

November 7, 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 7, 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, Public Works Director Tony Oxborough, John Weland of the Jackson County Animal Protection Society, Community and Business Development Specialist Dave Schmidt of Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA), Engineer Eric Hanson of HDR, Engineer Troy Nemmers of Bolton and Menk, Matt Arlandson, Ron Richards, Mary Muir, Catherine Koppen, Paul Hargus, City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff, Joshua Schuetz of the Jackson County Pilot, Justin Lessman of the Jackson County Pilot and Kempson Cross of KKOJ/KUXX Radio. Joining the meeting via Zoom and Teleconference were Ashley Schmidt, Shelley Pohlman of Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) and Luke Ewald of Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services. (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 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.

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

Council Discussion Items

CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO MINNESOTA STATUTES CH. 13D.05 SUBD. 3(B) FOR ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE

Mayor Polz entertained a motion for the City Council to move into Closed Session.

PELL/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried for the City Council to go into Closed Session at 6:32 p.m. pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Ch. 13D.05 Subd. 3(b) for Attorney-Client Privilege.

(Mayor Polz, Councilmembers, City Attorney Brad Anderson, City Administrator Matt Skaret and City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff moved into the Economic Development Office's Conference Room for the Closed Session so those attending the City Council meeting could remain in their seats in the Council Chambers.)

COMING OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

(Mayor Polz, Councilmembers, City Attorney Brad Anderson, City Administrator Matt Skaret and City Clerk/Council Secretary Dave Maschoff returned to the Council Chambers.)

MIX/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried for the City Council to go out of Closed Session at 7:33 p.m.

Mayor Polz said the City Council was now out of Closed Session.

MARY MUIR – WEST RIDGE SUBDIVISION

Mary Muir explained to Mayor Polz and Councilmembers that she would still like to purchase the vacant lot located between her property and Richard Anderson's property on West Ridge Drive.

Muir said she had spoke with Public Works Director Tony Oxborough on the afternoon of November 7th.

Oxborough said Muir would like to purchase the property next to her home on West Ridge Drive. He noted two other lots along West Ridge Drive have been sold to adjacent property owners. Oxborough said he put a hold on selling the lot to Muir. He said the lot could be advantageous to the City in the future whether it's to move a water main or using the property for a potential road since the City already owns the property. Oxborough said there's been some pushback on the idea regarding using the property for a road.

Oxborough said he thinks it's not worth the City selling the vacant lot next to Muir's property for a \$1,000 if the Public Works Department can continue to utilize the property for potential future use.

Muir said she would like to purchase the property next to her. She said she doesn't care if the City wants to install electric lines and a water main through it. Muir said she doesn't want to have a road next to her current property.

Muir said when she and her late husband, Dick, purchased property on West Ridge Drive, they wanted to purchase two lots so they could position their house to face the street. She said at the time they were told they could only purchase one lot for one house and so they positioned their house the other way. Muir explained their house runs from the front to the back of the lot, and then further behind that is a garage. She said they tried to purchase the lot to the east of them at that time so they could put a garage onto the house. Muir said they were told no and they could put their garage on their own lot behind their house.

Muir said they originally purchased their current lot on a cul-de-sac on West Ridge Drive because they wanted privacy and the view. She explained both she and her late husband were from the country and liked the country atmosphere and the quiet. Muir said the quiet isn't as quiet as it used to be because when they moved up to West Ridge Drive, Dave Polz was going to be having a business growing lawn grass. She said since that time, Polz has been doing a lot of other things with landscaping and things like that and there's noise from that business. Muir said the view from her property is also not what it used to be.

Muir said when you purchase property on a cul-de-sac, you expect it's to be a cul-de-sac. She said it had been mentioned after they bought their property about the thought of putting a road through the lot next to her. Muir said they expressed their consternation to that proposal and were then told a road would not be put through that property. She said now 20 years later, here comes the idea of a road again. Muir said she doesn't want that because the corner of her garage is touching the easement there. She said there's a ten-foot easement on each side which was for water, electrical and whatever. Muir said she doesn't have any real front yard for the true front of her house. She said she would like to buy the lot adjacent to her. Muir said everybody else got to buy the adjacent vacant lots next to them on West Ridge Drive and some got real sweetheart deals of two lots for a thousand dollars instead of a thousand dollars each. Muir said she feels like she's kind of getting the short end of the stick here.

