

JASPER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Regular Meeting & 2022 Budget Meeting –September 21, 2021;

The Jasper City Council of the City of Jasper met in-person in said city on September 21, 2021. Council members present: Mayor Mike Baustian, Jeff Leslie, Trinidad Garcia, Kim Lape and Dee Arp; Employees present: Clerk-Treasurer Cortney Kounkel; Assistant Clerk-Treasurer Maggie Erickson; Public Works Superintendent Brian Thode; Pipestone Star's Kyle Kuphal; Community Members: Blake (and spouse) Oelfke, Angel Garcia, Jerry Tower, Kizzy & Joe Clem, Reclaim Community Board Members: Elicia Kortus & Randy Larson; Reclaim Community Supporters; Richard & Patricia Rieck, Barb Brooks and ten other interested individuals;

Mayor Baustian called the Public Hearing to order at 6:33 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. This public hearing was held to discuss the 2022 Budget for the City of Jasper. The Jasper City Council opted to not increase the levy from previous years. The additional funds required will be transferred into the general account from the Money Market account. Changes to the 2022 City of Jasper Budget from 2021 are as follows:

- Local Government Aid increased from \$226,680 to \$228,621
- Transfer in from MM Savings increased from \$8,746 to \$18,474
- Pipestone County Police Contract increased from \$37,347 to \$38,480;
- Total Revenues for 2022 General Fund: \$569,172
- Total Expenses for 2022 General Fund: \$569,172

Motion by Leslie, seconded by Lape to approve the 2022 Budget with a preliminary levy of \$200,173, all ayes carried;

Mayor Baustian then adjourned the public hearing for the 2022 City of Jasper Budget at 6:41 p.m.;

Mayor Baustian called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance;

The Jasper City Council Meeting was video recorded by Reclaim Community Board Member Randy Larson;

Community Concerns:

Emily Crabtree, Luverne Area Community Foundation (LACF) representative, was present to address the council regarding the efforts of LACF. LACF is a community endowment fund that benefits all communities within the borders of Rock County which include Luverne, Magnolia, Beaver Creek, Hills, Steen, Hardwick and Jasper. LACF is challenging all communities to raise \$5,000.00 towards the endowment fund. LACF will then match \$5,000.00 and the \$10,000.00 raised can be used for future projects and needs directly related to Jasper. The funds are specific to Rock County, however, since Jasper lies within Pipestone & Rock Counties, tangible items may be placed in Pipestone County. The city will consult with LACF if the issue arises. Crabtree encourages the city to spread the word about the efforts of LACF, including to area businesses and non-profits. Crabtree informed the Council that the City of Hardwick utilized their funds to adhere to ADA requirements for their community center. Crabtree will email the city office with information to share with residents;

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Mayor Baustian then addressed the council and community as a concerned citizen. Baustian stated that he read an article that he thought was relevant to the current times for the city council and community. It read "As leaders, you have to live in 3 different time zones; the past, the present and the future. Everything you do has got to honor the past, deliver in the present and set the table for a prosperous future." Baustian addressed the council as a resident of the community for the past 36 years. Baustian stated that the people that build our town were hardworking, talented men and women who wanted to improve their lives and to set Jasper up for a prosperous future. And they did using their current day building materials; the town was built with our local stone. Now 100 years later, these buildings are reaching their life expectancy and it's time to rebuild our town with current day, energy efficient, substantial buildings so Jasper can be here for another 100 years. Baustian then stated it was very frustrating to read the writings of Elicia Kortus about how uneducated the council is and how their priority is to demolish the buildings because we have no experience. And the carpet bagging group tells us our buildings have been empty for 50 years and the people with no education should not be making these decisions. Baustian then stated that he seen pictures posted on Facebook of unmasked, educated people working in the upstairs wall of Bauman Hall, when they know that the plaster that wall is made of is full of asbestos unless they were not told that information. Now time to move forward, Baustian is very proud of the city council as well as the city staff. The council is engaged and asks all the right questions when making decisions. It is our responsibility to learn from our past, use our present day resources and guide our town to a sustainable and prosperous future;"

Kyley Mills, Stonewall Bar & Grill owner was present to address the council regarding the construction of a new bar/restaurant within the City of Jasper. Mills provided a copy of her rough draft blue prints to the council as an idea on what type of building she plans on putting up on the former bowling alley property, if the city chooses to sell her the land. Mills plans on serving breakfast, lunch and supper. Mills stated that the city needs food back in town and now is the time. The metal building will also consist of Quartzite Stone from the current building. Mills did not have a cost estimate for the new building but hoped to have concrete poured and the shell of the building completed before winter so work on the inside could be done after that time. The Engineer who inspected Stonewall Bar & Grill noted that current building could sustain another 1-2 years in its current condition. Mills informed the council and public that it would cost an arm and a leg to put a kitchen in the current bar establishment, let alone fixing the front as well. The annual upkeep of the building and the roof is a huge cost according to Mills. Resident Paul Krapf questioned if Mills knew the cost of constructing a kitchen is to pass inspections by the Department of Health. Mills knows the expense of a kitchen, has financial backing and owns another business that currently has a kitchen.

