

**CITY OF PARK RAPIDS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 13, 2020, 6:00 PM
Park Rapids City Hall Council Chambers
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

1. CALL TO ORDER: The October 13th, 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 Betty Thomsen, Planner Andrew Mack, Treasurer Jeremy Jude, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Lance Bagstad, Glenn Chiodo, Sue Tomte, Cynthia Jones, and Robin Fish from the Enterprise.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A motion was made by Conway, seconded by Wills, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the following addition to the Consent Agenda: #6.12. Authorize Staff to Advertise for the Full Time Accounting/Administrative Assistant Position in Accordance with the Attached Advertisement and to Interview Potential Candidates.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

4.1. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes-September 22, 2020: A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Randall, and unanimously carried to approve the September 22nd, 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 \$103,278.22, and the prepaids in the amount of \$74,841.95, for a total of \$178,120.17.

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

- 6.1. Approve Purchase in the Amount of \$5,843.00 from Minnesota Pump Works for the Replacement of a Wastewater Pump for Lift Station #14 for the Public Works Department.**
- 6.2. Resolution #2020-148 Authorizing Cooperation with the Headwaters Regional Development Commission (HRDC) and the City of Park Rapids, Minnesota, for Community-Wide Application to the US EPA for a Brownfields Environmental Assessment Grant.**
- 6.3. Resolution #2020-149 Designating Authorized Signatures for the Year 2020 for the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.4. Resolution #2020-150 Appointing Interim City Administrator Betty Thomsen as Responsible Authority for Records Management for the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.5. Resolution #2020-151 Appointing Interim City Administrator Betty Thomsen to Serve on the Fire Relief Association Board of Trustees for the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.6. Resolution #2020-152 Approving Wage Adjustment and Step Increase for Full Time Park Rapids Police Officer Austin Rittgers.**
- 6.7. Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$1,230.00 for Northwoods Computer Service for IT Support for the Park Rapids Police Department.**
- 6.8. Resolution #2020-153 Approve Minnesota Lawful Gambling LG220 Application for Exempt Permit for Hubbard First Response and Rescue.**
- 6.9. Approve Public Facilities Use Permit for Park Rapids Downtown Business Association c/o LuAnn Hurd-Lof to Close Main Avenue South, Block Four Center Parking Spaces, on Saturday, October 31st, 2020, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. for Halloween Candy Giveaway Event.**
- 6.10. Resolution #2020-154 Approving Wage Adjustment and Step Increase for Public Works Street Maintenance Worker Justin Leritz.**
- 6.11. Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$35,255.54 for Apex Engineering Group for Professional Services for Various Projects in the City of Park Rapids.**

- 6.12. Authorize Staff to Advertise for the Full Time Accounting/Administrative Assistant Position in Accordance with the Attached Advertisement and to Interview Potential Candidates.**

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

7. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS: There were no comments.

8. PLANNING:

8.1. Resolution Approving a Conditional Use Permit for John Rowe in the City of Park Rapids to Locate and Operate a Mechanical Contractor's (HVAC) Office and Shop at 105 Grove Avenue North, PID #32.52.42911: Andrew Mack stated this is a request for a conditional use permit for John Rowe to locate and operate a HVAC business, at 105 Grove Avenue North. It's an existing building that has recently been remodeled. It was formerly an instant lube change business and it also has office space. He was proposing to locate his contractor shop here, thereby moving out of his home and garage, and open a new business here in Park Rapids, which we welcome. He would operate without any outside storage or displays. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on this item. There were no comments received from the citizens. They have recommended approval based on the findings of fact, and two conditions. One is that there will be no outdoor storage of HVAC products or contracting equipment, and two would be conformity to all other applicable requirements of the city code. With that, we recommend approval of the resolution for the conditional use permit.

A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Wills, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2020-155 Approving a Conditional Use Permit for John Rowe in the City of Park Rapids to Locate and Operate a Mechanical Contractor's (HVAC) Office and Shop at 105 Grove Avenue North, PID #32.52.42911.

