

**CITY OF PARK RAPIDS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 28, 2020, 6:00 PM
Park Rapids City Hall Council Chambers
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

1. CALL TO ORDER: The July 28th, 2020, 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 Ryan Mathisrud, Planner Andrew Mack, Treasurer Jeremy Jude, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Elizabeth Wefel from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, Apex Engineer Jon Olson, Sue Tomte, and Robin Fish from the Enterprise.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A motion was made by Conway, seconded by Randall, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the following additions:

**Consent Agenda: #6.7. Approve Purchase in the Amount of \$1,948.00 from AGM for Four (4) Directional Signs at the Park Rapids Municipal Airport.
General Business: #8.1. Additional Information from CGMC.**

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

4.1. City Council Workshop Minutes- July 14, 2020: A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Wills, and unanimously carried to approve the July 14th, 2020, City Council Workshop minutes as presented.

4.2. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes-July 14, 2020: A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Wills, and unanimously carried to approve the July 14th, 2020, City Council Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

5. FINANCE:

5.1. Payables & Prepaids: A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve the payables in the amount of \$121,787.20, and the prepaids in the amount of \$191,747.49, for a total of \$313,534.69.

6. CONSENT AGENDA: Randall removed items #6.2. and #6.7. from the consent agenda. **A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Randall, and unanimously carried to approve the following consent agenda items:**

- 6.1. Approve Golf Cart/Class 2 ATV Licenses to Drive on Park Rapids City Streets in 2020 for Allan Wimpfheimer-ATV and Jeffrey Edward Berndt-ATV.**
- 6.2. *Removed from the consent agenda.*
- 6.3. Approve Transient Merchant License for Kevin Einafshar d.b.a. L&G Concessions for July 17th to 20th, 2020, at 1107 First Street East.**
- 6.4. Approve Public Facilities Use Permit for the Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce to Close Block Two of Main Avenue South on Friday, November 27th, 2020, from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony.**
- 6.5. Approve Purchase in the Amount of \$4,388.00 from Midstates Wireless on the State Contract Bid Price for One (1) APX6000 700/800 Model 2.5 Portable Radio for the Park Rapids Police Department.**
- 6.6. Resolution #2020-123 Accepting the Resignation of Park Rapids Parks and Beautification Board Member Ruth Ann Campton.**
- 6.7. *Removed from the consent agenda.*

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

6.2. Approve Purchase in the Amount of \$10,672.32 from Dell for Eight (8) Laptop Computers Using CARES Act Funds for City Employees to Work Remotely:

Randall stated I see that the computer purchase are laptop computers. In speaking with Mathisrud I also understand there needs to be some work done to our server and firewall so that people can access the information from their homes. I understand all of that about accessing the information, but I question the decisions to buy laptops in addition to their desktops. So many places are going, especially now that people know they can work efficiency from home, that their desktop is a docking system at work. I feel that is the route we should go on, to get an estimate that these new computers replace the computers in the offices here instead of having these desktops that are going to be phasing out. Then we'll be stuck with these laptops that we spent \$10,000.00 on that can't be docked properly. That's what I'd like to see us do to move forward. I understand the urgency of it,

but we've made it since March like this. I want to make sure we are using city funds properly and getting our tech up to date and using it the best way we can.

Conway stated I would agree. I've been working with a docking station for fifteen years. That way everything that you do at work is on your computer when you take it home. I would agree with that statement.

Mathisrud stated we will look into bringing that as an add for the folks that use desktop computers. We can use those docking stations in the future. Conway stated there are laptops that you can't use a docking station with. Randall stated Dell has one that it's a plug in and it just plugs in with a cord. I'm going to ask that this be referred back to staff. If you go forward with this and you can't dock these later, we just wasted a bunch of money. How old are the desktops?