Councilmember Arp expressed concern to Mills regarding placing a new building between the current buildings due to it not being a "decorative spot". Mills replied that she plans on using Quartzite Stone on the front of the building. Arp raised a question about the neighboring buildings. Kounkel informed the council that neighboring property owners were in attendance at the council meeting; Joe & Kizzy Clem and Richard & Patricia Rieck. Arp stated that it would be terrible to build a new building and have the same thing that happened to the front of Stonewall happen to the sides of the neighboring buildings. This is Arp's largest concern with Mills building on the bowling alley property, are the neighboring buildings safe? Arp would hate to see Mill's spend tons of money and have something bad happen, and are those buildings insured to the point where they can compensate Mills if damage does occur to her

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building? Kounkel informed the Council that Clem's have told her they were fixing the inside of their building, located to the east of the former bowling alley property. Clem's will also be tuck pointing, replacing all the windows and façade on the front of the building. Mills informed Clem's that she plans on having a 3' access on either side of the building so they would still have access to the side of their building to continue maintenance. Mills also explained to the council that ideally, the bar/restaurant would be located on Highway 23, however, no lots are available. Arp stated that we want to improve the looks of the community but placing a nice building between the current ones. Mills plans on putting a patch on the north wall of the current building, something that will be relatively inexpensive to fix. Clems asked Mills about drainage off the new building and how the construction could potentially affect their property. Mills stated that she is open to talk about those concerns in the future. Richard Rieck stated that he would spend years on lawyers if Mills did not approach the neighboring properties prior to the construction. Questions regarding the ownership of the bowling alley lot were then raised. Patricia Rieck questioned how much community money would be used or if Mills would be purchasing the property from the city. Kounkel explained when the city purchased the land; they did with all intentions of giving the land to a prospective developer for future community developments. Mills informed the public that she is receiving a personal loan for the construction if the project moves forward. Baustian stated that the city would likely approve the sale of the land to Mills for \$1.00 plus 50% of closing costs. Baustian stated that many cities, such as Luverne, do this same process. They will purchase blighted properties, clears them and then gives them to future developer. B. Madetzke then asked if Luverne has outside meetings with specific business owners. Baustian stated that they have many meetings with business owners that are public. P. Rieck questioned whether all the meetings regarding the land will be public, and was assured that all meetings held with the Jasper City Council are public. Baustian stated that all conversations about the property have been done at the Jasper City Council meetings which are open to the public. Bethany Madetzke asked if there had been any behind the scenes meetings with Mills and the city about the property. Baustian informed her that no secret meetings were occurring between the city and Mills;

Elicia Kortus, Reclaim Community President then spoke. Kortus informed Mills that Reclaim Community is willing to purchase the current bar property in order to obtain grants to fix the building, lease the building to Mills or lease her space at Bauman Hall. Kortus told Mills that they as a committee were happy to talk with Mills about the proposal if she would like to sell the property. Kortus said she supports Mills in building a new structure if that makes fore sense for her business. Kortus did express concern regarding the current building future as the building is part of the strategy that Reclaim Community has worked on for five years to help revitalize the community. Kortus stated that the Historical Society informed her that if any more demotions in town of historic buildings occur, designation will not be received, hence why Reclaim Community is pushing to save the buildings;

Randy Larson questioned whether the Jasper Development Corporation was financing Mills. Baustian stated "Not yet, but we are considering it." B. Madetzke stated that she believes there is favoritism on behalf of the city towards Mills. Baustian stated that the city was trying to help a successful business person. B. Madetzke stated that that was Baustian's option and responded with "So we're going to put all our money into somebody who's already proven that something fell apart. This building's falling apart. I'm just thinking it's real funny that we're curating somebody who's proven that they can't maintain whatever they have." The council meeting then became unruly with Mills and B. Madetzke

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arguing and speaking at the same time. B. Madetzke also argued with other residents in attendance. Baustian interrupted and asked if any else had any questions for Mills to help gain order within the council chambers. Rieck asked if Mills planned on demolishing the current bar or what her current plans are and if the city is interested in the property. Mills informed everyone in attendance that she could not afford to demolish the building and that she was looking into options for the building. Kounkel informed the council that she mentioned swapping properties with Mills and demolishing the building because of the blight issue. Kounkel apologized to the council about the statement as it created tons of issues. K. Clem then asked if the city would be willing to purchase the neighboring buildings to the former bowling alley property. Council member Lape asked Mills to establish a business plan to present to the council and figure out what she is going to do with the current building. Lape also informed Clem and Rieck to draw up proposals and bring back to the city if they are interested in selling their properties. When asked whether the buildings would be demolished, Lape replied "To be determined".