8.2. Resolution Approving the Revocation of Conditional Use Permit NO. 18-06 Via Resolution #2018-167 for Josh Elsner in the City of Park Rapids for a Well Drilling Contractor Operation and a Manufactured Storage Shed Sales Lot at 18154-169th Avenue, PID #32.20.01450: Mack stated we had a request forwarded at the last meeting for a conditional use permit revocation for Josh Elsner out at the intersection of Highway 34 and 169th Avenue, on the southeast corner of the property. The business operations have ceased to operate there. The Council had previously approved a small addition to the conditional use across the street where the storage building displays have been moved to. That site has been returned back to the condition it was in before the city approved the permit. It was never fully developed, nor did they comply with the conditions. I spoke with Mr. Elsner to say we were revoking the permit and there was no objection. He also stated he was sick for a period of time, which prevented him from being more proficient at operating the business at that location. With that understanding, and with the

recommendation of the Planning Commission, and no public comment, we are recommending revocation of that permit.

Mack stated as a caveat, with the two revocations, we did make the amendment to the ordinance in January of this year, talking about permits that don't start or aren't complete, that we would have automatic revocation, discontinuance of those. We probably still need to do some form of resolution, but that is going to address this type of thing in the future for a more streamlined administration enforcement of those. With that understanding we are recommending approval of this resolution revoking the permit for Mr. Elsner.

A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2020-156 Approving the Revocation of Conditional Use Permit NO. 18-06 Via Resolution #2018-167 for Josh Elsner in the City of Park Rapids for a Well Drilling Contractor Operation and a Manufactured Storage Shed Sales Lot at 18154-169th Avenue, PID #32.20.01450.

8.3. Resolution Approving the Revocation of a Conditional Use Permit No. CUP 15-01 Via Resolution #2015-54 for John and Bonnie Farrington in the City of Park Rapids to Construct and Operate a Diesel Repair Center on an 11.39-Acre Parcel in a B-1 Zoning District, Located at 17255 State Highway 34, PID

#32.20.01420: Mack stated the recommendation from the staff and Planning Commission is to revoke a permit for John and Bonnie Farrington to construct and operate a diesel repair center in the B-1 zoning district on State Highway 34 East. Since the approval of this CUP there was a decision to locate that business elsewhere outside of the city just north of town. Therefore, the project never went forward. The site is still completely undeveloped. This is a situation of our ordinance standards that this permit would automatically lapse and the approval cease. Since this was issued five years ago, we're recommending that the Council revoke this conditional use permit and approve the resolution for its revocation.

A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2020-157 Approving the Revocation of a Conditional Use Permit No. CUP 15-01 Via Resolution #2015-54 for John and Bonnie Farrington in the City of Park Rapids to Construct and Operate a Diesel Repair Center on an 11.39-Acre Parcel in a B-1 Zoning District, Located at 17255 State Highway 34, PID #32.20.01420.

9. GENERAL BUSINESS:

9.1. 2020 District 309 Vote Yes Presentation: Lance Bagstad stated I'm here to speak to Project 309, along with Glenn Chiodo. I'm going to run through our presentation with you. I moved to Park Rapids nine years ago. It was a big change for my family. It's been a fabulous adventure for us. Being part of the school system has been refreshing for me as a leader, and my family and I are very fortunate to live in Park Rapids. Park Rapids is a place where everyone is welcome. As Park Rapids looks to the future their main goal is to be inviting to people. We want them to stay active, and we want Park Rapids to thrive. When we look at Project 309 and how schools are a very important piece of the city and the community, Project 309 is about making a lasting impact to change more lives for the better, just in line with Park Rapids as it is for its residents and visitors.

Bagstad stated I want to discuss the process, how we got to where we are, planning concepts, and the tax impact of Project 309. You were part of the process. We went to nineteen different groups to gather input. In 2018, we started thinking about the future of Park Rapids Area Schools. We knew that in 2025 we had the Century debt coming due, and with things changing rapidly in education and in our society how can we best put together a plan that will positively impact the next two generations of students and residents of the Park Rapids Area.

Bagstad stated with that we started working through the strategic plan. We put together a great plan. In that plan it talks a lot about educational programming as well as facility programming for the future. How do we positively impact to make things better for the students and our community? We went through the listening sessions and gathered valuable data. We went back to ten of those groups and reported. We completed a detailed enrollment projection, which states that Park Rapids Schools will have a 10% increase in student enrollment over the next ten years. It also indicates that the Park Rapids area is going to grow as well. One of the things that we've seen so far through the pandemic is the incredible rush on real estate. It's not all locals upgrading. People are coming to Park Rapids.