Muir said they knew what they were bargaining for when they bought and built on West Ridge Drive and what the road situation was like. She said the City has been good about keeping the hill sanded and keeping the streets clear during the winter. Muir said she doesn't think it's a real problem. She said they do have some access to Polz's property if they ask and really need to have access going that way. Muir suggested there would be other alternatives by putting down some gravel if the City needed access in that area without installing a street on the vacant lot adjacent to her property. She said she hopes the City doesn't install a street on the lot next to her. Muir also asked where will the City get the money to install a new street. Muir said she thinks the City is already short on funds and it's just something more. Muir said it's a time to rein-in instead of pushing forward.

Muir thanked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers.

Mayor Polz thanked Muir.

Naumann asked if the City Council could at least have a discussion and get back to Muir at some point regarding the request to purchase the vacant lot adjacent to her.

Mayor Polz said let's take the matter under advisement and get back to Muir.

Naumann said he just wants to make sure that Muir knows the City Council is going to get back to her and not just cut her off at this time.

Mayor Polz said absolutely.

ADD GLORIA PELL AND MARCUS POLZ AS SIGNORS TO THE CITY'S OFFICIAL DEPOSITORIES AND REMOVE DEB MITCHELL

Skaret said this agenda item is for banking purposes. He said with the changes and additions in the City Office, the City is updating their signors on the bank accounts. Skaret said the banks usually like to see something in the City Council's minutes reflecting those changes.

PETERSON/FINCK moved and it was carried to add Gloria Pell and Marcus Polz as signors to the City's Official Depositories and remove Deb Mitchell's name.

Voting in favor of the motion were Alderwoman Sara Mix and Aldermen Mark Titus, Chris Naumann, Brandon Finck and Nathan Peterson.

Abstaining was Alderman Joe Pell.

FIRE DEPARTMENT-REQUEST TO SERVE ALCOHOL BETWEEN 5:30 P.M. AND 10:30 P.M. AT THE FIRE HALL FOR THE DEPARTMENT’S CHILI AND OYSTER FEED ON JANUARY 8, 2024 (NOT SELLING ALCOHOL)

Matt Arlandson and Ron Richards from the Jackson Fire Department were on hand at the City Council meeting.

Arlandson explained the January 8th event is a chili and oyster feed for retired and current members of the Fire Department along with law enforcement, dispatchers and Ambulance Department members. He said about three years ago the annual event was held at the American Legion but they would like to move it back to the Fire Hall. Arlandson said it’s not a big event and not a lot of alcohol served. He said they just wanted to ask the City Council’s permission to have alcohol at the event.

Arlandson said a lot of the Fire Department’s past members attend and like to see the new trucks and fire hall.

Richards noted it’s been about 50 years the Fire Department has held the annual event for everyone to get together. He said it started out initially as just an oyster feed, but the tastes have changed for most of the Fire Department members so they also serve chili as well. Richards said it’s been a 50-year tradition and for the exception of just a few years, the event has always been held at the Fire Hall. He said having the event at the Legion is just not the same as having it at the Fire Hall where past members can talk about the memories of the old trucks and see the new trucks.

Arlandson also noted some old stories are swapped and all that good stuff. He said the alcohol would be brought in and removed that same night. Arlandson said no alcohol will be overserved.

City Clerk Maschoff asked, just for clarification, that there would be no selling of alcohol.

Arlandson said there would be no selling of alcohol.

Finck noted it’s just the one night for the event. He said the Fire Department will have to self-police regarding the alcohol at the event.

Arlandson said he was aware of that.

TITUS/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the request from the Fire Department to serve alcohol between 5:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. at the Fire Hall for the Fire Department’s Chili and Oyster Feed on January 8, 2024.

Arlandson and Richards thanked Mayor Polz and Councilmembers.

AIRPORT PARALLEL TAXIWAY AND APRON CONSTRUCTION PROJECT PAY APPLICATION 3

Engineer Eric Hanson of HDR said Pay Application No. 3, payable to Svoboda Excavating in the amount of \$619,975.22, is for work completed from September 29th through November 3rd.

