

The regular meeting of the Ishpeming City Council was held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, in the Ishpeming City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Jason Chapman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Jason Chapman, Council Members Lindsay Bean, Elizabeth Firby, Renelle Halverson, and Pat Scanlon (5). Also present was City Manager Craig Cugini and City Attorney Caroline Bridges.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Public comment was offered through Zoom and in person.

Claudia Demarest, 821 Maurice Street, questioned the number of loans/bonds the City of Ishpeming is paying; quoted the City Charter Section 13.6; questioned the legality of paying Siren, communication consultant, out of the Water Fund; expressed concern with Item #15 the proposed increase to the City Attorney contract; and asked when a determination on what the impact to the water fund was from the former Utility Billing Clerk.

Mark Hall, 141 Vine Street, announced the opening of the Bike Pantry which was located on the first floor of the Gossard Building. He added the new business refurbishes bikes and then provides them to the public; the business is open from 4:00 pm to 6:00 p.m.; and he invited the City Council and staff to contact him if they were interested in taking a tour of the business.

John Schooler, 772 Michigan Street, spoke about the claim submitted to the City for damage to his motorcycle which was denied by the City's insurance; and also expressed his disagreement with a proposed wage increase to some City employees.

Mike Tonkin, 612 N. Third Street, asked when there would be a meeting related to the results of the audit; questioned the status of the policy covering short term rentals; when the snow plow meeting would be completed; asked when the Charter would stop being violated; suggested all Councilmembers attend training; mentioned process of public hearings; marijuana licenses; why pay raises were implemented; and questioned budget line items.

Mary Farmer, 415 S. Lake Street, questioned again why the MarqTran bus was not stopping at the Housing Commission; and, asked if the mess in her neighbor's yard could be addressed.

Cathy Schooler, 769 Michigan Street, questioned the authorization to purchase two new DPW pick-up trucks at the last meeting and why there was a new truck outside of City Hall.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Bean seconded by Mayor Chapman and carried unanimously to approve the agenda incorporating the addition of item 13d Discuss the date of the special meeting scheduled for December 13th.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Bean seconded by Councilmember Firby and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented.

- a. Minutes of Previous Meeting (November 8th and 29th)
- b. Approval of Disbursements
- c. Declare 606 Library Books and CD's as surplus

MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT REPORT

Finance Director Grant Getschow reviewed the unaudited balance sheet excerpt for the City including the General Fund, Major and Local Street, Water, Sewer, and Garbage fund for the period ending November 2023.

A motion was made by Councilmember Scanlon, seconded by Councilmember Firby and carried unanimously to approve the unaudited monthly financial statement report as presented.

PRESENTATION FROM JOAN MOVICH – SPECTRUM CHANNEL 189

Joan Movich, Manager at Spectrum, congratulated the City of Ishpeming on a successful launch of Channel 189 which was the first HD Peg Channel in the State and the only one in the U.P. She thanked the Council for supporting this project and thanked Manager Cugini for all he efforts in getting the HD channel up and running. Channel 189 was now available in many areas across the U.P. and there are several other municipalities that will also be converting to HD that will be following Ishpeming's lead. On behalf of Spectrum, she congratulated the City of Ishpeming.

Mayor Chapman thanked Spectrum and Manager Cugini for all the work and effort put into the conversion of Channel 189 to a high definition PEG channel.

UPDATE FROM LAKE SUPERIOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Rachele Raak and Chris Germain from the Lake Superior Community Partnership, provided an update on the status of the Redevelopment Ready Community certification; blight management; and housing and marketing. They also talked about the marketing of the State of City address and the Community Listening session that was held this year.

Mr. Germain advised there were some zoning ordinance language changes that were necessary to get RRC certified and those proposed changes would be sent to staff and would be placed on an upcoming Planning Commission meeting agenda. The recommendation would then be forward to Council for approval. The changes related to types of housing offered in the City and what RRC would like to see in the ordinance.

