Kensington City Council Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2023

Members Present: Jim Schecker, Joe Miles, John Gran, Brock Green, and Emmy Maheux

Members Absent:

Guests: Caden Fernholz

The monthly meeting for the Kensington City Council was held November 6, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Kensington Community Center Council room and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Motion (Green/Maheux) to approve the agenda with the addition of Mike Hagen snow removal. MCU**

**Motion (Maheux/Miles) to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2023, council meeting. MCU**

**Motion (Gran/Green) to approve the bills on the claims list. MCU**

**Motion (Miles/Maheux) to approve the financial report as presented. MCU**

Caden Fernholz was present to write the city a check for 2023 land rent for Green Acres, he also inquired about the possibility of renting the land again in 2024. The council told him at this time they were unable to make that commitment, however we will let him know once the city knows how things are progressing with the development.

The Fire Department Christmas party will be held on Saturday, December 2, 2023.

Farwell Kensington Sanitary District notified the city that there would be an increase in the community center base water rate from $35.00 to $40.00 due to having a meter larger than the standard 5/8” meter.

West Central Area School Special Election is being held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023. Polls will be open from 8am to 8pm.

The Senate Capital Investment Tour will be held on Thursday, November 9 at the Kensington Community Center. The Senators on the tour will be here about 7:55 am and stary for about 20 minutes to learn more about the Cities Green Acres project. The Kensington Bank is providing water, coffee and rolls for the event. Council members should be here by 7:45am.

The council reviewed the list of delinquent animal licenses scheduled to assess property taxes if not paid by December 15, 2023.

**Motion (Green/Maheux) to approve Resolution 11-2023** **to assess delinquent animal licenses to property taxes payable in 2024. MCU**

The council had an inquiry into renting an area of office space in the old clinic next to the lab, in between the People Service office and the old reception area of the clinic. David Berget, a resident of Kensington works from home but is looking for office space outside his house. He looked at the space and was most interested in this location. The council discussed the matter and felt that $ 150.00 a month would be acceptable, this includes the office space, power, heat water/sewer and garbage. He would have to provide his own internet/phone and be responsible for cleaning is own office area.

**Motion (Gran/Green) to approve renting office space to David Berget for $150.00 per month. MCU**

The council reviewed correspondence from Thornton Law Office regarding their rate increases from $125.00 to $160.00 per hour, effective January 1, 2024.

**Motion (Maheux/Miles) to approve the new contract with the rate increase for Thornton Law Office, effective January 1, 2024. MCU**

The annual review of the City Clerks wages was conducted. The council discussed a cost-of-living adjustment of $1.00 per hour bringing the clerks wages to $ 22.00 per hour, effective January 1, 2024.

**Motion (Gran/Green) to approve a cost-of-living increase for the City Clerk of $1.00 per hour bringing the clerks wages from $21.00 to $22.00 per hour, effective January 1, 2024. MCU**

The council discussed a few old nuisance properties and a few new ones. Discussion was held regarding the potential revision of the city’s nuisance ordinance to include more detailed and stringent regulations to ensure proper enforcement of the ordinance to get existing properties cleaned up and prevent new issues. John thought Grant County had a universal enforcement policy for nuisance properties, he was going to check with the City of Herman. Jennifer will do some research as well and further discussion will follow.

The council discussed a few issues relating to the Kensington Fire Department. Discussion was held regarding how to increase enrollment numbers and increase member participation at meetings, trainings, calls, and outside activities relating to the department. Kensington Fire and Rescue is experiencing a drop in membership as most cities are as older members retire. The council asked John and Brock to discuss the issue at the next fire department meeting and as a membership to come up with a few ideas for the council to consider ensuring the continued viability of the department.

Mike Hagen requested permission from the city to push snow over the property line at the shop onto the bare land of Green Acres for this winter if need be. The council didn’t see a problem and give him permission to do so, if need be, for the 2023-2024 winter.

We finally received an update from the Department of Labor and Industry regarding elected officials and ESST time. They have determined that elected officials are not considered employees therefore making them exempt from earning ESST. Volunteer Fire Departments do, however, seem to fall under the definition of employee so their regularly scheduled hours would have to be tracked. The city clerk’s paid leave time formula will be adjusted from X number of hours worked = 8 hours of PLT to X number of hours worked = 7 hours of PLT to accommodate the addition of the ESST. ESST will be issued on an accrual basis with one hour of ESST being accrued for every 30 hours worked for a maximum of 48 hours per year. Unused ESST can be carried over up to a maximum of 80 hours. The Personnel policy will be revised to reflect the appropriate changes to PLT and the addition of ESST.

**Motion (Green/Gran) to approve the addition of ESST and the revisions to the paid leave time formula for the City Clerk. MCU**

**Motion (Green/Gran) to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. MCU**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 4, 2023, at 7 pm.

Jennifer Kangas, City Clerk