Mathisrud stated our last desktop purchase citywide was in 2016. The intent for purchasing the laptops was to upgrade the desktop computers. The initial thought on this was by upgrading these with the servers, you'll be able to access the server remotely, after upgrading the firewall. That would potentially eliminate the need for docking stations. I haven't researched the docking stations themselves. Randall stated it wouldn't eliminate the need for a docking station. People are still going to want to use a big monitor. Otherwise, you'll be forcing people to use a laptop at work all of the time. If they don't dock they're not going to be able to use a regular keyboard or monitor.

Mathisrud stated I can reach out to our tech person and get a more thorough explanation. Randall stated most people don't like working off of a laptop all of the time. You have employees that have two big monitors. Once you work on that you don't want to go back to one monitor much less a laptop monitor. These need to be docked because you have your same setup on your desk and instead of a big box on the floor your laptop houses everything. Mathisrud stated I'll do some more work on that and bring it to the next meeting. Randall stated your tech person ordered all of the stuff for the county attorney's office when we switched over so they'll know what to buy.

The purchase in the amount of \$10,672.32 from Dell for Eight (8) Laptop Computers using CARES Act Funds for City Employees to work remotely was referred back to staff to gather more information about docking stations for the laptops.

6.7. Approve Purchase in the Amount of \$1,948.00 from AGM for Four (4) Directional Signs at the Park Rapids Municipal Airport: Randall stated I'm worrying why we're using COVID funds for this purchase. I don't see the connection. Mathisrud stated we received an additional \$30,000.00 for maintenance and operations funds. Randall stated that additional money was a grant to the airport for maintenance and operations for the airport. I saw COVID funds and I was concerned that we were using that money that we discussed at the last meeting. With that clarification that this will come out of the \$30,000.00 grant for the airport, it's fine.

A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to approve purchase in the amount of \$1,948.00 from AGM for Four (4) Directional Signs at the Park Rapids Municipal Airport.

7. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS: There were no comments.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS:

8.1. Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities Legislative Update by

Elizabeth Wefel: Wefel stated the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) is now one-hundred and two cities throughout the state. Ten years ago we were at about seventy-five cities. We've always worked on issues that are important to Greater Minnesota like local government aid (LGA), property taxes, economic development, transportation, environment, a lot more labor and employment this year because of the pandemic, and also some areas that we didn't expect to be working on this year.

Wefel stated I would normally be telling you about the goals we had for the session and what we did to achieve those goals. We went into the session with high expectations. We thought it would be a short session. There was a \$1.5 billion surplus and we were hoping that it would be divided between tax cuts and spending and we thought we'd be working on a bonding bill.

Wefel stated then the pandemic hit and life changed right around March 13th. The reality is we had no in person legislative meetings, two special sessions and counting. Our surplus became a deficit. We had a battle over how to apportion the federal aid. Civil unrest and police reform took center stage at the legislature. There were battle lines drawn over executive powers and the bonding bill is still tied up in uncertainty.

Wefel stated we didn't realize when our Legislative Action Day happened, it turned out to be one of the last legislative action days because within two days they canceled all hearings and shut all of the buildings down. It was a great meeting and all of a sudden things changed.

Wefel stated our goals before were to pass a bonding bill, try to advance some changes in the LGA formula to address inflation and population growth, build on childcare, and address strategy on PFAS chemicals. After that, the bonding bill is still a big priority for us. We really had to spend a lot of time working on how the CARES Act was distributed to our local governments. There are new challenges with respect to childcare. We're trying to push for small business grants through legislation and working proactively to protect LGA.

Wefel stated our labor group was a lot more active with the CGMC this spring helping us develop a resource page, we hosted webinars, multiple educational emails, and even hosted a Zoom meeting with the governor to talk about the pandemic. That really became the first order of business.