Bagstad stated we completed three assessments, educational adequacy, how does our building work with our educational programs. The building utilization and how do we use it with our students, as well as an in-depth facilities study and how is our envelope and our mechanicals. We did a lot of leadership meetings with our staff and conducted a scientific phone survey with four-hundred residents across the demographic as well as an online survey. With that we developed a lot of input from folks.

Bagstad stated with that input we have a concept. What we heard that we put into this concept was we need to provide a safe and secure learning environment. We know with the Sandy Hook and the Parklands we need to provide a safe environment for our kids and our people. We also heard about creating dedicated space for students and staff to collaborate. More now than ever we realize the importance of space. We need to have space in order to be able to collaborate, to break out, to be able to learn in different environments. We also heard without a doubt more opportunities for hands on and those career exploration opportunities. Update spaces to meet the needs for how the students today and tomorrow, as well as create those transitions at appropriate times are early childhood, 7th and 8th grades, to make those transitions easier, and to group those kids in the right age groups, early childhood two, three, six, seven, nine, ten, twelve. Reconfiguring has been one of the things that we talked about in order to be efficient as well as provide those opportunities for students to collaborate and grow with those age level groups.

Bagstad stated we talked about our current challenges. Right now, we have outgrown Frank White and Century School. Frank White is where we host our pre-K programs. With Governor Dayton's voluntary pre-K where the state took over the funding of the four-year-old programming's our voluntary pre-K numbers continue to grow, which means our space has become inefficient. We also know that our 7th and 8th grade at Century School, we need to get those kids involved earlier when it comes to doing those career technical programs and those hands-on opportunities. Renovating our existing facilities and moving our 7th and 8th grades to the high school space in Century where we can adjust and transition those early childhood programs. Those transitions, the pre-K, the

kindergarten, is so important to those kids to be kinder ready when they get to kindergarten. We know that the 7th and 8th grades students need those secondary educational opportunities for them now in order for them to grow into the high school program. Just increase those opportunities. Repurposing space at Century and the high school for project-based learning and create that collaborative space, and career technical education for those 7th and 8th graders.

Bagstad stated in the conceptual plan we would develop academic programming for 7th through 9th grade. We'd also enter the school building with a secure entrance into offices, that they'd have to go through in order to enter into the rest of the building. There would be a two station PE area, which would serve as an auxiliary gym as well. We would be able to update and renovate a boy's locker room, which currently is in a basement. We'd bring that up to surface level and we'd make our current kitchen area, which is by the activities commons, into a concessions and a lavatory for the activities commons. Our band and choir practice areas, according to Minnesota State Educational guidelines are insufficient. It's too small and our ceilings are too low. We'd renovate that area as well as our auditorium. We would be able to have zones. We'd have a 7-9 academic zone in the southeast corner and then we'd be able to have a performing art and an activity zone that would encompass a multi-purpose area, the pool, gym, fitness center, and the auditorium. To the north, we would have our commons area and the natural split between 7-9 and 12, along with it we would locate our kitchen and serving line where the current office is, to keep it all together for our commons. The high school office would move to the main entrance so we'd have a secure entrance into that building. There is a lot of renovation into the academic wing for 10-12 we found through our educational adequacy study that 90% of our current rooms are undersized according to guidelines. They are approximately 800 square feet, whereas the guidelines require 850-900 square feet. With COVID, we know how important space is when it comes to separation. We would also renovate some classroom areas and enhance our career and technical educational programming by adding some shop space and the ALC and some art areas.

Bagstad stated at Century School, there would be a new construction for a separate student/parent drop off area for our 3-6. That would displace our current playground, which would move to the southwest side of the building. The drop off would allow access into a secure area with the office being moved over in the entrance. In the southwest corner of the pod we would add two additional classrooms to accommodate the expected growth. We would repurpose the old offices for itinerant areas, as well as our Century Adventures area and a repurposed music area for the entire school in the north end. On the east side we would repurpose our current kindergarten-second grade wing and make it into our early childhood center. We would have the office at the entrance to be a secure area to enter the building. We'd build another classroom for kindergarten. We'd keep our kindergarten classes small. Seven classrooms seem to be around what we need and predict for the future. When Century was built twenty years ago all the end space was collaborative area for students to work in. It has now been walled off and made into classrooms because of our growing enrollment. We would repurpose that back into collaborative space.

