

**Whalan City Council  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 11, 2024  
Meeting held at the Whalan Town Hall and via Zoom**

**Present:** David Hallum, Kim Berekvam, Thore E. Johnson, and Sheila Higbe; and Owen Lewis (via Zoom)

**Absent:**

**Visitors:** Barb Jeffers, Randy Berekvam, and Ben Ruberg (in person); and Dave Ruberg (via Zoom)

**Regular Meeting:**

Mayor Hallum called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

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

**B. Agenda:** Member Higbe motioned to approve the agenda with the following additions:

NEW: Portable Bathrooms

MISC: LMC Annual Conference, Clerk's Online Foundational Training, Acentek Video Service Franchise Fee  
Member Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried, with all in favor via a Roll Call Vote.

**C. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the February 12, 2024 Council Meeting were read by Mayor Hallum. Member Berekvam motioned to approve the minutes of the Council Meeting as presented; Member Higbe seconded the motion. Motion carried, with all in favor via Roll Call Vote.

**D. Treasurer's Report:** Clerk Grossell provided the treasurer's report. The following are the bank balances as of 02/29/2024: General Fund \$49,661.79, 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 \$27,840.44, and Electric Fund \$58,849.11. Member Lewis motioned to approve the treasurer's report including the following accounts payable:

Claim No	Vendor	Detail	Amount	Check Number
Payroll	February 2024 Payroll Period	February Net Payroll – R. Berekvam	\$ 233.18	6311
Payroll	February 2024 Payroll Period	February Net Payroll – T. Grossell	\$ 450.00	6312
03112401	Plunkett's Pest Control	Feb Pest Control	\$ 46.52	6320
03112402	Acentek	Mar 2024 Phone	\$ 41.16	6314
03112403	Whalan Museum	March Internet Expense (in full)	\$ 70.26	6315
03112404	MiEnergy	Purchase Power, invoice	\$ 3646.54	6316
03112405	O'Koren Law	Inv 1227	\$ 60.00	6317
03112406	Preston Emerg Services	Per Capita Annual Fee	\$ 1368.25	6318
03112407	Thore E Johnson	Gazebo Light	\$ 21.59	6319

Member Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried, with all in favor via Roll Call Vote.

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

**F. New Business:**

- a. Portable Bathrooms: On a motion by Higbe, seconded by Johnson the Clerk was instructed to work with OnSite Rentals to get the following portable bathrooms ordered:
  - i. Regular Single Unit from April 1 – October 31 near bike path/gazebo
  - ii. Regular Single Unit from June 1 – September 30 at the ballfieldThe DNR will provide an ADA accessible portable bathroom near the bike path for the summer months. Motion carried, with all in favor via Roll Call Vote.

**G. Continued Business:**

- a. Lanesboro Area Community Foundation Grant Application: Mayor Hallum and Member Higbe completed the form and submitted it by the posted deadline. Selected grant recipients will be

Approved on 04/08/2024

announced at their banquet on Sunday, April 7. Details of the banquet were shared, tickets are \$50 each, which includes a meal and guest speaker; there will also be an auction and door prizes.

- b. Utility Poles Repair: The repair quote from MiEnergy was discussed. The cost to fully repair all 3 would be an estimated \$15,800. This led to a further discussion about whether the city is going to continue operating our own municipal electric system or not due to the aging infrastructure. It was noted that a vote by city residents would need to take place via official ballots to make any changes to our current system and process. On a motion by Lewis, seconded by Higbe this will be tabled until next month so long-range plans can be discussed in greater length. We may need to pick a date to hold another public hearing to gather additional feedback from the residents, even though no one attended the public hearing on this same topic about 18 months ago. Motion carried, with all in favor via Roll Call Vote.
- c. Gas Meter Pricing/Decision: Member Johnson reported that it would cost between \$700 and \$800 to purchase a meter pump lock. It was discussed if we should invest in fixing the leak first. It was also decided to try to measure how much gas is in the tank every 2 weeks and compare that to the log of what the gas is being used for. We can review the logs and measurement readings at future meetings.
- d. Music in the Bluffs Next Steps: Contracts have been signed with all 3 bands and a Save the Date message was added to our website. Further marketing will be needed, but there is specific verbiage that needs to be used regarding the source of the sponsorship funds.

#### **H. Miscellaneous:**

- a) Clerk Grossell shared various updates, including Audit Work was finalized and submitted as was the Poetry Grant financial paperwork. Covid Reporting and Annual Electric Reports are due by end of March. She will be meeting with MiEnergy on Wednesday re rebates, services available, etc. So if anyone would like to attend with her, it would be a good opportunity to discuss our aging electrical infrastructure with MiEnergy. Mayor Hallum indicated he would likely attend the meeting too.
- b) License Renewals will be due in May to be effective 6-1-2024, so she needs to investigate what that process all entails.
- c) LMC Annual Conference for Mayor/Council will be held in Rochester in late June. If anyone is interested in attending, please let her know so it can be added to the next meeting's agenda to approve the funds.
- d) Grossell requested to be able to attend the Clerk's Foundational Online Training which will cost \$55. Motion to approve made by Member Lewis, Seconded by Johnson. Motion carried, with all in favor via Roll Call Vote.
- e) Acentek Video Service Franchise Fee: Grossell shared that Acentek notified her that they will begin charging our residents who have Acentek Video Services a 5% Franchise Fee, payable to the city on a quarterly basis. This dates back to the agreement made with them on 8-9-21 but had been missed until a recent audit of their records.

**Next Meeting: Monday, April 8, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.**

**ADJOURN:** Member Johnson moved to adjourn at 5:53 p.m.; motion seconded by Member Higbe. Motion carried, with all in favor via Roll Call Vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Teresa L. Grossell  
City Clerk/Treasurer