Councilmember Scanlon would like to get copies of the progress reports from the LSCP; he questioned why the City pamphlet/magazine has not been produced yet; asked about the status of the housing ready checklist; and was disappointed that our neighboring community was certified first.

There was further discussion related to the remaining items needed for certification and the timeline for submitting information back to the LSCP. LSCP would continue to submit information and certification should happen after the first of the year.

AGREEMENT EXTENSION FOR ASSESSING SERVICES

Manager Cugini advised this was a proposed three-year contract with the County for assessing services with no increase in costs.

A motion was made by Councilmember Scanlon, seconded by Councilmember Bean and carried unanimously to approve the three-year agreement with the County of Marquette for assessing services and authorize the Mayor to sign.

SPECIAL EVENT APPLICATIONS

Noquemanon Ski Marathon: January 26-27, 2024

Polar Roll: February 17, 2024

Iron Range Roll: June 1, 2024

A motion was made by Councilmember Scanlon, seconded by Councilmember Firby and carried unanimously to approve the three special event applications as presented.

SECOND READING OF AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCE 11-300, PURCHASING PROCEDURES

A motion was made by Councilmember Bean seconded by Councilmember Scanlon and carried unanimously to approve the second reading of amendment to Ordinance 11-300 Purchasing and Contracting Procedures Ordinance as presented.

2024 CITY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE PROPOSED CHANGES

Reschedule January meeting from January 3rd to January 10th

Reschedule July meeting from July 3rd to July 10th

Consider rescheduling November meeting from November 6th to November 13th (General Election)

A motion was made by Mayor Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Scanlon and carried unanimously to approve the 2024 City Council meeting schedule incorporating the changes as recommended for January, July, and November.

Discussion on rescheduling date for the December 13th Special Council meeting

Councilmember Bean explained she had a medical appointment on December 13th, which could not be changed, and she would therefore not be able to attend the special meeting on the 13th. She would very much like to participate and asked if the meeting date could be changed.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bean, seconded by Councilmember Scanlon and carried unanimously to reschedule the special Council meeting from December 13th to December 20th at 6:00 p.m.

PROPOSED 2024 CITY OF ISHPEMING FEE SCHEDULE

A motion was made by Mayor Chapman and seconded by Councilmember Scanlon to not raise the water and sewer rates by 5% as outlined in the ordinances. There was discussion related to the rate increase being included in the 2024 budget and how not approving the 5% increase in water and sewers would affect both budgets. In addition, the new debt for the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan (DWSRF) funding should also be considered. After discussion the motion was withdrawn.

Staff advised the smart meters would trouble shoot usage issues and would provide accurate reads for utility billing. Staff added the water meter installations would be completed soon which will be a benefit to the water fund; noted the 2024 budget was dependent on the 5% increase, particularly since the water fund just recently moved out of a deficit.

Councilmember Halverson expressed concerns with not approving the 5% increase particularly since the water fund just recently moved out of a deficit; she added it would be irresponsible to not approve the rate increase particularly since it was included in the 2024 budget that was just approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bean, seconded by Councilmember Halverson to accept the 2024 fee schedule as presented. Ayes: Mayor Jason Chapman, Councilmembers Lindsay Bean, Renelle Halverson, and Pat Scanlon (4). Nays: Councilmember Elizabeth Firby (1). Motion passed 4-1.

PROPOSED INCREASE TO CITY ATTORNEY CONTRACT

Manager Cugini briefly reviewed some of the work, particularly work on blighted properties, that the City Attorney has been working on with staff. Staff added the budget would have to be amended to include this increase.

Member Scanlon noted most of the attorney work was not seen by the public, it was all work behind the scenes such as working the courts on blight removal.

Councilmember Bean added Attorney Bridges has been doing a great job for the City; the attorney's wages do not come out of the general fund; and the attorney contract has not been looked at since 2021.

