

City of Rockford, Minnesota Council Meeting Minutes
6:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 23rd, 2018

The Council Meeting was called to Order by Mayor Renee Hafften at 6:00 p.m. Council members Rick Martinson, Debbie Buoy, Ted Hill, and Scott Seymour were present.

City Administrator / City Attorney, Dan Madsen; City Engineer, Jared Ward; Fire Chief, Ben Sanderson; Assistant Fire Chief, Jamie Buoy; Patrick Christensen, Justin Mielke, and Kris Menth of the Rockford Fire Department; and Sue Van Cleaf of the Crow River News were also in attendance.

SET AGENDA/CONSENT AGENDA:

A **MOTION** was made by Hill, and seconded by Seymour, to approve the Consent Agenda Items 3A and 3B and set the Agenda for the Council Meeting as follows:

3A. Approve Minutes from the October 9th, 2018 Council Workshop and Regular Council Meeting

3B. Approve Payment of Claims, Check Number: 29207 through Check Number 29249 totaling \$72,501.15.

Motion Carried: voting in favor; Hafften, Martinson, Hill, Seymour, and Buoy.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discuss and Take Appropriate Action on Fire Department Retirement Contributions. Fire Relief Secretary, Patrick Christensen, explained that the Rockford Fire Department had again fallen behind on contributions to their retirement pensions as compared to 24 similarly situated departments. Minnesota Statute allows up to \$2,700 per firefighter per year to be contributed to pensions, with State Aid and investments comprising most and often all of that cost. The Rockford Fire Department (RFD) qualified members currently receive \$2,200 per year into their retirement. The Council had previously approved a three-year step-in process that ended in 2018 that raised the contributions to this current amount, and the RFD again proposed such a process whereby the retirement would increase \$150 per year through 2021 with the retirement contribution ending at \$2,650 per year on the condition that the City did not need to contribute due to deficits or a lack of funding.

Members of the Council and the Fire Department reviewed and discussed the matter and questions and concerns were raised that the funding mechanisms were not easy to understand. Administrator / Attorney Madsen explained that RFD members did not

qualify for retirement until they have served for 5 years in good standing. The Fire Relief funds retirements for all members, and when members leave or do not qualify, that funding stays with the Fire Relief and is applicable to any current, past or future firefighters. Additionally, the State increases its contribution into the Fire Relief for retirement annual as well, which supports the City having a minimal risk of shortfalls and needing to contribute. Madsen did, however, acknowledge that any shortfall in any given year would be required to be covered or otherwise funded by the City.

After additional discussion and review, including a request to send updated calculations and basis for funding the retirement pensions, **MOTION** was made by Martinson to approve the Pension Retirement Contributions as proposed. This motion was seconded by Seymour.

Motion Carried: voting in favor; Hafften, Martinson, Hill, and Seymour. Council Member Buoy abstained, as she is married to a Rockford Fire Department member.

Northern National Pipeline Easement Request

Administrator / Attorney Madsen and Engineer Ward reviewed and explained the proposed easement of Northern National Gas Pipeline (NNG) for an easement across a small portion of the city's property upon which Jim Thome Park was constructed. Staff showed diagrams and maps detailing the proposed route the pipeline would take and the impact on the city's property and overall area in general. Two representatives of NNG were also present and helped explain the impact and goals of their easement request.

At that time, **MOTION** was made by Hill, and seconded by Martinson, to enter into Closed Session pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, Subd. 3, to discuss the offer made by NNG to purchase the easement and discuss or consider acceptance of the offer or counter offer related to this parcel.

Motion Carried: voting in favor; Hafften, Martinson, Hill, Seymour, and Buoy. The Council entered into Closed Session at approximately 6:40 p.m.

MOTION was made by Buoy, and seconded by Hill, to exit Closed Session at approximately 6:50 p.m. Administrator / Attorney Madsen explained that the Council had reviewed and considered the offer of NNG to purchase the easement earlier discussed from the City on the parcel previously identified. After a brief additional explanation, discussion and review, **MOTION** was made by Martinson to decline the offer. This motion was seconded by Hill.

Motion Carried: voting in favor; Hafften, Martinson, Hill, Seymour, and Buoy.

STAFF REPORTS:

Staff and members of the Council then discussed various updates including Canvassing the November 6th Election Results, a Public Hearing for the proposed Kwik Trip development, Fire Department Truck refurbishment, staffing and enlistment levels, trainings and on-going events, and City Hall being closed on November 12th, 2018 for Veteran’s Day.

OPEN FORUM:

Mayor Hafften called for open forum, no one from the public spoke.

ADJOURNMENT:

A **MOTION** was then made by Hill to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Buoy.

Motion Carried: voting in favor; Hafften, Martinson, Hill, Seymour and Buoy, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:15 p.m.

Typed this 7th day of November, 2018.

Dan Madsen
City Administrator, Special Counsel
City of Rockford Minnesota

All meetings of the Rockford City Council are video recorded and available for viewing on-line at www.cityofrockford.org. Meeting minutes are intended to be a general synopsis of the meetings of the City Council, and more detail regarding discussions and policy considerations is provided by watching the recording of the meeting.

Approved:

Renee Hafften
Mayor

Attest:

Dan Madsen
City Administrator, Special Counsel