Wefel stated the CARES Act was the federal legislation that provided payments to state, local, and tribal governments to help navigate the impact of the pandemic. They passed that in late March. In early April the state received about \$1.8 billion. The challenge was that the guidance was very vague from the feds. We knew that local governments should get some of that, but how much would actually go to local governments? You look at competing proposals, the administration had the lowest amounts going to local governments. The house was in the middle, and the senate was higher. We worked with other local government groups, the Department of Revenue, and the legislators to try and come up with a funding distribution that really did send a lot of money to our communities. At that point we really didn't know what the needs would be. We worked closely with the senate. We liked their proposal. That didn't go through during the regular session. We

came up with a compromise proposal that everyone agreed to in June, but they couldn't get it done before the special session. So, at the end of that month the governor basically approved a funding distribution that mirrored the compromise that we had reached with the legislature. Even though it didn't get passed by the legislature it did equal what we negotiated out with everyone.

Wefel stated you can see in the report how the different legislative bodies looked at the distribution. The House didn't give as much straight to local governments. The Senate gave more. The in between came down to \$841 million that went to local governments. Park Rapids got \$311,000.00. One question was what about the rest of those millions. That is getting distributed out in a number of different ways. For example the legislative commission, which is the four leaders of the legislative bodies, approved \$100 million to be distributed for housing and utility payment relief for people across the state. It's getting used but for other programs. There are some good resources out there, the Minnesota Department of Revenue, and others, to ask if you have questions about those other funds.

Wefel stated I thought bonding would be our top priority during the legislative session. We called for a \$1.5 billion bonding bill. One of our top priorities continues to be to put more money into the PFA for wastewater, drinking water, and storm water projects. Most of our cities face those issues. It's really important for us to put more money into those programs. We're also pushing money for the BDPI, child care facilities, and public infrastructure to support housing. New this year was money for local roads and bridges. We had a big push for it at the beginning of the session, but with the pandemic a large bonding bill was even more important to stimulate the economy. There was a lot of tossing and turning around the bonding bill, but at the end of the day nothing happened. We pushed hard for it. It wasn't a major focus of our efforts. We were advocating for it last fall. We held press conferences and received a lot of good coverage. We joined with groups, city, environmental, construction, to try and push for more water money. We sent a lot of letters to our different legislative leaders. We even got national attention for some of our efforts after sending out a press release that our legislative session was a train wreck. That was picked up by the national media really bringing intensity to the issue but at the end of the day the legislature failed to pass a bill during the second special session. What's been happening is it getting tied into other issues. The legislators can't seem to come together. We are going to continue to be pushing on them because that bill is necessary. I don't know yet how helpful that will be. The MMB is telling us that we can't pass a bonding bill during August. But I think there is still going to be a push for trying to get something done in August or September. We want to get it done before the next session starts. That is going to be at the top of the agenda to try and get it done next year. There are a lot of infrastructure jobs that need to happen.

Wefel stated the next thing that should be on your radar is per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). These are pervasive forever chemicals linked to health concerns and found in waterbodies across the state. Bemidji's drinking water has been contaminated by PFAS because their wells are located at their airport. That's where their firefighting foam was used and it seeped into their drinking water wells. They are having to put treatment in their wells. It's very expensive to do that. We're hoping that few cities are affected in that way. The concern is that it will be found in wastewater. It's almost impossible to remove it from wastewater. There is no known feasible technology to remove these from wastewater.

Wefel stated our concern is we do not want the regulations getting ahead of us and imposing requirements on our cities that they simply can't meet. We think that the best way to tackle that is to focus on how do you control the source of PFAS. We came up with an idea and found some partners and we developed the Municipal Source Reduction Initiative. We partnered with the League of Minnesota Cities because it will impact everyone across the state. We have a three pronged approach. We want to identify the main sources of PFAS in wastewater, identify source reduction strategies, and educate wastewater professionals and public ways to prevent PFAS from entering the waste stream. We sought \$500,000.00 for this initiative. We had legislators carry our bill but once the pandemic hit any hopes of spending bills really went out of the window, unless they were COVID related. We spent a lot of time pushing back on related bills. We think education is really important. It's something that can be controlled. We were worried that there would be legislation that was not carefully crafted, and we were correct. There was legislation that would have held our cities liable if it showed up in your wastewater. We're trying to work with the legislators on a common sense way of trying to address this issue. It will continue to be a top priority for us in 2021 because it's not going away at a local or national level.