Councilmember Halverson could not justify any additional raises, the 2024 budget had been adopted and should not be amended at this point. She understood the importance of the work being done by the attorney, however, her concerns were with the budget.

A motion was made by Member Scanlon, seconded by Member Bean to allow a one-time 5% increase to the City Attorney contract effective January 1, 2024 to the monthly and hourly rate. Ayes: Mayor Jason Chapman, Councilmembers Lindsay Bean, Elizabeth Firby, and Pat Scanlon (4). Nays: Councilmember Renelle Halverson (1).

There was discussion related to the language in the Charter pertaining to a back-up attorney. Council ask Attorney Bridges to again seek a back-up attorney.

PERMISSION FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO SPONSOR A RECRUIT IN THE NMU 2024 REGIONAL POLICE ACADEMY

Chief Radabaugh explained he would like to sponsor a cadet in the 2024 NMU Police Academy Program which would be for the three-year position to cover the School Resource Officer.

A motion was made by Mayor Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Halverson, and carried unanimously to approve the submittal of the grant as requested by the Chief of Police.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Public comment was offered on zoom and in person.

Mike Tonkin, 612 N. Third Street, commented on the City Charter and added the City Manager was responsible for enforcing the Charter.

Claudia Demarest, 821 Maurice Street, questioned why there was a closed session for union negotiations when contracts were already settled; would like to see the broken windows on the building at the brownstone taken care of; questioned the increase on her water bill; and questioned paying Siren Communications from the water fund.

John Schooler, 772 Michigan Street, talked about his denied insurance claim.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Firby thanked everyone involved in the planning of the Christmas festivities, the parade was again very successful. She also wished everyone happy holidays.

Councilmember Scanlon attended the Commission on Aging meeting and they were in the process of reviewing their financials as well as discussing making amendments to their bylaws; questioned the number of street lights that are out, as well as some Christmas lights, and would like to have these checked into; and wished everyone happy holidays.

Councilmember Halverson was out of town for a few weeks but would provide the minutes of the DDA meeting to Council.

Councilmember Bean summarized some of the discussions at the joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the DDA; and reported at the regular Planning Commission meeting they reviewed the first draft of an ordinance for short-term rentals.

Mayor Chapman thanked the Fire Department for their assistance in changing the flag at the Veterans Memorial; thanked all the volunteers for their work on the Christmas parade, with a special thank you to Brett Antilla for all his work on the decorations at the Santa House; and added he would be holding an evening coffee hour with the Mayor on December 11th with the regular coffee hour with the Mayor on December 22nd at the Senior Center.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Cugini met with Dana Lalonde, new Marquette County Commissioner, and gave her tour of the City along with City facilities.

CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO MCL 15.268(C) TO CONSIDER STRATEGY AND NEGOTIATIONS CONNECTED WITH A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

A motion was made by Councilmember Firby and seconded by Councilmember Scanlon to go into closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(c) to consider strategy and negotiations connected with a collective bargaining agreement at 8:11 p.m. Ayes: Mayor Jason Chapman, Council Members Lindsay Bean, Elizabeth Firby, Renelle Halverson, and Pat Scanlon (5). Nays: None (0). Motion passed 5-0.

Returned to open session 9:06


A motion was made by Councilmember Bean and seconded by Mayor Chapman to authorize the City Manager to proceed with negotiations as discussed in closed session. Ayes: Mayor Jason Chapman, Councilmembers Lindsay Bean, Elizabeth Firby, and Pat Scanlon (4). Nays: Councilmember Renelle Halverson (1). Motion passed 4-1.

A motion was made by Councilmember Bean, seconded by Mayor Chapman and carried unanimously to authorize the City Manager to proceed with a special conference with the DPW Chapter of AFSMCE as discussed in closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:09 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Bean seconded by Councilmember Scanlon and carried unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,


Cathy Smith
City Clerk