

**CITY OF PARK RAPIDS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
JANUARY 26, 2021, 6:00 PM  
Park Rapids City Hall Council Chambers  
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** The January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Regular Meeting of the Park Rapids City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Ryan Leckner, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. ROLL CALL:** Present: Mayor Ryan Leckner, Councilmembers Tom Conway, Erika Randall, Liz Stone, and Robert Wills. Absent: None. Staff Present: Administrator Angel Weasner, Police Chief Jeff Appel, Fire Chief Terry Long, Treasurer Jeremy Jude, Planner Andrew Mack, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Kathy Ross and Joe Kramer from Respect Minnesota, Brianna Crowley, Sue Tomte, Mary Thompson, Nancy Newman, Rod Nordberg, LuAnn Hurd-Lof, and Robin Fish from the Enterprise.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** A motion was made by Wills, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the following addition: #9.2. Approve Public Facilities Use Permit for Wild Conspiracy to Close 5<sup>th</sup> Street W, Main Avenue S, and Second Street W, on Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., for a Puppet Parade.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**4.1. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes-January 12, 2021:** A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve the January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021; City Council Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

**5. FINANCE:**

**5.1. Payables & Prepaids:** A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Randall, and unanimously carried to approve the payables in the amount of \$17,846.74, and the prepaids in the amount of \$97,542.45, for a total of \$115,389.19.

**6. CONSENT AGENDA:** A motion was made by Conway, seconded by Wills, and unanimously carried to approve the following consent agenda items:

- 6.1. Approve Golf Cart/Class 2 ATV Licenses to Drive on City Streets in 2021 for Orville Carlson-ATV, Roy Barten-ATV, and Gerald Perpich-ATV.

- 6.2. **Resolution #2021-26 Appointing City Administrator Angel Weasner as Responsible Authority for Records Management for the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.3. **Approve Plumber's Permits to Work in the City of Park Rapids in 2021 for Northland Septic Maintenance Inc, Northern Pines Plumbing & Heating, Esser Plumbing & Heating Inc, and Ulvin Plumbing.**
- 6.4. **Resolution #2021-27 Re-Appointing Paul Albright to Serve on the Park Rapids Arts and Culture Advisory Commission.**
- 6.5. **Resolution #2021-28 Permitting the Destruction of Aged Documents as Determined by Adopted Minnesota General Records Retention Schedule.**
- 6.6. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$8,427.60 for Deitchler's Repair for Emergency Repairs to Unit #16 Plow Truck for the Public Works Department.**
- 6.7. **Approve Advertisement for the Current Open City Commission/Board Positions.**
- 6.8. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$1,490.00 for Banyon Data Systems for PSN Internet Pay EBills and PSN Module Support.**
- 6.9. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$3,747.50 for Flaherty & Hood for Professional Legal Services.**
- 6.10. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$7,263.00 for TKDA for Professional Services for the Park Rapids Municipal Airport Area Taxilanes/Part B Project.**
- 6.11. **Resolution #2021-29 Approve Minnesota Lawful Gambling LG220 Application for Exempt Permit for the Minnesota Darkhouse and Angling Association-Park Rapids Chapter.**

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**7. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:** Mary Thompson stated Heartland Lakes Development Commission is interested in developing the Heartland Lakes Entrepreneurial Accelerator Resource and Technology Hangar, which is a co-working place that will supply a one stop shop for a wide array of services for entrepreneurs, start-ups, small businesses, freelancers, and remote workers. It is our intension to locate our office within the same

space to facilitate a strong connection between the activities of the hangar and the Heartland Lakes Development.

Thompson stated we have considered a few locations and the property owned by the city located at 100 South Eighth Street, which is the old liquor store, would serve our needs quite well. We are interested in partnering with the city to allow for the conversion of the currently unused space on the main floor to be used for the HLDC offices and the hangar. Early estimates for the renovation work are approximately \$100,000.00, which the HLDC is expecting to fund. We are also requesting a grant from USDA Rural Development under the rural business development grant program to pay for the furniture, fixtures, and equipment. The application for this grant is due on February 26<sup>th</sup>.

Thompson stated we are requesting the city to consider providing the space on the main floor, which is approximately 24,000 square feet with no rent charges, snow plowing, garbage removal, and building insurance for a period of ten years. We are also asking the city to continue to pay the utility costs for the remainder of 2021. Because we are not exactly sure of when we'll be able to occupy the space. Then at the beginning of 2022 we would assume the utilities for the remainder of the lease term.

