEMENT

City Administrator Matt Skaret noted the City Council had talked about the Belmont Heights Subdivision Loan Letter of Agreement at a previous meeting in principle as far as the DBS/Belmont Heights Housing Project.

Skaret said what was before the City Council was a revised letter outlining the terms of the loan. He explained basically what's being considered by the City Council is the City will loan \$500,000 to the Belmont Heights GP LLC to be used for the construction and management of the Belmont Heights Subdivision in Jackson. Skaret said the loan will be for 90 days. After the 90 days, he said Belmont Heights GP LLC shall provide written confirmation that the project is going to proceed.

Skaret said Belmont Heights GP LLC will provide disclosure of the amount of committed funds for the project and the equity that has been committed to a limited partnership to be formed by Belmont Heights GP LLC through a memo confirming the subscription agreements received from investors.

Skaret said the loan would be for 90 days and assuming that those conditions are met, then the loan may be converted to a 10-year loan at zero percent interest.

Skaret explained all loan proceeds to Belmont Heights GP LLC must be used for project costs, like the soft costs, or the building costs for the buildings and improvements that are outside the City's right-of-way for the project.

Skaret said the City would issue the \$500,000 loan to Belmont Heights GP LLC by December 31st, 2023.

Mayor Polz entertained a motion to approve the Belmont Heights GP LLC Loan Letter of Agreement.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was carried to approve the updated Belmont Heights GP LLC Loan Letter of Agreement

Voting in favor of the motion was Alderwoman Sara Mix, Alderman Mark Titus, Alderman Chris Naumann, Alderman Nathan Peterson and Alderman Joe Pell.

Abstaining was Alderman Brandon Finck.

DONNIE SHOENROCK – LIQUOR LICENSE FEES

Donnie Schoenrock, owner of Kat's Hog Heaven in Jackson, thanked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers for allowing him to speak to them.

Schoenrock said over the past several days he had an opportunity to talk with City Administrators from different communities regarding what those communities charge for their annual liquor license fees. He said he understands the fees are used by cities for the recuperation of any costs associated with processing the licenses, enforcement and any costs associated with that enforcement pertaining to liquor licenses.

Schoenrock pointed out he pays \$2,150 per year to have a liquor license for Kat's Hog Heaven. He noted the liquor license fees charged by the City of Jackson are in line with communities of similar population size.

Schoenrock said he asked the communities that he talked to if their liquor license holders had ever approached them about reconsidering their annual fees. He said none of the communities he spoke with have received such a request except for the City of Windom where the golf course years ago had asked the City to pro-rate their liquor license fee because they are only open for 8 months during the year. Schoenrock said Windom City Administrator Steve Nasby said the answer was “no” to the golf course’s request and the issue was never revisited and was never discussed again.

Schoenrock asked if the Jackson City Council would consider sending the issue of liquor license fees to a committee that deals with ordinances and fees to discuss why does the City charge the liquor license fees. He pointed out floral businesses, vehicle dealers, financial institutions and clothing stores don’t get charged license fees.

Schoenrock noted the restaurants in Jackson are really a big drawing force in bringing people into town for community celebrations and providing activities for people to do.

Schoenrock said he thinks the liquor license fee is just really detrimental to business and he questions why the City charges it. He said just because the City can, doesn’t mean the City should. Schoenrock asked if the City Council would consider at least looking at the liquor license fees and talk about them. He noted many of the restaurants in Jackson are struggling right now. Schoenrock said he just thinks it’s something the City Council should consider looking at.

Mayor Polz thanked Schoenrock for attending the meeting.

Skaret explained the reason why the City charges liquor license fees is to help cover the cost of enforcement and the processing of the applications. He said the liquor license fees are not a big money-maker for the City. Skaret said about \$15,000 in revenue is generated from the liquor license fees.

Finck said the City Council still needs to review the final City budget for 2024. He said the Finance Committee could discuss the liquor license fees.

GALEN KAUFMANN – REBUILDING TOGETHER MINNESOTA UPDATE

Galen Kauffman from Rebuilding Together Minnesota attended the Council meeting to introduce himself to new Councilmembers and to provide an update on the Rebuilding Together Minnesota Program in Jackson. Joining him was Sharlett Glidden who also works with Rebuilding Together Minnesota.

