

CITY OF KETTLE RIVER
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
December 12, 2023

The Kettle River City Council meeting was held in the meeting room of City Hall, Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 7 pm.

Members Present: Mayor Lucas, Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Collier, Councilor Doward, Councilor Mascarenas

Staff Attending: Kathryn Lake, City Administrator Clerk/Treasurer; Rob Tschida, Building Inspector; Tom Simi, Assistant Fire Chief; Travis Leino, Utilities Department

Staff Absent: Jamie Dobosenski, Deputy Clerk

Guests Attending: Kassie Hall, AUS; Eric Applewick, AUS

Other Guests: Laura Simi, Marcia Sarvela, Judy Collier, Cam and George Klaskin, Gary and Judy Marsyla, Bob Kohmetscher, Logan Tomczak, Jim and Mary Sanders, Pat and Edwin Lund, John Peura, Jessie Kemp.

Mayor Lucas called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Reminder from Mayor Lucas that there is a policy in place that states council members are not allowed to record the council meetings.

Motion to Accept consent agenda made by Councilor Kohmetscher and seconded by Councilor Mascarenas. Ayes: Councilor Collier, Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: Councilor Doward. Motion carries to approve the following consent agenda items:

- Minutes of the November 14, 2023, regular council meeting and November 27, 2023, Special Meeting with the changes to clarify the regular meeting minutes to say, “Reminder from Mayor Lucas that the council members are no to record the council meetings” and “Anyone with an audit book needs to return it.” Also, the special meeting minutes should list the reprimand decided on and the roll call vote.
- Claims (6844, 6854-6885=\$17,728.00)
- Cash control statement, receipts, disbursement registers, and bank statements.

Councilor Doward mentioned concerns of the office computers getting fixed and made allegations of violating data practices, stating that Cyber PC should not retain the old hard drives and that the Sheriff’s office will be picking the hard drives up. She also made allegations about the city violating data practices.

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Administration Department: report submitted by Kathy Lake, City Administrator, City Clerk/Treasurer:

- Getting caught up on work after being on suspension for two weeks
- Both office computers were sent for repairs
- Travis Leino will need to be added to the City's charge accounts for the ability to charge needed materials and parts. Motion to approve made by Councilor Doward and seconded by Councilor Mascarenas. Ayes: Councilor Collier, Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas, Councilor Doward. Nays: 0. Motion carries.

Councilor Doward requested a list of all charge accounts the city has.

Utilities Department: report submitted by Kassie and Eric, Advanced Utility Solutions.

- Automatic backwash of the filters is set up to every 18k gallons.
- Well 2 was flushed and raw water was tested in both well 1 and well 2 the iron and manganese levels are comparable in each. Well 2 is now on as lag.
- Still waiting on a quote from OSI about removing old sodium permanganate
- Flushed hydrants on 11/3/2023
- Installed new fluoride pump on 11/4/2023
- Eric and Kassie fixed valve extension at transfer structure between primary ponds on 11/7/2023
- Will need to order reagents for testing chlorine, fluoride, phosphate, iron and manganese at WTP soon.
- Will be doing Quarter 4 influent sampling on 12/12/2023
- THM sampling will be done on 12/12/2023
- Fixed the Battery back up at the pump station
- Travis will look into oil changes and brake repairs on the ford and first responder vehicles for the fire department.
- Councilor Doward would like a copy of the meter readings or to ride along when they are read. She states she is working with an auditor and the utilities commission to check on the meter readings and compare it to what is being billed.
- Travis will get a burning permit to burn the City's brush pile when there is enough snow on the ground to burn it safely.

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Fire and First Responder Department: report submitted by Thomas Simi, Assistant Fire Chief;

- 4 medical runs and 2 fire runs
- New fire fighter Logan Tomczak is now certified to be an EMR, there is now a total of 4.
- Logan and Bobby are starting fire fighter 1 training in Moose Lake
- There will be some upcoming repairs to the trucks
- Travis Leino is interested in rejoining the Fire Department

City Council:

- During the Tree Lighting Ceremony several residents approached Councilor Mascarenas about the upcoming increase in the water and sewer bills. They stated Councilor Doward was telling people the increase is to compensate for the businesses in town that do not pay for water and sewer. Councilor Doward denies any knowledge of this.
- Councilor Mascarenas did not appreciate an email Councilor Doward sent her about the issues with Mr. Kasden and where he parks. The pictures Councilor Doward sent prove the issues at hand. Councilor Doward also told Councilor Mascarenas to resign from council. Photos also show the no parking sign has been removed and needs to be replaced.
- Mayor Lucas is asking for the audit books to be returned, Councilor Doward found this comical.
- Arguing between Council Members ensued.
- Mayor Lucas questioned Councilor Doward on whether she was still frightened of Mrs. Lake. Councilor Doward responded that she is afraid of all the Council Members.
- Mayor Lucas states any information needed from the City Administrator needs to be in a written request so staff can do their job.
- Councilor Doward mentioned the issue with the changing of the ordinance. She believes that a Councilor should be in the office with the clerks at all times to make sure things are not being changed. She states that she should be able to sit in the office and go through the policies, ordinances and minutes. Councilor Doward brought up another Ordinance she believed was changed. Mayor Lucas clarified that the Ordinance was not changed, the wrong ordinance was quoted in the letter that a resident received.
- Councilor Kohmetscher mentioned the incident that took place when Councilor Doward was hostile in the office. When Councilor Kohmetscher walked in, she stated she saw Councilor Doward cornering maintenance personnel and Mrs. Lake by the safe. She was yelling and upset because she was told she could not

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have access to the safe. Councilor Doward admitted using profanity towards Mrs. Lake.

