

**CITY OF PARK RAPIDS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
January 27 2015, 6:00 PM
Park Rapids Public Library-Lower Level
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

1. CALL TO ORDER: The January 27th, 2015 Regular Meeting of the Park Rapids City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Acting Mayor Paul Utke, and everyone present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL: Present: Acting Mayor Paul Utke, Councilmembers Dave Konshok, Rod Nordberg, and Erika Randall. Absent: Mayor Pat Mikesh. Staff Present: Administrator John McKinney, Public Works Superintendent Scott Burlingame, Police Chief Terry Eilers, Public Facilities Superintendent Chris Fieldsend, Treasurer Angela Brumbaugh, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Cynthia Jones, Molly Luther, Linda Sue Carter, Jackie Senenfelder, and Anna Erickson from the Enterprise.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Nordberg, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda with the following addition: to the Consent Agenda #6.12. Approve the Updated Job Description for the City Planner Position.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

4.1. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes-January 13, 2015: A motion was made by Nordberg, seconded by Randall, and unanimously carried to approve the January 13th, 2015 City Council Regular Meeting minutes with the following change: page 6, line 23, of the minutes, change the word “challenge” to “change”.

5. FINANCE:

5.1. Payables & Prepaids: A motion was made by Konshok, seconded by Nordberg, and unanimously carried to approve the payables in the amount of \$77,390.61, and the prepaids in the amount of \$74,164.82, for a total of \$151,555.43.

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

- 6.1. **Approve Plumber's Permits to Work in the City of Park Rapids in 2015 for Lunseth Plumbing & Heating, Park Rapids Plumbing & Heating, and Culligan Soft Water.**
- 6.2. **Approve Backhoe Operator's Licenses to Work in the City of Park Rapids in 2015 for Racer Construction Inc.**
- 6.3. **Resolution #2015-26 Approving the Renewal of Liquor License for Royal Bar in the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.4. **Resolution #2015-27 Approving Wage Adjustment and Step Increase for Public Works Parks Worker Stephanie Paulson.**
- 6.5. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$28,358.14 to TKDA for Professional Services Pertaining to the Development of Private Hangers at the Municipal Airport.**
- 6.6. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$2,400.00 to TKDA for Professional Services Pertaining to the Airport Runway 18-36 Project.**
- 6.7. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$18,000.00 to SLL Inc. for the First Half of the 2015 Assessments for the Property Evaluations in the City.**
- 6.8. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$68,075.00 to the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust for the 2015 Worker's Compensation Insurance Policy.**
- 6.9. **Resolution #2015-28 Accepting Donations for the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.10. **Resolution #2015-29 Approving the Termination of the Farm Leases by and between Gregg Malm and the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.11. **Approve Farm Lease Bid Packet and Authorize Advertisement for the City's Farm Leases One (1) through Five (5).**
- 6.12. **Approve the Updated Job Description for the City Planner Position.**

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

7. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS: Cynthia Jones, Chair of the Park Rapids Downtown Business Association, stated our association held its annual meeting on January 14th. She thanked McKinney for attending the meeting and for highlighting the priorities for the Council in the coming year. I would like to highlight what our plans are for the upcoming year. Molly Luther is our co-chair.

Jones stated the flowers on Main Avenue will return. They are a big hit. Last year we paid \$3,400.00 for fifty-five flower baskets on Main, and baskets on Highway 34 for those businesses that pay into our advertising package. We'd like to thank the city for the \$500.00 support that was given to these efforts. We raise the majority of our money from businesses that pay a \$1,000.00 into the Association to support all of these kinds of activities. We sell flower baskets and advertising.