Hanson reported the new runway is open and is essentially completed. He said the apron is complete and the expansion of the apron is done. Hanson said Svoboda's have graded and installed all the gravel for the taxiway. He noted about \$2.2 million of the \$3.4 million dollar project has been completed. Hanson said about two-thirds of the project is done with the rest of it to be finished next year. He said the big heavy work for the project has been completed.

Skaret suggested adding to the motion approving Pay Application No. 3 that it be paid contingent upon reimbursement from MNDOT and the FAA on Pay Applications One and Two. He pointed out MNDOT and the FAA have been slow in turning around the reimbursements and the City is getting a backlog on payments that they need to make to Svoboda Excavating. Skaret said the City has yet to receive any reimbursement from Pay Application No. 1 so the City has not been able to pay Svoboda Excavating on Pay Application No. 2 in the amount of \$745,861.28. Skaret said the last information he received is that the City was to receive reimbursement in two weeks and that information was received a week ago.

Hanson said he would call MNDOT (Minnesota Department of Transportation).

PETERSON/MIX moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Pay Application No. 3 in the amount of \$619,975.22 payable to Svoboda Excavating of Jackson contingent upon reimbursement from MNDOT and the FAA on Pay Application No. 1 and Pay Application No. 2.

RESOLUTION NO. 46-1123 ACCEPTING AIRPORT STATE GRANT AGREEMENT – PAPI AND REILS

Engineer Eric Hanson of HDR said PAPIs and REILs are navigational aids for pilots. He explained the REILs are the lights that flash at the end of the runway and the PAPIs are four boxes of red lights that pilots can see when they're up in the air and are approaching for a landing.

Hanson said earlier this year the City applied for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for the PAPI construction, REIL construction and Flight Check Reimbursable Agreement associated with the Runway Shift Construction project at the airport.

Hanson said the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) had approved the grant back in July and the State of Minnesota has just approved the grant. He said a resolution is needed to authorize the Mayor and City Administrator to execute the MNDOT Grant agreement. Hanson said this grant is for \$146,700.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 46-1123 accepting the Airport State Grant Agreement for PAPIs and REILs.

HDR CONTRACT AMENDMENT – OWNER ENGINEER AGREEMENT – ADDITION AGIS SERVICES FOR AIRPORT RUNWAY SHIFT PROJECT

Engineer Eric Hanson of HDR said although the new runway at the airport was completed in August, the Federal Flight Service still lists the Jackson Airport's new runway as closed.

Skaret pointed out Senator Amy Klobuchar's Office was also enlisted to help in the effort to get the Flight Service to list the new runway as open, but to no avail so far.

Hanson explained the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) is now requiring additional imagery and Airports GIS (AGIS) services to complete an as-built submittal for the runway. He said initially, conversations with the FAA were to do a final imagery after the taxiway and apron were complete and not to do a full as-built AGIS submittal between the runway and taxiway/apron projects. Hanson noted this was a change in course and was not included in HDR's original scope of work.

Hanson said HDR will have Martinez Geospatial complete the required AGIS work. He said Martinez Geospatial are well experienced in this type of work as they have completed all of the AGIS work at the airport since 2014. Hanson said the work will result in an additional cost of \$37,025.89 which is eligible for FAA and MnDOT reimbursement. He said the local share will be five percent which amounts to \$1,851.29.

Hanson said a motion was need to approve the HDR contract amendment to have Martinez Geospatial complete the required AGIS work. He pointed out the new runway is open as VFR (Visual Flight Rules) only and should be IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) approved on January 25th, 2024.

Mayor Polz asked for a motion to approve the HDR contract amendment.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the HDR Contract Amendment for the addition of AGIS services for the Airport Runway Shift Project.

2022-2023 STREET AND UTILITIES IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT PAY APPLICATION NO. 8

Engineer Troy Nemmers of Bolton and Menk said Pay Application No. 8, payable to Duininck Incorporated, is in the amount of \$94,637.77 for work that was completed from September 25th to October 25th. He explained much of Pay Application No. 8 is the re-paving of the hill on Northridge Drive. Nemmers recommended approval of Pay Application No. 8.