Thompson stated we expect that the city will want to continue to utilize the basement for storage of city records and would request that we would have a small area of our own in the basement for our records storage, but otherwise, we would not need the basement. I brought this to your attention today to allow the Council to ask any questions, and I'll make sure that I provide you with what you need to make a decision. I also ask that you would address this issue at your February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting so that we have an action before I have to submit the grant application on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February.

Leckner stated I asked Thompson to come and give a brief overview of what they are looking for so we have some time. We could take it to the Finance Committee to look at what the expenses would be. Does the Council have questions?

Randall stated I think we should refer it to staff for now. We'd have to get our attorneys involved on a lease agreement. Conway questioned do we need a motion to refer it to staff. Leckner stated no. Thompson stated feel free to reach out to me as we move forward with working on this.

Brianna Crowley stated I'm here to give additional information on an item that was going to be added to the agenda regarding the permitting of a parade. Leckner stated we added that as 9.2.

## **8. PLANNING:**

### **8.1. Resolution Authorizing Proper City Officials to Submit a Preliminary Grant Application to the Minnesota Historical Society for the City of Park Rapids:**

Mack stated you have before you a request for a grant application submission to the Minnesota Historical Society. To present the item to the Council is LuAnn Hurd-Lof of the Arts and Culture Advisory Commission, after all of her hard work on this grant application.

Weasner stated I'd like to recommend that we move this request to the Finance Committee. I spoke with Hurd-Lof last week when she asked for signatures. However, this is a partnership grant, because it is a shared services grant there will be some staff time, and possibly an intern will be needed. I believe that should go through the Finance

Committee first before the Council approves this grant. You could receive the information, but my recommendation is to move it to the Finance Committee.

Randall stated when I reviewed this, I reached out to Weasner to ask for some additional information about the intern. If applying to even have an intern supervised by the city had been approved by any city committee or by her, and it hadn't. I think that, unfortunately it's before us a little prematurely. I'm going to support Weasner and her request to go through the proper procedures. I apologize to Hurd-Lof. I appreciate her being prepared but this is the first we are hearing about it and unfortunately it hasn't been approved by anyone.

Hurd-Lof questioned when would the Finance Committee be meeting? Weasner stated I have to make the arrangements, but most likely next week. I need to converse with the committee members to ensure that they are available, and I will invite you to the meeting to answer any questions they may have. Hurd-Lof stated this was a pre-application so it doesn't require a signature. If it's approved and they ask us to proceed, the final deadline is March 5<sup>th</sup>. So, we do have a little time. Randall stated I don't think there is any reason that we can't have it back on the agenda for our next meeting.

Mack stated keeping the administrator informed along the way, before Weasner started, there was never any direction to any department head administering this commission that we should start first with the Finance Committee. Had I known that we would have certainly done that first.

## **9. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**9.1. Respect Minnesota Resolution:** Kathy Ross stated I'd like to tell you about Respect Minnesota. It's centered on a promise and a pledge to be respectful and to show respect, just as you would want in return. It's a positive and impartial initiative that was developed around the planning and permitting process during the Enbridge Line 3 replacement. It aims to spread a message of respect among workers, communities, businesses, residents and visitors, especially when they have different opinions.

Ross stated it's centered on a pledge to honor and respect people and their opinions and to provide a safe environment for everyone. Ross played a video for the audience, which described the mission to create a broader community view, which would ensure that all citizens of Minnesota will be respected during the process of constructing the Line 3 Project. The pledge states: I support free speech and a safe environment for everyone. I will listen, be inclusive, and look for common ground. I will respect others, our natural environment, and local communities. I will respect the cultural heritage and the history of indigenous people. I will be accountable for my words and actions, and abide by the law. Join us. Let's move forward together in this effort to make Minnesota a better place.

Ross stated there are five tenants to the pledge. Respect Minnesota has been a true grassroots effort. It started out with a conversation during the planning process for Line 3 about how to elevate respect during and through construction. What can we do to make sure that everyone feels respected during this process regardless of where you stand on it? I brought with me, Joe Kramer. He's with the operating engineers, Local 49. He and his team have put in hundreds of hours in getting this off the ground and spreading the message. Kramer is going to share some history.