Bagstad stated our educational adequacy study is broken down into eighteen categories. Our current status according to the Minnesota Department of Education show many areas are inadequate. As an example, our classroom size and suitability are undersized according to the guidelines. After the renovation that category would become

green. Safety and security would become green after the project. Parking, the bus drop-off, accommodating expected growth for the future, all would become green according to the chart.

Bagstad stated a lot of people have already voted. If you haven't there's two questions on the ballot. Question one needs to be approved before question two would come into play. Question one is based on what we found to be the educational needs from all of the input that we received that would impact our students and our educational programming. Question two, we heard the needs, but aren't directly related to educational programming for students. Question one asks shall we borrow \$54 million to renovate the high school, fund additions, renovations to the Century School, reconstruct parking lots, and support the reassignment of grades between the buildings, and the demolition of Frank White. Question two talks about the bus garage and our current tennis court situation. It doesn't directly impact student programming, but we heard from our folks that it's important so we're asking question two. The current situation with the bus garage is at the fairgrounds. We pay about \$18,000.00. It's smaller than what we need. We have at least ten buses that sit outside all of the time. Highway 34 tends to be a problem. We've worked that issue and it's not going to go away. MN Dot has no issue with the intersection crossing there.

Bagstad stated we are proposing a larger bus garage. It would allow us to house our buses inside. Part of the maintenance would include a wash station so we could keep them clean. In northern Minnesota we battle salt. The facility would be located on District 309 property adjacent to the school so that we wouldn't have to cross Highway 34. The tennis courts at Century have deteriorated beyond the point to where we don't allow use of them anymore. We did hear from folks about the concern with our tennis courts. In this plan we are proposing to replace them with another eight courts as needed. Question two asks, if question one is approved, can the board authorize approval of \$3.71 million for a new bus garage and tennis courts.

Bagstad stated everyone always worries about how this will impact our residents. Wrapping around our current debt that we have from the Century School, we will see that a \$200,000 market value house, will be impacted by \$116.00 per year, which would equate to about \$8.00 a month for question one, \$1.00 for question two, for a total of \$9.00 per month. For our commercial/industrial folks, a \$500,000.00 market value property would total \$592.00 per year, which equates to \$50.00 per month. For our agricultural homestead folks, for an acre valued at \$3,000.00 it would be impacted 43 cents per year, or 4 cents per acre per month. Ag land not homesteaded, for a \$3,000.00 acre of land its 86 cents per year, or 7 cents per month. For our seasonal rec folks, a \$300,000.00 property would be assessed a little different and have a \$192.00 impact per year, which would be \$16.00 per month. We have quite a few resorters that live in our district as well. They are a unique tax class. We are recommending that they call me and I will get in touch with our financial folks and we can get a good determination on what the impact would be on them.

Bagstad stated a couple of years ago the legislature passed what's called ag-to-school tax credit. This has been a major improvement to help our farm folks, our farm economy, as well as schools in the State of Minnesota. In pay 2020, it was at 50%. With ag-to-school, the State of Minnesota is picking up a phased in tax credit for this ag land. Currently it's 50%. But in 2023 it's going to move up to 73% of school taxes will be picked up by the State of Minnesota. That \$3,000.00 acre of land today is going to cost the farmer

80 cents. With the new referendum bonds that same acre of land is going to cost 47 cents for the farmer, which is less than what they are currently paying.

Bagstad stated payments for the bond are going to come from our residential levy at 35%, our seasonal rec is 34%, commercial/industrial 18%, agricultural 4%, and the state, through ag-to-school credit will be paying 9%. When we are looking at the real estate and financial markets right now the interest rates are at historic lows. These tax charts were built with an average interest rate of 2.75 to 3.25%. I can guarantee that we can probably get better rates than that. These are good conservative examples.