Kauffman explained Rebuilding Together is a national non-profit organization with an affiliate in the Twin Cities which has since expanded into Southwest Minnesota.

Kaufmann said Rebuilding Together has opened an office in Windom that serves Jackson, Cottonwood and Nobles Counties. Kaufmann said he and Glidden work out of the Windom office.

Kaufmann explained they essentially organize and mobilize volunteers to help with repair and fix up projects of homes owned by low-income individuals. He pointed out the projects and operations are primarily funded by grants and donations from local organizations. He said Rebuilding Together Minnesota offers home repairs up to and including roofs, painting, home safety and accessibility installations including entry ramps for low-income homeowners.

Kaufmann said as an organization that uses volunteers, Rebuilding Together Minnesota sees themselves as matching their resources to local initiatives and efforts. He said as part of the Rebuilding Together umbrella, they offer access to some larger State and Federal grants. Kaufmann said most of those larger grants get used for larger projects such as roofing contracts, but can also find their way into some of the organization's Rebuilding Day Projects. He said Rebuilding Together Minnesota has the means to readily screen applications so they are putting grant dollars into where they are most needed and do the most good. Kaufmann also thanked corporate sponsors who also provide funding for Rebuilding Together projects. He said that's just a few of the ways they match local eyes and ears and efforts.

Kaufmann referred to the Rebuilding Day that was held in Jackson on June 3, 2023. He showed Mayor Polz, Councilmembers and those attending the meeting some of the projects that were completed in Jackson. Kaufmann thanked local contractor Dennis Bertram for all his assistance, coordination and help with Rebuilding Together's projects in Jackson.

Kaufmann said Jackson is about two steps ahead of any other County they work in regarding having local initiative and moving forward with projects. He said Rebuilding Together Minnesota has momentum in Jackson and they want to keep that momentum going.

Sharlett Glidden, a half-time AmeriCorps member who has been working in the Windom office of Rebuilding Together, spoke about her experiences and volunteering through Rebuilding Together in helping to revitalize homes, revitalize communities and rebuilding lives. She said she hopes the Rebuilding Together Minnesota Programs can continue in Jackson. Glidden thanked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers for their support of the program.

Kaufmann said that City Administrator Matt Skaret and Economic Development Director Dave Schmidt have been huge supporters of the Rebuilding Together Program in Jackson. He said Skaret and Schmidt have been an integral part of Rebuilding Together's support structure and an important part of the planning committee that planned the Rebuilding Together Jackson Day.

Kaufmann said he understands that the City is going through a transition as Skaret and Schmidt will be leaving. Kaufmann said Rebuilding Together had two requests of the Mayor and City Council. He said one request is can the City Council support Rebuilding Together during the time of transition and secondly, making sure Rebuilding Together in Jackson continues after new City staff people come aboard. Kaufmann asked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers to make sure that happens. He suggested maybe having a Councilmember liaison be a part of the Rebuilding Together Planning Committee in Jackson.

Skaret said he wanted to thank Kaufmann, Glidden and everybody else with Rebuilding Together Minnesota for the work they have done in Jackson. He noted they started the Program a couple of years ago with nothing and the organization was totally new to the area. Skaret pointed out since that time, Rebuilding Together has established an army of volunteers to serve on boards and committees and get projects organized. He said things have come a long way in two years.

LUKE EWALD – PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION SURVEY RESULTS

Luke Ewald of Des Moines Valley Public Health and Human Resources and also a member of the Park Board was in attendance to present the results of the recent community survey conducted by the Park Board regarding the City's parks and recreation amenities.

Ewald said during the July, 2023 Park Board meeting, it was suggested the City explore conducting a Parks, Trails and Recreation community-wide survey to gather feedback from residents. He said the goal of the assessment was to help identify gaps in parks and recreation, help develop strategies for filling gaps and enhancing these gaps and enable the City of Jackson to plan for the future to meet resident and community needs and desires. Ewald said the assessment was completed through SurveyMonkey and shared through various mediums to reach various residents in Jackson.