- Mayor Lucas reminded everyone there is a policy in place to protect both Councilor Doward and Kathryn Lake due to ongoing litigation between them that states they are not allowed in the office with each other. Kathy states she will not be alone with Councilor Doward because she is intimidated and threatened by her. Councilor Doward states they need to work together and insists she will continue to go to the office.
- Mayor Lucas suggested to close the office until further notice, until Councilor Doward quits impeding the work of the office staff. If anyone needs access to the city office, please call and make an appointment. Motion to close the office until further notice made by Councilor Kohmetscher and seconded by Councilor Collier. Ayes: Councilor Collier, Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: Councilor Doward. Motion carries.
- Councilor Doward states she had no issues being in the office when Kathy was not there.

Committees-

Personnel Committee:

- Nothing new.

Planning and Zoning Commission: report submitted by Councilor Collier.

- Mark Tollgaard resigned from the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Next meeting is Monday, February 12, 2024, at 4:30 pm.

Building Inspector: report submitted by Rob Tschida, Building Inspector.

- Nothing new.

Correspondence:

Old Business:

New Business:

- Quotes to replace lights from fluorescent to LED in city hall and senior community center.

Region Electric quoted city hall light fixture replacement for \$3,462.08

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AUS Electric quoted for light fixture retrofit at city hall, the senior community center and the water treatment plant for \$3,742.87.

AUS Electric also quoted the city for complete replacement and rewiring of the light fixture at \$6,673.33.

Motion made to accept the AUS quote for \$3,742.87 made by Councilor Collier and seconded by Councilor Kohmetscher. Ayes: Councilor Collier, Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas, Councilor Doward. Nays: 0. Motion carries.

- Motion to accept Mark Tollgaard's resignation from the Planning and Zoning Commission made by Councilor Kohmetscher and seconded by Councilor Mascarenas. Ayes: Councilor Collier, Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas, Councilor Doward. Nays: 0. Motion carries.
- Policy on Elected Officials and Appointed Official Use of City Hall.

Elected and appointed officials may perform work and meet with members of the public at the City hall building located at 3977 Main Street. However, elected and appointed officials must not conduct any work or conduct any meetings in the office area of City Hall (this includes the two employees' desks and front counter). Any work to be performed by an elected or appointed official must be conducted in the City Council Chambers unless it has been reserved. If the City Council Chambers has been reserved, no work or meetings are to be performed or conducted by elected or appointed officials at City Hall.

Any requests for information or documents from the City by elected or appointed officials must be made to the City in writing. The information or documents that are being requested will be provided by City staff should it be information that the City has in its possession and the elected or appointed official is authorized to review the information. Elected and appointed officials must not review the City's files in order to respond to their requests for information as the files may contain private and confidential information.

Motion to accept the Policy on Elected and Appointed Official Use of City Hall made by Councilor Kohmetscher and seconded by Councilor Collier. Ayes: Councilor Collier, Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: Councilor Doward. Motion carries.

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- Resolution 2023-11 Resolution Adopting 2024 Special Assessments and Delinquent Water and Sewer to Taxes.
Special Assessments- \$4,800.00 and Delinquent Water and Sewer- \$4,146.56
Special Assessments tabled for next meeting to review ordinance violation procedures.

Motion to approve Delinquent Water and Sewer to Taxes for the amount of \$4,146.56, made by Councilor Collier and seconded by Councilor Mascarenas. Ayes: Councilor Collier, Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas. Nays: Councilor Doward. Motion carries.

- Mayor Lucas responded to a letter Councilor Doward sent the other Council Members about an audit on payroll for Council Members. Work sessions or workshops are considered special meetings and were posted properly according to the League of Minnesota Cities. Councilor Doward stated she believes it does not follow the City's Ordinance. Arguing between council members ensued. Councilor Doward alleging the city and other council members do not follow the rules and council members stating that Councilor Doward is the one who does not follow the rules.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilor Collier and seconded by Councilor Kohmetscher. Ayes: Councilor Collier, Councilor Kohmetscher, Councilor Mascarenas, Mayor Lucas Councilor Doward. Nays: 0. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

The next regular City Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 9, 2023, at 7 pm in the meeting room of City Hall.

Submitted by,
Jamie Dobosenski
Deputy Clerk