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

FINCK/NAUMANN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve 2022-2023 Street and Utilities Improvements Project Pay Application No. 8 in the amount of \$94,637.77 payable to Duininck Incorporated.

DOWNTOWN ALLEY PROJECT PAY APPLICATION NO. 6

Engineer Troy Nemmers of Bolton and Menk explained Pay Application No. 6 was one of the last payouts for the Downtown Alley Project from September. He said there are some punch-list items to be completed in the spring but otherwise the project is wrapped up.

Nemmers said Pay Application No. 6 is in the amount of \$113,365.55 and recommended approval.

Mayor Polz asked for a motion to approve Pay Application No. 6.

TITUS/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Downtown Alley Project Pay Application No. 6 in the amount of \$113,365.55 payable to Jensen Excavating and Trucking, LLC.

PRAIRIE WINDS MOTEL DEMOLITION PAY APPLICATION NO. 1

Skaret said demolition work of the former Prairie Winds Motel was started and then was stopped. He said work on the former motel is now paused awaiting what happens with the Minnesota Appeals Court. Skaret noted the property owner has paid the court fees.

Skaret said in the meantime, Blue Earth Environmental has requested to be paid for the work that's been done so far in the amount of \$28,988.75. He explained that work includes mobilization, the environmental assessment survey, installation of the silt fence, removal and disposal of hazards, garbage and asbestos abatement and disposal.

Skaret said Blue Earth Environmental is requesting to be paid \$28,988.75 at this time for the work that been completed so far.

PETERSON/MIX moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Prairie Winds Motel Demolition Pay Application No. 1 in the amount of \$28,988.75 payable to Blue Earth Environmental.

JACKSON ELECTRIC RATE STUDY PROPOSAL

Skaret said the City is need of another electric rate study. He said the last rate study was conducted back in 2019. Skaret said that study covered the years from 2019 through 2023.

Skaret said another electric rate study is being sought. He noted there's been a lot of changes in the electric industry in the last four or five years.

Skaret explained what the electric study will do is determine whether rates will provide sufficient cash flows to cover operation expenses and future capital improvements, evaluate the adequacy of cash reserves, evaluate the costs of serving each customer class, provide benchmarking information, propose rates that reflect the fixed costs of providing service and prepare for distributed generation in the future and compare Jackson's electric rates to other area utilities. He said the Utilities Commission has reviewed the proposal and recommended Council approval.

Skaret noted Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) would do the electric study in 2024 for a fee of \$9,500. He said the total fee is \$19,000, but as a member of MRES, the City gets a 50 percent discount.

NAUMANN/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the MRES (Missouri River Energy Services) Jackson Electric Rate Study Proposal.

RESOLUTION NO. 45-1123 IN SUPPORT OF KEUL AVENUE LRIP GRANT APPLICATION

Skaret said the City is in the process of applying for the Local Road Improvement Grant Program (LRIP) to install Keul Avenue in the Industrial Park that would run east to west from Prospect Lane to Torgerson Lane. He noted there was a map included in the Councilmembers' information packets that shows the approximate location for Keul Avenue.

Skaret said it's long been a goal of the JEDC (Jackson Economic Development Corporation) to develop Keul Avenue so there are some more buildable lots. He said the number of buildable lots is diminishing which is a good problem to have but not so good if the City is trying to get more industry and jobs to town.

Skaret said a motion was being sought from the City Council to support the grant application. He explained because Jackson is a City of under 5,000 in population, State rules require that Jackson County submit the application for the City and serve as the City's sponsor.

Skaret said the City Council needs to approve a resolution of support which will then go before the Jackson County Board of Commissioners at a future meeting.

PETERSON/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to approve Resolution No. 45-1123 in support of the Keul Avenue Local Road Improvement Program grant application.

SNOW REMOVAL BIDS 2023-24 AND 2024-2025 SNOW SEASONS

Skaret said the City is due to seek bids for snow removal. He said letters were sent out to local contractors soliciting proposals for snow removal at City Hall, the Liquor Store, Library and Senior Center.

Skaret said Polz's Lawncare and Snow Removal submitted the only bid for snow removal at City Hall at \$125 per time plus \$0.39 per pound of ice melt. He noted Polz's has been doing the snow removal at City Hall for the last several years.