Joe Kramer stated this started about two and a half years ago with the membership. The conversation was how can we lower the temperature on the controversy of this project. This is what we came up with. We brought it to all of the membership, from Northern Minnesota to Rochester, talking to members to get their input on it. After we got done talking to them, we took it a step further and went to the communities that are going to be along this right of way. We're not asking anyone to be for or against the project. We just want to make sure it's a safe environment for everyone. This is what we came up with. That's how it started, one on one conversations with people. I sat down with the mayor a year and a half ago. It led into talking with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses. That's the history of how we got to this point. The message is all members, whether you're an operator or laborer, teamster or UA member, they all agreed to sign this pledge. We have supporters that have already signed on, including businesses. We built this from the grassroots, the workers out there. Once we got to the point that the contractors and Enbridge wanted to join on, we said yes, absolutely, along with different local cities and chambers of commerce as well.

Ross stated some of the supporters have taken it a step further and wanted to share their support publicly. Beyond this project, the topic of respect is important. It's a message that people are ready to embrace. Our goals for Respect Minnesota are to continue to spread the message to foster respect among everyone that's connected to the project, regardless of your opinion or where you stand on it. To have more and more people adopt the pledge, and to continue to encourage positive behavior that reflects the values of the pledge. We're here to ask for your support for Respect Minnesota, individually, everyone in the room is invited to take the pledge. We have pledge cards with us, or you can do it on our website, [respectminnesota.org](http://respectminnesota.org).

Ross stated for governments, the idea is to adopt a resolution which enforces the support that you have for showing respect in your community, modeling the pledge, integrating it into your own meetings, and reminding others of the importance of it and how it helps to contribute to positive progress. And then importantly, make it visible. It's the marketing rule of seven when you need to keep seeing something over and over before it connects. We have a number of items that are available to help with that in your community, like putting up signs. There's no additional cost involved. We have various items that help visualize that message. The Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce has taken the pledge, and will also help spread the message of respect through their membership as well.

Kramer stated one of the things to move this forward is when workers come on during the onboarding process, they view the video and they sign the pledge at that time as well. With the contractors and Enbridge, they also do it internally in their businesses too. Everybody that's out there is aware of this campaign and are part of it.

Randall questioned this started with the members of the union, the people that are out there doing the work? Kramer stated absolutely, yes. That is exactly where it started from. All of the membership said we are going to lower the temperature and make it a safe environment for everyone no matter what side you are on with this project. As you've seen with the video and the pledge, we're not asking you to take sides. We're asking for you to find common ground and be a safe environment. We all know in the past few months what is happening. We need this. It's more important than ever right now

Stone questioned have you had any resistance? Kramer stated on presenting this over the last two years, no. Everybody agrees that this is something that is not asking you to take sides. I've never had any resistance on it at all.

Randall stated when I read through the materials, I wasn't sure who was presenting this to us. To hear that it's really the members of the union, the employees, the workers, are asking people to take this pledge because at the end of the day they are not the ones making all of these decisions and these fights at the top, they're just out there trying to do a job, and to be treated with respect. I appreciate that they also are taking a pledge to be respectful to the people that have strong opinions about it. Kudos to them for starting this. I think that's great.

Kramer stated when we first started talking about this, I'm a thirty-seven-year member of Local 49. I've been out on the right of way. I've experienced the heated topics. When we started talking about this it was, what can we do as workers? We want to be good land stewards when we're out there working as well. That's why we want to make sure everybody realizes that we're not the bad people here. We're trying to do the best thing we can. I've lived in Minnesota all of my life. I want to make sure we have clean waters. I like to fish and have fun with our grandkids as well.

**A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2021-30 Authorizing the Abidance of the Respect Minnesota Pledge by the City of Park Rapids Council.**

**9.2. Approve Public Facilities Use Permit for Wild Conspiracy to Close 5<sup>th</sup> Street W, Main Avenue S, and Second Street W, on Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., for a Puppet Parade:**

Brianna Crowley stated I'm from the Heart of the Beast Theatre. It's an amazing art and puppet theatre in the Twin Cities that puts on these incredible parades. They have done a May Day parade forever. It's an awesome parade with huge puppets. People line the streets for that. Due to COVID-19 they didn't have one in 2020. Most of the people from the theatre have been furloughed. Because of that they have extra time to take their artistry into other places. I work with the tribe in White Earth. They approached us and asked if we would be able to do something in Park Rapids. The date we suggested was February 13<sup>th</sup>. On the following day we will be in Bemidji.

Leckner stated we got a letter from Chief Appel on what the Minnesota Department of Health guidelines are according to the governor's executive order about parades. His recommendation is to not allow it because of that. Unfortunately, I think we should stick with his recommendation. Randall stated I do too. It sounds wonderful, but as a city we shouldn't start a precedence that we are going to defy the governor's current executive order. The in-person part is what is not currently allowed.