Bagstad stated our taxes compared to our neighboring cities now, the \$200,000.00 value home pays \$551.00 for school taxes. With the referendum that would increase by \$116.00 for a total of \$667.00. That puts us in the middle between Detroit Lakes and Wauban. Our neighbors of Bagley, LaPorte, and Menahga pay considerably more, as well as the average in the state, which is \$822.00. Even with the new referendum we would hover right around the middle of the pack when it comes to our neighbors.

Bagstad stated right before the pandemic hit we were looking at doing this project. Then the pandemic came and it was, slow down. We thought what about November? We did a study and asked some folks. We know in 2025 those Century School bonds will be paid off. The time is now to make the next set of investments for the future generations. Interest rates are historically low. Construction contracts are very competitive right now, and won't be decreasing. These improvements are needed. The education adequacy charts show us some improvements need to be made. Our scientific survey said that 75% of our folks preferred a November referendum. We all know that by doing it now more students will benefit in the long run from the positive things that we are trying to do. That is what we are trying to do with Project 309. We are looking at making a lasting impact that will change more people's lives for the better. All of our research and demographic studies are on our website. If you have questions, call me and I'll help you get those answers.

Sue Tomte questioned what about the timeline should this get elected in? Bagstad stated the timeline for how the project would work is firstly we would go out and bond because we want to take advantage of the low interest rates, in January or February. We would go onto the design phase, which would take a few months. We're planning on moving dirt in the spring of 2022. We would expect to move in fully in the fall of 2024, which would meet our goal of being ready to go in 2025 for the next two generations.

9.3. Computer Server Upgrades: Betty Thomsen stated there has been difficulties in getting someone here at this given point of time. We do have documentation that this could be an approved expense for the CARES funds. We are under a time crunch because we have to have this done by November 13th. With that being said, it is bringing us out ten years. We would relocate the current server, which is now sitting on the cement floor with brick walls. It's in a humid environment. That will all be moved. A lot of the jacks in the building that aren't being used will be removed. From our standpoint we would like to see this approved.

A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to approve the server upgrade going with the company named Techcheck.

9.2. City Administrator Search: Ryan Leckner stated there is information in the packet that Thomsen put together for us. I would like to mention that in the past the Personnel Committee has done the search. I would like to step down from that because I have a lot going on in the next month or so. We can only have two councilmembers on a Selection Committee so I'm suggesting Erika Randall and Tom Conway if that is okay with everyone else. Thomsen stated because of the timeline the Council can go ahead and appoint that as a temporary committee. Randall stated we may pull in someone else at a future date. Leckner stated we also have to give the committee some leeway on the timelines. We talked about shortening the advertisement for two weeks and then see what we get for applications. Conway stated I'd like to see the interviews happen over Thanksgiving week. Randall stated I think the application deadline could be October 30th, which is a Friday. Depending on the applicant pool, we can extend the deadline if needed. The main place we need to advertise is the League of Minnesota Cities. That's where folks are looking for these types of positions.

A motion was made by Conway, seconded by Stone, and unanimously carried to authorize the Selection Committee to be able to adjust the timelines, as needed, and follow through completely to bring the recommended candidates for Council approval.

Discussion: Conway stated I challenged the job description thinking that we had changed it last time. But we changed only the posting. I looked through it. It was different from what I would write, but I don't see anything wrong with it. I say we should just move forward with it in the interest of time. Randall stated the areas that I was concerned about, it does have the word preferable, so that gives us discretion. The ad should also be posted on the Minnesota Counties website. A lot of times there are county positions on the League of Minnesota Cities website, and vis-a-versa, because they are both government websites.

10. CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS: Thomsen stated I'm happy to be here. I was looking for a challenge and this definitely is one. Mack has been diligently working with the Downtown Business Association about the formulation of a revolving loan fund for the downtown area. We talked about where the seed money would come from. With all that is going on in city hall and the changes in personnel, I would like to recommend that you put that on hold until you get a new administrator in place. They could certainly utilize all of the research and work in conjunction with Mack. I think he can offer that person great insight into that. Hopefully when you bring a new administrator in, you will have things on an even keel, and then they can be in on that from the ground up. They might have some ideas on how to expound on that and maybe make it a more inclusive thing other than just the downtown businesses. I would say that the administrator should take the lead on that, especially regarding the funding end of it, and provide you with recommendations. You have to decide if you even want to have a revolving loan fund for that.