Skaret said Beckel's Cheapscares and Polz's Lawncare and Snow Removal both submitted bids for snow removal at the Liquor Store. He noted Beckel's Cheapscares submitted a bid of \$75 per time and Polz's Lawncare and Snow Removal submitted a bid of \$125 per time for the Liquor Store. Skaret said Beckel's have been removing snow at the Liquor Store for a couple of years and submitted the lowest bid at \$75 per time which is the same amount they have charged in the past.

Skaret said two bids were received for snow removal at the Library. Beckel's Cheapscares submitted a bid of \$75 per time plus \$0.50 per pound of ice melt and Polz's Lawncare and Snow Removal submitted a bid of \$110 per time plus \$0.39 per pound of ice melt. He said Beckel's has removed snow from the Library in the past and their bid is the same price as it has been previously.

Skaret said one bid was submitted for snow removal at the Senior Center. He said Polz's Lawncare and Snow Removal submitted a bid of \$50 per time plus \$0.39 per pound of ice melt

PETERSON/MIX moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the bids from Polz's Lawncare and Snow Removal for snow removal for City Hall and the Senior Center and approve the bids from Beckel's Cheapscares for the snow removal at the Liquor Store and Library for the 2023-24 and 2024-2025 snow seasons.

JACKSON BUSINESS CHALLENGE 2024 RULES

Skaret said the Jackson Business Challenge 2024 rules were discussed at the October 17th City Council meeting. He noted the Councilmembers requested that they have the opportunity to review the rules. Skaret said Economic Coordinator Dave Schmidt emailed the rules to all the Councilmembers following the October 17th meeting.

Skaret said the Jackson Business Development Committee and the Economic Development Authority have both reviewed the rules. He said the only change they recommended was making the \$10,000 loan forgivable over three years instead of the current two years. Skaret said otherwise the rest of the rules for the Business Challenge are the same.

Schmidt said the Jackson Business Development Committee met last week and wanted to know if the City Council wanted to move forward with the Jackson Business Challenge in 2024.

Finck noted the Jackson Business Development Committee and Economic Development Authority had both reviewed the rules.

FINCK/MIX moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Jackson Business Challenge 2024 rules.

GIVE 30-DAY NOTICE TO CEDA TO END THEIR CONTRACT WITH THE CITY

Skaret explained the City has a contract with CEDA (Community And Economic Development Associates) that's on an annual basis. He said the City pays a fee to CEDA on a monthly basis. Skaret said there is a 30-day out-clause included in the contract between the City and CEDA.

Skaret said it was requested today to add to the City Council's agenda to give a 30-day notice to CEDA to end their contract with the City.

Mayor Polz asked what was being requested as an end-date for the contract.

Finck said the Personnel Committee could meet to determine an end-date of the contract between the City and CEDA. He said he thinks this agenda item just authorizes to give the notice that the City wants to end their contract with CEDA.

Finck said the Personnel Committee has inquired about bringing economic development services back in-house under the City's auspices like they used to have it prior to entering into a contract with CEDA.

MIX/NAUMANN moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the City giving a 30-day notice to end their contract with CEDA (Community and Economic Development Associates) with the Personnel Committee to determine the official end-date of the contract.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR SEARCH PROPOSAL – SOUTH CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

Skaret explained the Personnel Committee has discussed and recommended that the City bring the Economic Development services back in-house. He said the City has been contracting with CEDA (Community and Economic Development Associates) since late 2017.

Skaret said the Personnel Committee believes with so much going on in Jackson and the number of projects that are going on, the City has simply outgrown CEDA and needs more than what CEDA can do for the City.

Skaret noted a proposal from South Central Service Cooperative, based in Mankato, to do a search for an Economic Development Director for a fee not to exceed \$12,500. He said the proposal information was included in the Councilmembers' informational packets.

Skaret said the South Central Service Cooperative has done a lot of searches in the past. He said South Central Service Cooperative has a two-year guarantee, meaning that if the new hire leaves before the two-year mark is up, they will conduct another search for free. Skaret said these searches do take time. He said the searches do take a number of months so Councilmembers should be prepared for that.