Wefel stated we've been working on childcare for the last couple of years. It's a top priority to put some money into the childcare grant programs that we helped create last time as well as money towards six Minnesota Initiative Foundations. We were looking hopefully at this. At the beginning of session the DFL identified this as their top priority. They proposed \$1/2 billion for it, including money for our programs. But then COVID happened, and again that kind of spending isn't going to happen right now. The state did respond to some of the childcare issues during this crisis. They allocated money for emergency funds, slightly more than half of that went to Greater Minnesota. In June, the special session pushed some money to childcare and in July the governor announced some additional money. It is something right now that my colleagues that works on the childcare issue are looking at what further can be done. The COVID is creating special childcare challenges and we were facing a crisis already in Greater Minnesota and we don't want it to get worse. It's going to be a big priority for us next year.

Wefel stated those weren't the only issues that we worked on this year. There's more in your packets and you can call us if you have questions about anything we're working on. Looking ahead, the state budget forecast in February, that they do every year, showed a \$1.5 billion surplus. In May, they took the unprecedented step to do a budget forecast that showed a projected deficit of \$2.4 billion. For us when we hear that we think about what does that do to local government aid? We immediately called out and sent a letter to the governor and the legislature and issued a press release calling for LGA to be paid on time and in full. That's going to be our motto for the next six months. LGA, on time, and in full. We think that's extremely important. We've seen what has happened when we've had previous budget deficits and our local governments are facing a lot of challenges and we really need that support of LGA. We'll continue to push on that.

Wefel stated MMB has said that they will be doing another revised forecast. It may happen in August or September. The question becomes, we will probably have a budget deficit. When will the state address it? Now, or at the next session? The options are they could deal with it during a special session which we anticipate will happen in August. They could wait until the next regular session or the governor could use his un-allotment powers,

which we have not seen in almost ten years. It's something that we prefer to avoid. Our top priority is going to be insuring that LGA is going to be paid on time and in full. That is extremely important to our communities. There was a bump in LGA last year for our cities. It was staged in two pieces. In 2021 you'll be getting another slight bump, which is a carryover from the previous session. We'll continue to work on that.

Wefel stated looking ahead, there are a lot of things in play. I'm making no prediction on what's going to happen with the November election. It's about one-hundred days away and I think a lot of stuff can happen between now and then. We could see some shifts in the power dynamic. The pandemic is going to continue to affect our economy and our legislative process. We will continue to push for bonding and protecting LGA. We are already working on how to lay the groundwork for that next session.

Wefel stated we had to cancel our summer conference. If you are free from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. this Friday you can come in on our membership meeting. That will be done via Zoom. We're urging everyone to sign up and join in for that. We have our fall conference scheduled for Wilmar in November. Legislation Action Day in January and our summer conference will be in Red Wing next summer. One of the reasons we can do the things we do is because we have this wide membership base throughout the state. It really helps us to get things done. Thank you for your long time membership in Park Rapids and your participation. We appreciate it. We're always happy if you want to get more involved, just let us know. We are always looking for folks that want to step up on that next level.

8.2. Resolution Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids for the Well and Water Treatment Facility Improvements in the City of Park Rapids: Mathisrud stated we have been working to do some well improvements for the city. Jon Olson is here to discuss some of the specifics associated with that.

Jon Olson, from Apex Engineering Group, stated we've been working on the well and water treatment facility improvements over the last several months. Now we're getting to the point that we are near completing those drawings and we're ready to put them out for advertisement for bids.

Olson stated the project generally includes a new production well, #10. It will be the city's tenth well. It will have the same capacity as well #9. It will operate between 600 and 1,100 gallons per minute. The intent with this new well is a redundant well in the sense that well #9 and #10 will be your only two wells that will be in operation and would not run at the same time. Your typical flow rate on well #9 is right at 600 gallons per minute. Rarely do we see that ramp up. It ramps up based on need and demand on the system.