Ewald said the survey opened in September and closed on October 4th, 2023. He said there were 267 participants.

During his presentation, Ewald outlined details of the survey results regarding the City's current parks and trails, volunteerism, anticipated park projects for 2024 and what additional amenities could be added to parks along with recreational activities.

In wrapping up his report Ewald noted he covers three counties in his work with Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services. He said whether it's been Active Living related or not, it's been the easiest working with City Administrator Matt Skaret among all the City Administrators, Clerks and in some cases County Coordinators. Ewald said he's also enjoyed and appreciated working with Economic Coordinator Dave Schmidt. He said he's been happy to work with Skaret and Schmidt. Ewald said the community has seen a lot of improvements. He said it's been great working with Skaret and hopefully the City will get somebody who has Skaret's unlimited passion for this work.

Skaret thanked Ewald for all he does to keep the City on its toes and keeping things moving forward.

Ewald thanked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers.

Mayor Polz thanked Ewald for his report.

PATTERSON PARK THOMAS HILL SIDEWALK BIDS

Skaret said the Patterson Park/Thomas Hill Sidewalk Project was discussed at the August 1st and September 5th City Council meetings. He said the project has been in the works for a long time. Skaret pointed out it was included in the City's Active Living Plan in 2015 as there is a safety factor for pedestrians, especially children walking on the street on Thomas Hill Road.

Skaret said in 2022 the City applied for and was awarded Safe Routes to School Grant Funding to fill in the sidewalk gap on the south side of Thomas Hill Road in front of Patterson Park and replace broken sidewalks on both sides of the gap. He explained because the City of Jackson is under 5,000 in population, Jackson County was required to be the sponsoring agency. Skaret noted the County also does the engineering for the City on Safe Routes to Schools projects. He said grant funding was awarded in the amount of \$118,753 and the City of Jackson's match was to be \$51,521 based on the engineer's estimate of \$170,274.

Skaret said in August the project was bid and only one bid was received and that was from MR Paving of New Ulm for nearly \$234,000. He explained the State has since revised their contribution to \$153,381.78 which would have left the local share from the City to be over \$80,000. Skaret said the City Council rejected that bid.

Skaret said the project was recently rebid with a completion date of October 30, 2024. He said two bids were submitted which included a bid from Nielsen Blacktopping of Mankato for \$177,090.00 and a bid from MR Paving of New Ulm for \$223,461.19.

Skaret said the City's share for the project would be \$23,708.22. He said the funds would come out of the City's 222 Capital Improvement Fund.

Skaret said Nielsen Blacktopping is a reputable company. He pointed out Nielsen Blacktopping did much of the paving for the Downtown Alley Project this summer and did very good work.

Mayor Polz asked for a motion to approve the bid from Nielsen Blacktopping.

PELL/NAUMANN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the low bid of \$177,090.00 from Nielsen Blacktopping of Mankato for the Patterson Park/Thomas Hill Sidewalk Project.

RESOLUTION NO. 48-1123 ACCEPTING TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION GRANT PROGRAM AGREEMENT

Skaret said Resolution No. 48-1123 ties in with the previous agenda item regarding the Patterson Park/Thoms Hill sidewalk bids. He said there is a grant agreement that the City has to execute with MnDOT (Minnesota Department of Transportation).

Skaret said Resolution No. 48-1123 would authorize the Mayor and City Administrator to execute the grant agreement.

Mayor Polz said he was looking for a motion to approve Resolution No. 48-1123.

MIX/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 48-1123 accepting the terms and conditions of the Active Transportation Grant Agreement from the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

TORGERSON LANE GRAVEL EXTENSION PROJECT PAY APPLICATION NO. 1

Engineer Troy Nemmers of Bolton and Menk reported contractor R & E Enterprises of Mankato was able to get the majority of the work completed on the Torgerson Lane Gravel Extension Project. He said the contractor was able to get some temporary mulch down and was able to pretty much get everything wrapped up for this year. Nemmers said R & E Enterprises will be back in the spring to do some final touch-up and get permanent seeding down when the weather is more viable for grass to grow.