MIX/PETERSON moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Economic Development Search Proposal from the South Central Service Cooperative.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH PROPOSAL – SOUTH CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE

Skaret said after much consideration, he and the Personnel Committee have decided to explore different opportunities.

Skaret said he just wants everybody out there, the Council and the whole community to know how honored and what a privilege it has been for him to have had the opportunity to serve as the City's Administrator for the past five-and-a-half years.

Skaret noted the long litany of projects in the City that have been completed. He said a number of projects are still on-going. Skaret said none of those projects would be possible without the City's excellent staff. He said the City has a staff, both past and current, that are second to none. Skaret said the City could not have had the success they've had without the staff, consultants and so forth. He said none of these projects, and all the progress that we've made as a community, would not have happened without the support of everybody.

Skaret said he wanted to thank the community for making him feel so welcome. He said it really has been a home. Skaret said it's been a great five-and-a-half years.

Skaret explained the City Council has before them a similar proposal from the South Central Service Cooperative to do a search for a City Administrator.

Skaret said he's willing to stay on as City Administrator until a new City Administrator takes office or unless he gets employment elsewhere before that time comes up. In that case, Skaret said he would give the City Council a 30-day notice as spelled out in his employment contract with the City.

Mayor Polz said he personally wanted to thank Skaret for all his contributions over the years. He said there's plenty to do yet.

Mayor Polz also thanked Dave Schmidt and said he appreciated all of his contributions in the Economic Development Office.

Schmidt said it has been an absolute honor to be working in economic development for the City of Jackson during the last two years and really appreciated the opportunity to serve this community.

Mayor Polz said Schmidt's work ethic and Skaret's integrity and seeing projects move forward has been great and he wishes Schmidt and Skaret the best.

Skaret said it has been a great honor and a privilege to serve as City Administrator. He said Jackson is a great community and is truly a very special place.

Finck said he doesn't think the community really understands, or probably ever will, how much Skaret has done behind the scenes. He noted the progress the City has made because of how Skaret has handled situations. Finck said there's just so much that goes on that people don't realize unless they serve on the City Council.

Finck said Skaret has led the City through some projects that he didn't think the City could get accomplished the way the City did without impacting the taxpayer. He pointed out examples such as some large street projects, reconstruction projects and things like that. He noted the Economic Development Office has done the same thing.

Finck said hopefully the future is as bright as the past has been. He said he wishes both Skaret and Schmidt well.

Finck said the community really has been better because of Skaret coming to our community. He said he wants to make sure that's clear out there. Finck said he knows Skaret has a quieter personality, but there's definitely been a ton of good things come out of his work here, so thank-you.

Skaret thanked Finck for his comments. He said the City has a number of boards, committees and commissions that also work behind the scenes. Skaret said they certainly played an important role in different projects in all aspects of the City and did a lot of the leg work so when projects arrived at the Council level, they were ready to go, fully vetted and planned out. Skaret noted there's been a lot done with parks and trails, disc golf course and the City has had a wonderful partnership with Public Health and Jackson County. He said it takes a community and a village to run a City.

Finck noted Skaret probably worked as City Administrator through one of the hardest and most difficult times in the City during the 18 to 24 months of the Covid Pandemic by helping businesses navigate through that period. He noted the Federal government regulations and the business impact in guiding the City Council through on how to support those businesses as a City. Finck said that impact has been huge for our community and he doesn't think most citizens are aware of that. He said there's been a lot of things that most City Administrators probably won't go through going forward.

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the City Administrator Search Proposal from the South Central Service Cooperative.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Mayor Polz said he would volunteer to serve again on the Committee to review the nominations for this year's Volunteer Recognition Program. He said it's a great program.

Councilman Peterson said he would also volunteer to be on the Committee.

Council Pell said he would also volunteer to be on the Volunteer Recognition Program Committee.

MIX/FINCK moved and it was unanimously carried to appoint Mayor Marcus Polz, Councilman Nathan Peterson and Councilman Joe Pell to the Volunteer Recognition Program Committee and also authorized the solicitation of nominations for the 2023 Volunteer Recognition Program.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PRESS RELEASE

Skaret explained there's been a lot of events happening lately where the City has had to jump in and get involved.