Jones stated the Second Street event is going to return starting June 18th and continuing to August 20th. The All School Reunion is planning its kickoff on August 13th at the Second Street Stage. Last year we asked ten businesses and/or groups to sponsor one night and bring volunteers to help with the evening. It worked very nicely for us. We'll be doing that again. With help from Hugo's and Northwoods we were able to purchase a utility trailer. We've come a long way in three years. The first year we put up a stage piece by piece and took it down and stored everything in the back of Zulas and Riverbend after every event for ten weeks. The Chamber paid to register the vehicle. We paid to train individuals to serve our alcohol so we're very within the conformity of the alcohol laws. Word about the event has spread and now we have bands calling us to play at Second Street Stage. We tell them to call out agent, which is Brian Skinness, who books our bands for us. Thanks to the city for storing our vehicles, the chief for allowing us to haul the stage from public works to Main, for Scott Olson for storing our liquor. The event has become so popular that last year we were getting calls to borrow the stage. We have to say no. We did loan it to the Shell Prairie Ag Association for the fair and they stored it for us for the winter in the Paulson Barn along with our utility trailer.

Jones stated this year we're going to need to come up with a policy. Everyone wants to come and sell their wares at Second Street, such as raffle tickets, the churches want to give out free ice cream. We're going to have to decide how we're going to deal with this. We want the event to grow and be welcoming to everybody, but we're going to have to put some perimeters on it. It's meant to be a family friendly event.

Jones stated the Bite of Park Rapids is going to be held on Sunday, July 12th. Last year the event was bigger and better than ever because it didn't rain.

Jones stated new this year is we'd like to explore ideas with you, the city, to locate public restrooms on Main Avenue. This has been a long overdue, ongoing need that we would like to begin to address. We'd like to sit down with you and come up with some ideas. Right now the only way we have public bathrooms is for those businesses who say they have a public restroom available. That's the only real bathrooms we have on Main Avenue.

Jones stated no meeting of the downtown would be complete without a discussion about Armory Square. We recognize that you are well aware of our dilemma. Our downtown economy is in transition. No longer can we exist on merely tourists. Last year, as I'm sure you recognized, the volume of people was up, but the percentage of buyers to walkers was low. It's never going to go back to where it was. We understand that. We

need more than six weeks of traffic to remain viable. The past two years have been especially hard because we had no springs, which means our seasonals don't come back, and our snowbirds are late in coming, and this year we have no snow. Please know that we also recognize your challenge. You are responsible for the City of Park Rapids. But the City of Park Rapids' services and its area are much greater than the city limits. So you have a dilemma. We know that.

Jones stated we are totally committed to making the Armory Square Project work. Three years ago we started the Second Street Stage on a shoestring. We have made it work. Last week as part of the PRCDC we met with the executive director of the Paradise Center for the Arts in Faribault. We spent three and a half hours discussing the nitty-gritty that it takes to run such a venue. We are currently finding resources and talking with him to return to spend a day with us to wrestle with the hard questions around start up and sustainability. We know that what we envision will have challenges. It has become clear that we will need to find startup capital to hire an individual who will be able to manage the startup, identify and book program offerings in collaboration with the arts community, write grants, and to conduct membership and fundraising campaigns. We will need volunteers to supplement programming as a full complement of paid staff will not be realistic at start up.

Jones stated we know that we are taking on a lot, but we know that we businesses have a lot at stake if we are not successful at transitioning and growing the economy of our town. We also know that you and we are not the only ones who care for Park Rapids. Generations of people have come to this town because of its quiet charm and quality of life. Someone said, as they travel north they have to stop in Park Rapids to park in the middle of the street. It's become a tradition.

Jones stated we have drafted a letter, which the businesses have signed, committing our support for the establishment of the Upper Mississippi Center for the Arts, and we will be working to demonstrate to you in the coming weeks and months that we can and will assure its success. We have distributed a copy of the letter to the Council and we've given city staff a copy of the winter hours of the businesses. There's nobody around because there's no snow. Businesses are taking some time to close. None of the hours are consistent.

Molly Luther, owner of the Good Life Café, stated I'd like to comment in support of the Armory Square Project. As a restaurateur I have witnessed firsthand the impact of bringing a couple hundred people to the Main Avenue District on an evening or an afternoon can really have. I remember one event last month when we ran out of food because we were so busy. It was phenomenal, I didn't expect anything like that. People come to a theatrical event or a trade show, and going out to lunch before or dinner after is part of the routine. We were also fortunate enough to cater some of the events that were held at the Armory Square for a couple of NLOC events that were held over a year ago. That's additional revenue for us, as well as other events that we could provide food for. Having a catering kitchen there will be a real asset. We do a lot of catering through the café right now, like weddings, family reunions, retreats, and corporate meetings. A lot of times our business is open and we have very small facilities. Having a supplemental kitchen where you can run your current business within your four walls and then go out and still feed another two or three hundred people in addition to your everyday business,

that's a real asset to the local caters and people that are trying to accommodate groups coming to town.