Olson stated the existing four wells, #5, #6, #7, and #8 are no longer in service. They have water quality issues. We are recommending that those be sealed. Burlingame obtained a \$10,000.00 grant from the Minnesota Department of Health to assist with some of those costs. We'll be reconfiguring the route of the water lines coming into the facility on the north side. The existing well #9 is above grade. Staff has expressed concerns about that regarding potential freeze up. We're bringing the new well #10 in under grade and staff has requested that we reroute #9 and put it under grade as well. We inspected that above grade penetration and there is actually some separation on that facility already. This is a much better long term solution.

Olson stated in addition to the well improvements there's various maintenance improvements that staff would like to see. We do agree with them. The facility has been in operation for seven years. There are a few valves that are non-functional. There are a couple of valves on the drawdowns on the filters that are undersized. We're proposing to replace those and the associated piping. The screens and the filters are on top. There are five pressure filters in that facility. There is a screen on the top of the filter. Those are plugged and not operating correctly. It's challenging for staff to get in and replace those. We're recommending that when we have a mechanical guy on site that we replace those filters as part of the project. The chemical feed equipment, there's a pump or two that needs replacing, and the injection points have been a constant maintenance item for staff. We're proposing to replace all of those at elevations that are suitable for frequent maintenance.

Olson stated we're recommending replacing the electric heaters. There are four electric heaters in the facility. We're recommending to replace three, the two large ones in the treatment portion of the facility, and one in the well water portion. The electric heater in the feed room, that one is very congested. It doesn't run too often, but we're recommending that one stay in place. We'd replace the three large electrical units with gas, which will be far more energy efficient.

Olson stated we reviewed these drawings with staff over the past couple of weeks. They did have several good comments, which were appreciated. They are the ones that are using and operating this facility. We incorporated that feedback into the drawings. I will review it one last time with them before we go out for bids. The design estimate has grown a little bit as it's evolved. We're currently estimating construction costs around \$450,000.00, or upwards to \$500,000.00. We'd like to receive bids on August 20th, 2020, review the bids with the Council at the August 25th meeting for a potential award with the possibility of starting construction this season yet, through the winter and finishing up in the spring. We're getting pretty late in the season to be doing exterior well work. We're going to give the contractor the option to provide a deduct for doing the well work in the spring to see if there is any cost savings with that. We'll review that with you at the August 25th meeting.

Olson stated we are recommending approval of the plan and authorization to receive bids. Wills questioned are they going to go into the same aquifer as well #9? Olson stated it is. It's the first confined aquifer. It's the same one as well #9. We'll have the same water quality and it won't cause any issues with the plant's operations and chemistry going through the plant. Leckner stated they won't be used at the same time so it's just a backup. Right now we don't have a backup. Olson stated there won't be any additional stress on that aquifer with the installation of this well. It is simply a redundant well, which is absolutely a recommended practice.

A motion was made by Wills, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2020-124 Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids for the Well and Water Treatment Facility Improvements in the City of Park Rapids.

9. CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS: Mathisrud stated Governor Walz enacted the face mask order last week. We've been implementing those procedures in the

city's facilities. So far we've made masks available to the public. Everybody's been wearing them and in compliance with that order. We've installed some Plexiglas barriers in the liquor store to separate staff from each other. That's in performance with the recommendations for the mask order so if they are behind the counter at the point of sale they are allowed to not wear masks, but when they leave they have to put them on. As a reminder, our first meeting in August will be on Wednesday, August 12th, due to the Primary Election, which will be held on our regularly scheduled Council meeting date on Tuesday.

10. DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES: There were no comments.

11. MINUTES/REPORTS/INFORMATION: There were no comments.

12. COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL: There were no comments.

13. ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Conway, seconded by Wills, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

[seal]

Mayor Ryan Leckner

ATTEST:

Margie M. Vik
City Clerk