Skaret noted the ribbon cutting on Wednesday, November 1st for the new Belmont Heights Subdivision. He noted that is a classic example of a community partnership to make a very difficult project come to fruition. Skaret said in a perfect world, the government wouldn't need to step in and help foster a housing project along, but in outstate Minnesota outside of the Twin Cities, it really does take a collaborative community effort by City government, local industry, a willing developer and others to make a housing project a reality.

Skaret said he also wanted to note some other issues. He pointed out the City has loaned out hundreds of thousands of dollars through the City's Revolving Loan Fund to businesses and industry to help them grow and expand. Skaret said those loans are to fill-in that gap between, often times, what a bank is willing to loan out and what is actually needed. He said there's often a gap there and that's where the EDA comes in. Skaret said the City is not the "go-to" as a bank but the City does help to fill-in that gap where it's needed. He said there's been numerous loans that have helped make these projects become a reality.

Skaret said during the Covid Pandemic, the City issued over \$300,000 in emergency funds to local struggling businesses right at the start of Covid when they were forced to be shut down. He said that was an example of where the City stepped in to save our business community.

Skaret said the City has also stepped in to assist a number of non-profit organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Jackson Center for the Arts, the Food Shelf, Fort Belmont Foundation, the JACKFIELD Softball Association, the Jackson Cemetery Association along with several others.

Skaret said without these local government efforts, we wouldn't have the retail businesses, industries, restaurants and non-profits that make our community better and a nice place to live.

Skaret said the Little Huskies Learning Center is another example of where the City became involved to help keep a vital service afloat pertaining to child care. He said the market in child care is broken in Greater Minnesota. Skaret said the expenses of running a childcare center far outweigh what the revenues are coming in. He said it's becoming a struggle, not only for Jackson, but for many other communities in outstate Minnesota. Skaret said it's another situation, where again, it takes a community effort including the City to keep this essential and critical infrastructure in place. Skaret said it's known without childcare, so many parents will need to leave the workforce and that causes a ripple effect for the community's employers and is a very big detriment to the community. He said the City has been involved with Little Huskies for about two-and-a-half months. Skaret said that situation came out of the sky and landed in the City's lap on August 24th with less than 24 hours of notice that Little Huskies was going to close permanently.

Skaret said the parents of 80 children would have been scrambling around trying to find alternate arrangements in a community where there's already a childcare shortage and it would have been detrimental for our community and industries.

Skaret explained with Little Huskies, the City is still sorting things out trying to determine the best operating model to go forward to ensure having that quality, affordable childcare in our community for those who need it. He said it's known it's going to have to be a community effort, some kind of a public-private partnership. Skaret said that's being worked on. He said in a perfect world, government wouldn't need to step in. But Skaret said we live in a far from perfect world out here where there needs to be a collaborative effort, including government, to continue to provide these critical services.

Skaret said that's the information the City wanted to provide in educating and helping the public understand what is taking place.

Mayor Polz shared that he spoke extensively with Luverne Mayor Pat Baustian over the weekend about how Luverne has addressed the struggles and challenges of providing childcare in their community. He said providing childcare in Luverne has been a collaboration of their community which has involved the City helping fund a lot of the shortfalls of their childcare center. Mayor Polz said Luverne's collaboration has also involved Rock County and the Federal government. He said it was something Luverne looked at over a period of six years before they arrived at the resolution they have today. Mayor Polz said he doesn't see a quick resolution to the childcare issues in Jackson. He said Mayor Baustian encouraged Jackson to explore avenues as a community on how to collaborate and even offered some resources so Jackson could utilize the City of Luverne as a model going forward.

Titus asked if Luverne has any engagement with local industry in supporting childcare in the community.

Mayor Polz said Luverne does have an engagement with local industry regarding childcare. He said Mayor Baustian said citizens and local industry have been able to partner in Luverne and do fundraising almost to the tune of one million dollars which they put towards their operating cost of the childcare center.

Finck pointed out the City has not gifted any money to Little Huskies in Jackson. He said that has clearly been a loan to Little Huskies. Finck said the plan, as he understands from the Little Huskies Board, is to figure out a business model in which that loan is repaid back to the City. He said he wants the public to understand the money from the City were loans and not grants. Finck said the City did not gift money to Little Huskies. He said repayment terms will be figured out and how the loans will be repaid will be determined.