Motion by Lape, second by Arp to approve the minutes from the August 10, 2021 Council Meeting;

Review and approve the August claims to date: League of MN Cities, P/C Coverage 8-21 to 8-22, \$35,379.00; Martinez Concrete, Concrete at City Park & QCC Back Entrance, \$2,600.00; Benjamin Denton, Legal Fees, \$630.00; Ludolph Bus Service, Swimming Lesson Transport, \$958.80; MEMSA, Amb Conference, \$850.00; Developmental Services Inc., Lead Assessments, Admin Fee, \$5,950.00; Double D Gravel, Inc., Sewer Ponds, \$5,442.41; Heiman, Inc., Fire Air Tanks, Masks, Cylinders, \$77,199.60; City of Madison, Fire SCBA Air Compressor, \$3,500.00; Motion by Arp, second by Lape to approve the August claims to date, all ayes, carried;

Receipts noted in August: Jasper Town Homes, Mower Purchase from City, \$4,800.00; New Horizon Farm LLP, Fire Call Income, \$2,400.00; First Bank & Trust, Donation for Undetermined Purposes, \$5,000.00; MMB – DEED, SCDP First Draw, \$5,950.00;

DELINQUENT SEWER/WATER/GARBAGE:

Five accounts were listed on the delinquent sewer/water/garbage report. Increasing the late fee to \$25.00 has proven to decrease the amount of residents who are continuously late;

Wellness Center/QCC: No new business;

NEW BUSINESS:

Kounkel informed the council about the American Rescue Plan Act that is available to all cities within Minnesota typically with a population less than 50,000 to receive approximately \$105.81 per capita. The City of Jasper may receive up to \$63,803.43. Funds can be used to respond to the public health emergency or its negative impacts, provide premium pay to eligible workers, replace lost revenue, or to make necessary investments in water, sewer or broadband infrastructure. The City of Jasper has applied for the funding;

The Pipestone County Law Enforcement Contract was provided to the council. As discussed in the previously held budget meeting, the City of Jasper will see a 4% increase in rates compared to 2021. In 2021, the City of Jasper was charged \$59.00 per resident or \$37,347.00. In 2022, the City of Jasper will be charged \$61.36 per resident or \$38,840.00;

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OLD BUSINESS:

Thode had mentioned during the August 2021 Council Meeting that he had a request to place a shouse in the backyard of a residence. Thode would like to see what other cities have in their ordinance book regarding this type of construction. Kounkel discovered that the City of Jasper prohibits shouses based off the current City of Jasper Zoning Ordinance. Section 719 Titled "Dwelling Units Prohibited" states "No basement, garage, tent, trailer or accessory building shall be used as a permanent dwelling." Other communities across Minnesota also have the same literature that prevents the construction of shouses;

A letter addressed to Pipestone County Medical Center regarding the temporary closing of the Jasper Medical Clinic was provided to the council. There has been some movement at the clinic recently with the replacement of outdoor lights. The council will be updated on a response when received from PCMC;

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

No land use permits were issued in August;

Thode received a permanent disconnection notice for a residence located on 3rd Street East. The home is in the process of being sold. After a brief discussion, the council opted to not approve the permanent disconnection as of this time but will revisit the request in 3 months;

ITEMS ANYONE WANTS TO ADD TO THE AGENDA:

The City of Jasper's 2020 Audit was completed today, Tuesday, September 21, 2021;

Development Services, Inc. is required to hold a public hearing to update interested residents on the progress of the Home Improvement Grants. The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, October 12 @ 7:00 p.m., the same evening as the regular council meeting. The City of Jasper will publish notices in the Pipestone Star for 2 weeks prior to the public hearing;

Kim Drew, Jasper Ambulance Association President, was recently awarded EMT of the Year at the Minnesota Emergency Medical Service Association annual conference;

Upcoming Meetings:

Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 12, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.;

Lape motioned to adjourn, Arp second. All ayes, regular meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Cortney Kounkel, Clerk-Treasurer

Mike Baustian, Mayor

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