Luther stated the third prospective would be as an event coordinator helping the Downtown Association and then I'm also an event coordinator for the Chamber. We're doing so much to try to build our shoulder seasons, spring events, fall events. We need an indoor venue, with heat and air conditioning. You never know what you're going to need in October. You could need either one. Having that centrally located in downtown, in a newly refurbished building could really expand the seasons that you can operate in. From other different perspectives I see the Armory Project as something that not only benefits the businesses downtown, but the other groups in Park Rapids as well.

Linda Carter stated I'm here to speak about the Armory Project. For the past two years I have organized, along with a couple of other local ladies, the Christmas Showcase there. The first year we had about thirty-five different vendors. Last year we had close to fifty. We used the downstairs as well as the main level. The event the past few years has brought in several hundred people and vendors from Brainerd, St. Cloud, Bemidji, and Fergus Falls. Several vendors have come and stayed overnight in the area the night before to set up. We've had customers come from Fargo to this. Some comments I've heard is that it's such a wonderful venue. The vendors have said of all the different places they've been this is one of the best setup ones. It will be nice when it's a lot more open and we have exact dimensions for booth sizes. It would be great to have a catering kitchen there as well. We worked with to offer something to our vendors and shoppers, like discount coupons, but they weren't able to handle the volume either. We'd love to see a home for us to continue.

Carter stated my husband Tony and I are the owner/operators of Carter's Red Wagon Farm. My father-in-law passed away on Sunday. Russ was such an establishment in this town. The community is welcome to his memorial service, which will be held Saturday at Faith Baptist at 11:00 a.m. We do recognize how important he was to the community and we want to make people feel welcome. Utke stated Russ has been part of the community for a long time.

Jackie Senenfelder stated I'm the general manager of the C'mon Inn Hotel in town. I've been there for fourteen years. We pay \$20,000.00 a year in taxes. Can you imagine if you were told on any given day that you had to stay home today and you were going to lose five to eight hours of pay? Then two or three days later, you get that same phone call. You start to add that up, what happens to your paycheck, especially if you live paycheck to paycheck. I hate making that phone call. We're all making hay when the sun shines in the summer. We're so busy we can barely keep enough staff. The problem is we need that staff through the winter months. We've got them trained. They're great people. They're citizens of Park Rapids. I hate telling them they have to stay home today because we did not sell enough rooms, to say there's not enough for you to come and clean today. We were wishing for a great snowfall, we're already down \$20,000.00 of revenue in January compared to last January. Right now I'm stringing these housekeepers along trying to keep them employed. They're not on assistance. I'm in support of the Armory Square. I believe we can bring in events, conventions, meetings, and wedding receptions. I get calls for that kind of stuff at the hotel. I don't have the facility to do that. To bring those extra people into town, heads in beds, seat them at our local restaurants, put them in the downtown stores, I

think it's important for our economic development and the viability and sustainability of our town. I would like you to consider all of that. As part of the city lodging association, and I'm active on the chamber board as well, and the PRCDC, these things are important to all of the members in most of those committees that I represent. Think about it from a personal level of the different folks that we have in town that this is their livelihood too and if there is anything we can do to bring visitors here to start spending more dollars we'd appreciate that.

Utke thanked everyone for attending.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS:

8.1. City Committee Voting Requirements: McKinney stated this is the continuing step of the question that was first raised in December about the ability of Councilmembers who sit on various boards and commissions to participate fully to the extent of having the right to vote. We gave you that report at the last meeting and you directed us to prepare legislation that would enable you to change the rules where possible so you would have a vote. Those are the items listed. One is an ordinance required to change the Parks Board voting. The other is a resolution to change the Planning Commission bylaws. There is a report about membership and voting rights. Some are dictated by someone other than you.