Skaret said the City Council should have a motion to approve the press release.

Mayor Polz asked for a motion to approve the press release.

TITUS/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the Government Assistance Press Release.

Other:

Alderman Brandon Finck

Alderman Brandon Finck asked Skaret if there was any update on the swimming pool.

Skaret said the City should be hearing something about the pool this week. He said during the week of November 6th, Burbach Aquatics indicated they should be submitting a preliminary draft to the City. Skaret said the plan is to have Burbach Aquatics give a presentation to the Pool Task Force and City Council.

Finck also noted with the retirement of City Office Manager Deb Mitchell, the City's investment policy requires the Office Manager or Skaret to be an approval on investments. He asked if the Finance Committee should be appointed to be the other approval until it's determined what's going to be done regarding the City Office. Finck said there needs to be two approvals.

Skaret said that would be fine.

Alderwoman Sara Mix

Alderwoman Sara Mix asked if there was an update regarding the new UCAP houses on Pond Drive.

Economic Development Director Dave Schmidt said one of the houses is completed. He said UCAP will be in Jackson on November 8th and a walk-through of the completed house will be held at noon. Schmidt said anyone interested is invited to the walk-through. Schmidt said the first house is completed and when the second house is done, realtor Lee Porter is going to have an open house of both houses for the public.

Schmidt said he spoke with Porter about a week and a half ago. He noted Porter said he's handed out some applications regarding purchasing one of the houses, but none have been submitted.

Mix asked if photos of the houses would be updated for the internet. She noted the current pictures are just of the outside of the houses.

Schmidt said he's hoping Porter will be taking pictures of the inside of the houses and posting them on the realtors' website.

Finck asked Schmidt if he had a completion date for the second house.

Schmidt said he didn't have a completion date. He said he should get that information during the walk-through tomorrow. (November 8th)

City Administrator Matt Skaret

Skaret said he had an update on the search for a new Ambulance Director. He reported the City's Personnel Committee and Ambulance Department liaison, Councilman Nathan Peterson, have been working very hard with SGR, the City's consultant for the hiring process.

Skaret said there was a candidate that the Personnel Committee was ready to fly into Jackson for an interview. He said unfortunately, that candidate backed out at the last minute. Skaret said that has caused the Personnel Committee to hit the reset button and open the position up again for applications.

Mayor Marcus Polz

Mayor Polz said a really good meeting was held on the afternoon of November 7th at City Hall. He noted besides himself, Councilmen Mark Titus and Brandon Finck along with City Administrator Matt Skaret and Economic Development Coordinator Dave Schmidt attended.

Mayor Polz said the meeting was spearheaded by Mary Jetland. He said Mary Jetland is the daughter of Al McQuinn who founded Ag-Chem. Mayor Polz said the meeting discussed what we can do with the Community Foundation and ways to grow the Community Foundation and maybe utilize the Foundation as a funding avenue verses taxation as the City looks at some future projects such as an events center or other projects. Mayor Polz said people nowadays are taxed to death so the City has to find some alternative paths for funding community projects.

Titus noted three people participating in the meeting that have strong Jackson connections.

Mayor Polz noted those participating in the meeting included Steve Joul who is CEO and President of Community Giving who helps create Community Foundations, Mary Jetland who has a legacy in her own right and is the daughter of Ag-Chem founder Al McQuinn and Carl Samp from Alpha, a member of the Class of '74, who is quite a knowledgeable resource and works with community foundations.

Mayor Polz it was really a nice meeting.

Finck said it was a pretty eye-opening meeting about opportunities.

Titus said Joul, Jetland and Samp are going to follow-up with the group that met on November 7th.

Mayor Polz said what excites him is the millions and millions of dollars that have been brought into community foundations in central and outstate Minnesota. He said those resources are rooted in our very own community that the City has had minimal involvement with.

Titus noted the infrastructure is there. He said Jackson has a Community Foundation, it just needs an infusion from folks and leadership.

ADJOURNMENT

PETERSON/PELL moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Jackson City Council meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Mayor Polz said the City Council meeting was now adjourned.

David A. Maschoff, Council Secretary

Marcus Polz, Mayor