Randall stated I'm confused because we have a revolving loan fund. Why are we spending time on a new one? Mack stated it was brought up during the last EDA meeting regarding the return of the armory funds and that they would be set aside specifically for improving the downtown district, whereas the RLF fund is citywide for all types of projects that are job generated projects. This would be something that would be a subcomponent.

Randall stated I don't recall that at all from an EDA meeting. Mack stated it was very broadly touched on with no specific details.

Randall stated then I agree with staff that it needs to be put on hold. We don't have the luxury of staff time to work on that. We have a revolving loan fund. If there is a downtown business that wants to take advantage of it, there is a process. Leckner stated Mack has worked on it and has had some meetings to hear what they are thinking about doing, she thought that should definitely be something for the new administrator. Conway stated I remember at an EDA meeting there being something to do with industry requirements and relaxing some of that, but I don't remember this project. Mack stated this would be for smaller projects like facades and signage, things to aid in implementation of the downtown plan. That's the intent. Thomsen stated it's not a bad idea.

Randall stated even with a new city administrator it sounds like something that should come back to the EDA so we can refocus it because it doesn't sound like a lot of us can recall this conversation about what this was for. But understand we have a revolving loan fund out there and should a downtown business want to make an application, its there. Mack stated I do have two businesses downtown that are interested in pursuing a loan. Thomsen stated I did get some information on that today.

Thomsen stated thanks to the diligence of the staff, most of the airport hangar rent has been collected. We have three that we did curtesy calls on. We have one that we may have to move forward with eviction procedures but we will need legal guidance for that. That might come before you at the next Council meeting. Hopefully, we can get it resolved before then.

Thomsen stated we are also looking into third party pay for credit card payments for our water bills online. We need to hear back from our credit card company. In this time of COVID with no-contact bill payment it will make it more convenient for people. This seems like the next step to take.

Thomsen stated Mack has had interest from people in wanting to rent the old liquor store building. We'll put something together with his thoughts for the next Council meeting to get approval if you want to rent it or not. Mack has some ideas on different leasing options.

Thomsen stated with everything that is going on and we're down one more staff member it is evident that we need outside help to get caught up with the accounting end of it. I'm glad you found Jeremy Jude. He is very detail orientated. Once it's back up to date it will stay there under his guidance. We're going to finally see the last year's audit, and he's already getting requests to start next year's audit.

Jude stated we've had a gap in coverage and we've had some staff turnover. We're really far behind. We're moving forward. The final audit presentation will be at the next meeting on the 27th. The problem is we're behind on the stuff for this current year. I'm afraid with our limited staff the data entry and utility billing will fall farther behind. We're trying to hit the deadlines for the statutory stuff as well as we can. But in 2021 that's going to be harder to do. We have a workmen's comp audit they want to get working on starting in December. In January we'll be prepping for the 2020 audit. I'm afraid that if we don't get caught up by the end of this year, next year will be an even worse situation. We're looking at having our LGA withheld if we don't meet certain deadlines. There are repercussions that I don't want to have to address, and there are only so many hours in a day. Everyone is doing what they can. You're looking at thirty days to get someone new in here and then

bringing them up to speed. Our part time person is in her third week. She'd doing a good job but there's a learning curve for all of this stuff. The farther we get behind the worse it will be. Janel was the senior finance person with five years of experience with the daily operations of the city. I leaned on her to show me how things were done internally and for historical questions. I know the accounting big picture, but the internal processes were all new to me, and now we have lost that asset. With the lack of general experience here, it's a big issue right now.

Thomsen stated I have put feelers out. I'm looking at contacting places that would have someone who knows the Banyon System and could physically come into the building and help out. We have about \$38,000.00 that we didn't expend on the IT position this year. We could utilize that money if you gave us the authorization to spend that to get someone in here to help get this done. Conway questioned didn't someone come in for a while? Jude stated they were doing interim payroll and payables. It's more of an operational thing. The way fund accounting is set up you have different funds but you also have different modules, like the liquor store, utility billing, payroll, and then the accounting software. A lot of people were doing different things, then we pull it all into the main body to do the financial reporting. We lost a piece of that right now. In the four months that I've been here I haven't had time to stop what I was doing and go learn what someone else was doing. I can't just jump in there and show someone how to do it. Banyon does online training. That's an option, but you have to take the time to do it. My preference would be it we could find somebody to come in with some Banyon experience to show us the way to be doing this stuff and show us how to best utilize the system. So, they could show us the training process.

