

# MEETING MINUTES EMMONS CITY COUNCIL

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Date: February 12, 2024

Time: 7:00 PM

Meeting called to order by: Paul Henschel, Mayor

## IN ATTENDANCE

Council Members: Imogene Opdahl, Eleanor Bauman, Neal Honsey, Gary Sorbo,

City Clerk: Lorry Zasada

Guests: County Commissioner, Nicole Eckstrom and CJ Gross of ISG Engineering

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Imogene. to approve the Minutes from January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, seconded by Neal. Motion carried.

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Reports were reviewed by the council. Motion made to accept the financial report by Imogene and seconded by Gary. Motion carried. Bills to be paid were reviewed and a motion was made by Neal to pay the bills, seconded by Eleanor. Motion carried.

## BUSINESS DISCUSSED

- C J Gross from ISG Engineering firm addressed the council with interest in being considered for our Wastewater Treatment Plant project. They do a lot of work with smaller communities like Emmons. Discussion involved our MPCA penalty and what ISG Engineering has to offer Emmons. They charge \$30000-35000 for the Preliminary Engineering Report required by USDA Rural Water for applying for funding. C J proposed an aerated pond system which would have a lower upfront cost, but annual electrical costs can be very significant (could be more than \$500,000/yr). Controlled discharge lagoon system is the option that Emmons has chosen, the current mechanical plant cannot be updated and the city is not interested in continuing with that type of system. Collection system improvements and water distribution should also be included in the initial scope of the project. Discussed how grant funding is being held up by Washington and states currently do not have any grant monies available at this time. Discussed the need to have a firm that will keep lines of communication open with the council and provide guidance as each step of the project becomes necessary. Emmons also needs to know all costs associated with the proposed project. Council will be reviewing all options in the upcoming weeks and is planning to have a discussion with Rural Water to determine what steps are needed next to move forward on the project. The council determined that a workshop meeting with each of the other two interested Engineering firms was in order to determine which one the city would like to continue working with through the rest of the project.

- The replacement playground equipment has been put on hold due to the requirements for installation, size of the equipment and location. Several footings would have to be dug and help to have the set put up. Council decided to cancel the current order and look for a company more local that could install the set for the city. In addition, Nicole Eckstrom suggested we contact Lana Howe with the Freeborn County SHIPs program. They may have grants available that could help to finance the park improvement. Suggested possibly installing at the school playground and adding a pergola or structure for shade at that location.
- Resident requested information on sale of lot and type of structure that can be built on Arrowhead Rd. Resident discussed with a council member who clarified building requirements.
- Municipal Clerks & Finance Officers Assn (MCFOA) Conference – council agreed that Lorry should go to the March conference and pay for membership. Motion made by Imogene to finance the conference expenses, seconded by Neal. Motion carried.
- Wigham trucking submitted their costs for street sweeping at \$1098 per occurrence and asking if Emmons wants to continue with their services for 2024. Motion made by Imogene to continue the contract, seconded by Neal. Motion carried.
- Gary had a conversation with Bolton & Menk that the city needs more information on what they are doing for our project. Council determined that a Workshop to be setup to discuss concerns with John Graupman on Friday 2/16. Additional workshops to gather information from Veenstra & Kim and other Engineering firms should be conducted for cost comparisons and project timelines and another workshop with Rural Water to determine the steps needed and will the grant cover repaving of streets should the USDA determine the collection system, water distribution and tower has to be replaced.
- Nicole Eckstrom our County Commissioner shared:
  - County is requesting specific verbiage on the new Cannabis legislation, needing further clarification.
  - County has requested that public notices be extended by 10 days to give people more time to be made aware of upcoming county board meetings.
  - There is a judge’s order to keep the front doors of the courthouse closed, having people enter through the security checkpoint at the law enforcement door with screening for safety. Having a second checkpoint would be very costly to the county and taxpayers so the decision was made to continue as is for now.
  - The North Star Act is before the MN legislature that would make Minnesota a sanctuary state for immigrants. Freeborn County commissioners are pushing back requesting how this will affect our county as far as costs, additional stress on law enforcement, shelters, schools and the ICE program that offsets their current expenses. Minnesota is in the top 5 states that immigrants are currently being sent to by other states.

## ADJOURNMENT

- Motion to adjourn was made by Gary and seconded by Neal. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM

## NEXT MEETING

Next meeting will be March 11th at 7:00 PM