A. Acknowledge First Reading of Ordinance Amending the Park Rapids City Code of Ordinances of the City of Park Rapids, Chapter 31: Parks and Beautification Board, Section 31.42 Members and Terms: A motion was made by Konshok, seconded by Randall, to acknowledge the first reading of the Ordinance Amending the Park Rapids City Code of Ordinances of the City of Park Rapids, Chapter 31: Parks and Beautification Board, Section 31.42 Members and Terms.

Discussion: Nordberg questioned is there any need to discuss what happens if there is a tie vote. This would make the board eight members. McKinney stated if you have a tie vote it doesn't pass according to Roberts Rules of Order. You have to have more yes votes than no votes. Nordberg stated I'm fine with that as long as we understand that we are going to follow the rules of order.

B. Resolution Approving the Second Amendment to the Bylaws for the Park Rapids Planning Commission: A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Nordberg, and unanimously carried to approve Resolution #2015-30 Approving the Second Amendment to the Bylaws for the Park Rapids Planning Commission.

9. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE: McKinney stated tomorrow as the first day for the new city planner. As of tomorrow we now have a full staff of department heads.

10. DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES: Burlingame stated it's been warm so we haven't had any freeze ups. We are about done installing the new water meters.

Eilers stated the county sheriff's department has been working diligently over the last one and a half years to replace their record system. We're tied in with that system with them. If they replace their software system, we'll have to follow along or we're out of business. They are going to put together, using the Law Enforcement Technology Group, a contract for us. We'll be buying into the licensing part of it. We'll be bringing a contract before the City Council shortly. It will replace the outdated system with a newer system. We're going to try and put some computers in the cars. We've applied for a grant. We've been notified that we were accepted and that will help cover the expenses.

Eilers stated I received an email from Nordberg requesting a yearend report. We do put stuff on our Facebook page. This is something new that my officers started a few months ago. We'd like to come and do a show and tell for you at a workshop prior to a meeting. There are some officers that you haven't met. We'll do a report at that time, answer questions, and show off some of our equipment that you purchased for us. That will be the first meeting in March. Utke questioned what are you putting on the Facebook page? Eilers stated a couple of the guys add a few things here and there. Go ahead and check it out.

McKinney stated we will be bringing to you the financial questions that Eilers raises. Some of them won't have to be paid until the end of the year, and some of them have to be paid by April. We will find out how we will pay for those things, and explain it as a regular item on the agenda. Nordberg questioned is some of that in the CIP? McKinney stated we also have a contract to pay that we didn't know about before which involved more money, about \$2,500.00. Eilers stated originally we were looking at over a \$100,000.00 to get into the system. Right now we're at \$41,000.00 which can be paid over two years. We can pay part of it this year when the system is installed, and then in the next calendar year, the remaining balance.

McKinney stated we talked about the audit of the procedures so we have to hire an independent contractor. Eilers stated he will look at our criminal history, all the stuff that's on the state computers, they come in and do an audit every so often, and we have to hire an independent person to look at the system to make sure we are following all of the rules. We have an in-house records system, and we also have a state record system. The audit company is from Morris and they do this for several entities up here. They will be doing it for the sheriff's office at the same time. It's on an hourly basis. The initial stuff will cost about \$2,000.00, but we'll have that more refined when we bring the request to you soon. This process is a state requirement.

Fieldsend stated I've been working on a kitchen for the public safety building. They never had a kitchen before, just a refrigerator and a hot plate. In the budget some money was set aside for upgrading some of the liquor store lighting for their sign. We're getting the bids together for that.

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

12. COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL: Nordberg stated I would like to expression my condolences to the City of New Hope, for the Council and especially for their officers that were involved in the shooting last night. I appreciate our chief and his people for protecting us, and for us to realize that sometimes it can be dangerous work. Konshok stated I echo those words and I do appreciate what law enforcement does.

13. ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Nordberg, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

[seal]

Acting Mayor Paul Utke

ATTEST:

Margie M. Vik
City Clerk