Nemmers said in front of the City Council for consideration was Pay Application No. 1 from R & E Enterprises of Mankato in the amount of \$14,705.05. Nemmers recommended approval of Pay Application No. 1.

PETERSON/MIX moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Torgerson Lane Gravel Extension Project Pay Application No. 1 in the amount of \$14,705.05 payable to R & E Enterprises of Mankato, Incorporated.

WATER DEPARTMENT TRUCK QUOTE REVISED

Skaret explained during the budgeting process for 2022, the Finance Committee had approved the purchase of a new one-ton truck to replace a 2008 three-quarter ton Ford F-350 hoist truck unit. He said the 2008 truck is getting old and has had numerous mechanical problems in recent years including multiple fuel filter replacements, timing chain guides breaking, wheel bearings replaced and most recently replacement of the fuel pump.

Skaret said due to supply chain issues a truck was not available to purchase until recently. He said Asa Auto Plaza in Jackson currently has a new 2024 one-ton Chevy 3500 double cab truck available and ready to go. Skaret said the price on the new truck is \$46,610. He said the box from the 2008 truck can be removed and remounted on the new truck which is a lot less expensive than getting a new box. Skaret said the price from Crysteel in Lake Crystal to remount the box onto the new truck is \$5,490.

Skaret said a motion was needed to approve the quote from Asa Auto Plaza for the new truck and the quote from Crysteel to remount the box from the old truck onto the new truck.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the quote of \$46,610 from Asa Auto Plaza in Jackson for a new 2024 one-ton Chevy 3500 double cab truck and approve the quote of \$5,490 from Crysteel of Lake Crystal, Minnesota for remounting the box from the 2008 truck to the new 2024 truck.

POOL REPORT UPDATE

Skaret said the City received the Pool Report late, late Friday afternoon on November 17th.

Skaret said he's still working with Duane Wepking of Burbach Aquatics about scheduling a time to meet with the Pool Task Force and the City Council. He said a meeting would be held with the Pool Task Force followed by a meeting with the City Council.

Skaret said he hasn't had a chance to go through the report yet, but it is very thorough. He said the report is 119 pages in length and that's not counting exhibits and photographs.

Finck asked if the Pool Report was available in an electronic form.

Skaret said the report is in a google drive.

Finck asked if the report could be sent out to the Councilmembers to review since the City paid for the report.

Skaret said the Pool Report will be sent out to the Mayor and Councilmembers.

Finck said because the report is such a big document, it would be nice for the Councilmembers to have the opportunity to review it before it's discussed.

Skaret said this agenda item was just for informational purposes only at this time for the Mayor and Councilmembers.

Pell suggested if a Pool Task Force meeting is held prior to a City Council meeting that the Pool Task Force meet at 5 p.m. so they have an hour and a half for the presentation and are not crunched for time before the City Council meeting starts. He said that would allow time for questions and answers for the Pool Task Force members.

Skaret said he would coordinate the meetings with the Pool Task Force, City Council and the City's Financial Advisor Shannon Sweeney.

Mayor Polz thanked Skaret for the information.

AUTHORIZE ADVERTISING FOR A PART-TIME 20 HRS/WEEK ASSISTANT FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Mayor Polz said seeking a part-time assistant for the Economic Development Office for 20 hours per week is something he requested be included on the November 21st City Council agenda. He explained it was something that had been discussed by the Personnel Committee. Mayor Polz said hiring a part-time assistant for the Economic Development Office would provide someone being in the office while the search is underway for an in-house Economic Development Director.

PETERSON/TITUS moved and it was unanimously carried to authorize advertising for a Part-Time Assistant for the Economic Development Office for 20 hours per week.

Other:

Alderman Brandon Finck

Alderman Brandon Finck asked if there was any new information from Geroge Janssen regarding the proposed Grandstay Hotel development in Jackson.

Mayor Polz said he hasn't heard anything.

Skaret said he also hasn't heard anything from Janssen.

Finck asked Skaret if he could email Janssen to see where they are at regarding their feasibility study.

Skaret said he could email Janssen.