Crowley stated the planning surrounding this is being approached with the idea that it's a COVID safe event. The fact that we would be outside, masked, and socially distanced, I feel does comply with the guidelines. Randall stated I wonder about the ability to enforce and monitor people outside along Main Street. I have no doubt that is your intention, but I wonder about the enforcement of that. I don't want Park Rapids to end up on the front page of the Star-Tribune because there was a huge gathering of people without their masks at an outdoor event. People may be comfortable with that, but not for me if it's in defiance with an executive order. I have no concern about your intentions to do

all of that, it's just when you invite people to an outdoor event in a public space it becomes impossible.

Stone stated I would fully support it. I think it would be an incredible experience for our community. Unfortunately, we're still dealing with COVID, and we need to honor Chief Appel's recommendation as well as the governor's.

Crowley questioned would there be any possibility to extend the route so that it's not condensed into Main Street? Randall stated then it becomes a whole issue for our police department to monitor street crossings if it's longer than just Main Street. In the winter, that's not something that I'm comfortable with. Again, I don't think you could stop everyone from gathering right outside on one spot along the route. You'd have to have so many volunteers to keep people moving along. I would love to see this come back to us when the restrictions are lifted. That would make it more comfortable for the people that have to enforce it on our end, which is our police department.

Stone questioned have they been given the go ahead in Bemidji? Crowley stated in Bemidji they are not closing streets. They don't need a permit for it. They are doing it on that certain stretch of park. We've considered other places. Could we do it in a park? Weasner stated at this point in time, no, because we'd be condoning a gathering of larger than two-hundred. That is against the governor's order, because even with sporting events they are limiting the number of participants in any event. Conway stated we can only decide to do something like this if it was on city property. Leckner stated we all think it's a great idea and we'd love to do it, but at this time following the guidelines, I don't think that we can allow it.

Crowley stated maybe we'll have to move it to tribal territory. That has been another discussion of having a smaller parade somewhere in White Earth. If we were to do that, we could invite anyone we wanted to. Conway stated once you get it out of the city there's nothing we can say about it. We don't want to do anything in violation with the governor's order.

**A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to deny, with regrets, the request for a Public Facilities Use Permit for Wild Conspiracy to Close 5<sup>th</sup> Street W, Main Avenue S, and Second Street W, on Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., for a Puppet Parade.**

**10. CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:** Weasner stated thank you to everyone for the opportunity to be here. I'd like to have a Finance Committee meeting on a regular basis, at least for the next six months to get some things taken care of that I see we need to discuss in much greater detail. Stone stated I think that is a really good idea. Randall stated I fully support that.

Weasner stated I'm still meeting with some of our employees. I will be meeting with the police department and public works. I still have to touch base with some leaders of the community. I'm holding conversations and learning more about the community with the key leaders. I will continue to do that until I think I have exhausted everybody.

**11. DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:** Scott Olson stated public works painted some surfaces in the building that haven't been painted since 1995. It looks very nice.

Mack stated I have included information in the packet. It's a two-year progress report from the Planning Department and Commission. It was presented to the Planning Commission at their regular meeting. They did recommend approval to send it forward to the Council.

**12. MINUTES/REPORTS/INFORMATION:** There were no comments.

**13. COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:** Stone thanked Mack for all of the work that he did on the planning report. I appreciate a synopsis of everything that we've accomplished over the last two years. Going forward he has indicated he will be providing this on a yearly basis. It's nice to see it all in one place.

Randall stated I echo Stone's comments about the planning report. It was an interesting read and a reminder of all that's been accomplished. Welcome to Angel. We are excited to have you on board.

Wills stated kudos to Mack. I loved the report.

Conway welcomed Weasner.

Leckner also welcomed Weasner, and thanked Mack. I'd like the Council to think about setting maybe one or two work sessions per month either before or after the regular meeting so we can try to get through some of these unresolved items. That goes for the Finance Committee too. It would enable us to move forward quicker on issues that we are trying to accomplish. Weasner suggested possibly holding work sessions on off-Tuesdays so that it doesn't make for a long night. Randall stated I'm open to exploring that. It's good to have a work session scheduled at least once a month. I would prefer to have it before a meeting versus adding another meeting on the off-Tuesdays since we do meet in the evenings. Leckner stated I like that too but we'll try and make it work for everybody. If we have one scheduled for once a month, we can get it on our calendars.

**14. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by Conway, seconded by Wills, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

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Mayor Ryan Leckner

ATTEST:

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Margie M. Vik  
City Clerk