Conway stated I'm in line with getting done what we need to get done. That's something that has to be taken care of. Randall stated we have to authorize Thomsen to address this. Whether it's a temp agency or a person that she's found, and to work within the budget that we have leftover. We don't have a lot of time to micromanage it right now and we should just leave it up to Thomsen. I have a question about this person that is leaving us, did we get a two-week notice? Thomsen stated that is covered.

A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Conway, and unanimously carried to authorize our current city administrator to go forward and bring to temporary help to assist with the city's accounting needs, up to the \$38,000.00.

Discussion: Randall stated our part time accounting clerk that we just hired, the Finance Committee approved that she can work up to thirty-nine hours a week to get caught up. We'll have money leftover in this budget. Conway stated when we call them part time, as it's recognized by the IRS is limited to thirty hours a week, and a limit of one-hundred and thirty hours a month. If they are part time under the IRS rules, we can't go to thirty-nine hours a week. Randall stated Thomsen was looking into that. It was up to what was allowable. The part timer was willing to give us some more time if we had hours for her.

11. DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES: Mack stated the Council approved a task order for the reconstruction of the tennis courts in Depot Park. That will begin with the soil boring analysis and that will start next week. The project is moving forward. I'm also very

pleased to announce that based on private donations from the tennis association, the fund has reached nearly \$100,000.00.

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

13. COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL: Randall stated the Finance Committee met about the budget, very preliminarily. We will set the levy at our meeting on December 8th. We will have a workshop on November 24th. It hasn't worked very well in the past to have the workshop on the same day that we set the levy, just in case the Council has questions or changes. We'll have a workshop on the 24th so there will be some time to make changes before the December 8th meeting.

Conway stated Heartland Lakes Development Commission (HLDC) would like to thank Kathy Henry with all of the assistance that she has given us on the Hubbard County COVID-19 Business Assistance Program. I want to make sure that I acknowledge that. We as a community, Kathy Henry has just hit the ball out of the park for us. So far, we have done phase one and two. We have awarded grants to twenty-four businesses and given out approximately \$835,843.00. Eighteen of the twenty-four businesses are located within the City of Park Rapids. We also have given money to businesses in Akeley, Nevis, Henrietta, Todd, Fern, and Lake Alice Townships. Phase three of the COVID-19 Business Assistance Program will begin on October 6th and the applications will close on October 22nd. If you own a business in Hubbard County and you have not applied for these grants please apply. The \$836,000.00 sounds like a lot of money but it's not even half of what we have to give away on these grants. We don't want to have to give the money back. If you own a business that has suffered a loss of revenue because of COVID, you need to get an application to the HLDC. I can't thank Kathy Henry enough. She has gone through every single application to determine eligibility before recommending them to the subcommittee.

Leckner stated if there are businesses that are wondering how to do it, the local banks will help. There are people willing to help them get through this if it looks intimidating to fill out the paperwork. Get ahold of Julie at the HLDC office, or any of the banks in the county. Conway stated I don't think the application is too daunting. We have adjusted it from the start of phase one from asking for a verification to a certificate of good standing from the state. We lowered the revenue loss from 30% to 20%. We've gone from instead of paying for 50% of the loss up to \$20,000.00, we're paying 100% of the loss to up \$20,000.00, just to try and get some of this money out. There has to be businesses out there that haven't applied. We need to get the word out.

Randall thanked Thomsen for helping the city out. She has really done a lot and kept us informed about updates. I really appreciate the work you are doing and your willingness to step up and help us. Thomsen stated thank you for giving me the opportunity and I have to turn that back on the staff. They have been so helpful. They are a diligent and hard-working group. They've helped me settle in.

Leckner stated I'd also like to thank Thomsen for everything. She's doing a great job and we're lucky to have her.

14. ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Stone, seconded by Randall, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

[seal]

Mayor Ryan Leckner

ATTEST:

Margie M. Vik
City Clerk