

**Whalan City Council**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, January 8, 2024**  
**Meeting held at the Whalan Town Hall and via Zoom**

**Present:** David Hallum, Kim Berekvam, Thore E. Johnson

**Absent:** Sheila Higbe and Owen Lewis

**Visitors:** Barb Jeffers and Ben Ruberg (in person); and Melanie Murphy and Dave Ruberg (via Zoom)

**Regular Meeting:**

Mayor Hallum called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

**A. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.**

**B. Agenda:** Member Berekvam motioned to approve the agenda, Member Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried, with all in favor.

**C. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the December 12, 2023 Council Meeting were read by Mayor Hallum. Member Johnson motioned to approve the minutes of the Council Meeting as presented; Member Berekvam seconded the motion. Motion carried, with all in favor.

**D. Treasurer's Report:** Clerk Grossell provided the treasurer's report. The following are the bank balances as of 12/31/2023: General Fund \$53,675.57, Court Reimbursement Fund \$10,658.19, Siding Upkeep Fund \$1030.00; Taste of the Trail \$2900.98, Ballfield Fund \$935.06, Beautification Fund \$187.00, General Capital \$27,761.74, and Electric Fund \$54,763.54. Member Berekvam motioned to approve the treasurer's report including the following accounts payable:

Claim No	Vendor	Detail	Amount	Check Number
	Payroll Period Ending			
Payroll	12/31/2023	December Net Payroll – R. Berekvam	\$ 136.21	6289
	Payroll Period Ending			
Payroll	12/31/2023	December Net Payroll – T. Grossell	\$ 450.00	6290
01082401	Plunkett's Pest Control	Dec Pest Control	\$ 44.52	6291
01082402	Acentek	Jan 2024 Phone	\$ 42.16	6292
01082403	Whalan Museum	January Internet Expense (in full)	\$ 70.26	6293
01082404	MiEnergy	Purchase Power, invoice	\$ 3352.09	6294
01082405	USPS	Annual Mailbox Rental	\$ 70.00	6296
01082406	SEMLM	Annual Dues 2024	\$ 50.00	6297
01082407	IRS	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr Payroll Withholding Taxes	\$ 791.24	e-pmt
01082408	MN Dept of Revenue	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr Payroll Taxes & Sales Taxes Collect	\$ 1193.09	e-pmt
01082409	MN PERA	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr Payroll Contributions	\$ 304.55	e-pmt
01082410	Harters	Quarterly Garbage Removal	\$ 180.30	6295
01082411	DMV	Tabs for City Truck	\$ 20.25	6298

Member Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried, with all in favor.

**E. Welcome to Visitors and Visitor Comments:** No comments were shared.

**F. New Business:**

- a) **Resolution 2024-01** - Designating Merchants Bank as the Official Depository for 2024 was approved on a motion by Johnson; seconded by Berekvam. Motion carried, with all in favor.
- b) **Resolution 2024-02** - Designating The Fillmore County Journal as the Official Newspaper for 2024 was approved on a motion by Berekvam; seconded by Johnson. Motion carried, with all in favor.
- c) **Resolution 2024-03** - Establishing a Mileage Reimbursement Rate of 67 cents/mile for 2024 was approved on a motion by Berekvam; seconded by Johnson. Motion carried, with all in favor.
- d) **Resolution 2024-04** - Authorizing Signatures by Mayor David Hallum and Clerk/Treasurer Teresa Grossell for City Accounts in 2024 was approved on a motion by Johnson; seconded by Berekvam. Motion carried, with all in favor.
- e) **Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) law** became effective 1/1/2024. Clerk Grossell explained the new state law that applies to all city staff that work at least 80 hours in one year and she explained the three options allowed by the state to implement the plan. On a motion by Berekvam, seconded by Johnson the Council approved the Clerk's recommendation of implementing the Accrual Method by awarding 1 hour of paid ESST after every 30 hours worked. By law, employers must allow each employee to accrue up to at least 48 hours a year (if they earn that much), carried over from year to year, until an 80-hour maximum accrual is reached. Motion carried, with all in favor.
- f) **Lanesboro Area Community Foundation Grant Applications** are Due 3/31/2024. Up to \$5000 can be requested to support programs and projects that further their mission of being a good neighbor by investing in the vitality of the people and community of Lanesboro. Potential projects were discussed, such as staining the gazebo, painting city buildings, concession stand improvements, bleacher repair, park bathroom removal, and fencing in the ballpark area. Council Members were all asked to come back to the next meeting with their list prioritized along with estimated costs so a decision can be made in February to allow enough time to work through the six grant application questions in order to submit the grant application by the March 31 deadline.
- g) **SMIF Allocation 2024:** On a motion by Johnson, seconded by Berekvam \$150 will be sent to SMIF to support their mission in 2024. Motion carried, with all in favor.
- h) **Liability Coverage Waiver Form:** Member Berekvam motioned to not waive the monetary limits on municipal tort liability coverage. Member Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried, with all in favor.
- i) **Smith & Schafer Engagement Letter:** On a motion by Johnson, seconded by Berekvam the Engagement Letter from Smith & Schafer was approved requesting they prepare the Financial Statements for the City of Whalan for the year ending December 31, 2023. Motion carried, with all in favor.
- j) **Arrears Past Due Notice:** Clerk Grossell asked for clarification regarding past practices of sending out Past Due Notices for electric utilities. It was confirmed that Grossell does not need Council Approval to send those out.

**G. Continued Business:**

- a) **Zoning Board Commission Vacancy:** Jae Julianne has decided not to serve a 2<sup>nd</sup> term, so there is now a vacancy to serve a 3-year term thru December 2026, so Clerk Grossell has posted the vacancy on the City's Official Website. One person has expressed interest thus far, and this will be discussed again next month.
- b) **Secure storage options for city files:** Clerk Grossell reviewed several fireproof filing cabinets that could be purchased brand new. Member Berekvam found 3 used fireproof filing cabinets that would be available for free, if we picked them up from a business in Decorah Iowa. On a motion by Johnson, seconded by Berekvam we will pursue the free cabinets. Motion carried, with all in favor. It was noted that we will need to purchase keys for them, and Mayor Hallum and Member Johnson offered to drive there and pick them up.

Approved on 02/12/2024

- c) **Meeting Schedule for 2024:** The schedule as presented (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month except in November when the meeting will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month @ 5 pm all months) was approved on a motion by Berekvam, seconded by Johnson. Motion carried, with all in favor.

**H. Miscellaneous:**

**a) Updates from the Clerk/Treasurer:**

- i. After additional research, Clerk Grossell agrees with the notification received from the Social Security Administration indicating that our 2022 Fed Tax Annual Submission was incorrect. She believes we will likely receive a refund of over \$1000.
- ii. Payment still not received (\$100) for Hall rent from October 20. Member Johnson offered to follow-up on this with his contact for this reservation. If it is not received by the February meeting, the Clerk needs to secure an official mailing address to formally send the invoice to.
- iii. December has been extremely busy for the Clerk/Treasurer with all of the budget finalization work and January will be even busier with all of the quarterly and annual reporting and closing out CTAS for 2023 along with other fiscal year-end requirements. February she will be busy with Audit Prep as documents are due to S & S by 2/27/24, and March there are several Covid Funding Reports due.

**Next Meeting: Monday, February 12, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.**

**ADJOURN:** Member Johnson moved to adjourn at 5:59 p.m.; motion seconded by Member Berekvam. Motion carried, with all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Teresa L. Grossell  
City Clerk/Treasurer