On another note, Finck reported information has been emailed to the Personnel Committee, EDA members, representatives of JEDC and JBDC to review the job description for the Economic Development Director's position. He said the person with South Central Service Cooperative working on the search also had a generic outline for a job description which he had also emailed out to the various committees and Councilmembers. Finck said efforts are to gather feedback from the various committees by next week to keep the process moving forward.

Alderman Nathan Peterson

Alderman Nathan Peterson reported the search for a new Ambulance Director has been relaunched. He said the position was posted on November 21st and is open until December 26th.

City Administrator Matt Skaret

City Administrator Matt Skaret reminded Mayor Polz and Councilmembers that a Special City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 28th at 6:30 p.m. He said the Council will be approving the City's bond sale for the Belmont Heights Phase One Infrastructure Project.

On another note, Skaret reported he attended the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities Legislative Conference that was held November 15th through the 17th in Willmar. He said it was a really good conference. Skaret said EMS services is an issue the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities is going to be addressing in the next Minnesota Legislative Session.

Skaret said the Coalition has formed a working group on EMS issues which he is a part of. He said many communities in Greater Minnesota are struggling with many of the same EMS problems. Skaret noted one of the problems is funding. He said cumulatively, there's about a \$130 million deficit if you combine all of the ambulance services' losses last year alone. Skaret said the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities is trying to get the State of Minnesota to fill in the gap by using some of the State's huge budget surplus and get some dedicated funding to help support rural EMS services and funding that's easily accessible. He said without funding, rural communities can't tackle the other problems that exist such as training of EMS personnel and so forth. Skaret said the other challenge is making it more attractive for people to serve as EMT's and getting more people into the profession. He said the lack of volunteerism in a community also extends to the ambulance, EMS and Fire Departments. Skaret said people aren't jumping out of their chairs like they used to in becoming EMT's and getting involved in a life-saving business in their spare time.

Skaret explained each ambulance has a PSA which represents each Ambulance Department's service territory. He said there's been some legislation introduced at the State Legislature which would just be a disaster for rural Minnesota. Skaret said it would basically confine PSAs to city boundaries. He said, for example in Jackson, the City of Jackson's PSA would be limited to just the City of Jackson and the City would not have any of its rural service territory. Skaret said that would really limit the Jackson Ambulance Department's calls for service. He said it's also a big concern for those living in the rural areas because then, all of a sudden, they're uncovered for ambulance service. Skaret said if someone in the rural area calls 911, they might not have an ambulance come. He said it's a very poorly thought-out piece of legislation. Skaret said there will certainly be more talk about it in the Legislature coming up.

Skaret said the big debate and question mark with the upcoming Minnesota Legislative Session is whether the legislative session is going to be anything like 2023 where it was a mad dash sprint from start to finish and a lot of legislation was approved. He said then there was a lot of time spent afterwards figuring out what was passed and what the ramifications were. Or Skaret said will Legislators during the 2024 Legislative Session slow walk it and let the dust settle from the 2023 Session. Skaret said how things turn out, we'll know about May.

City Attorney Brad Anderson

City Attorney Brad Anderson said he wanted to wish everybody a very filling and fulfilling Thanksgiving.

Skaret and Mayor Polz thanked Anderson.

City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff

City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff echoed Attorney Anderson and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mayor Marcus Polz

Mayor Marcus Polz asked City Attorney Brad Anderson if he has heard anything new regarding the former Prairie Winds Motel building.

Attorney Anderson said the City received the Court Order back on November 20th from the District Court. He said everything the Judge put in her order supports the City's position. Attorney Anderson said if the Judge is going to continue with the temporary enjoinder will only occur if the owner of the motel puts up a \$25,000 bond. He said the motel owner has 30 days to put up the \$25,000 bond. Attorney Anderson said the City proceeding with demolition of the motel building is pending a decision by the Court of Appeals.

Attorney Anderson said things haven't gone backwards. He noted the City has support from the local District Court and the City is not moving forward with the demolition yet.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mayor Polz entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

PETERSON/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Jackson City Council meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Mayor Polz said the City Council meeting was now adjourned.

David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

Marcus Polz, Mayor

