

OAK GROVE COUNCIL
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 28, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Oak Grove City Council was called to order by Mayor Rolf at 6:00 PM on Monday, October 28, 2024. Pledge of Allegiance was said, and roll call taken.

Present: Weston Rolf, Mayor
 Angie Bray Johnson, Council Member
 Paul Tradewell, Council Member
 John West, Council Member
 Mike Wylie, Council Member

Also Present: Loren Wickham, City Administrator
 Chuck Schwartz, City Engineer
 Joe Sathe, City Attorney
 Rob Engler, Fire Chief

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council member West announced that the Christmas tree lighting event will be on Friday, December 6th, from 5:30-8:00 pm. Food trucks will be present and begin serving food at 5:30 pm, and the lights will turn on at 6:30 pm.

Council member Bray Johnson mentioned that it is National First Responders Day. She thanked the Police Department, Fire Department, dispatchers, and EMS responders.

Mayor Rolf noted that Election Day is next Tuesday, November 5th, and encouraged community members to vote.

2. SETTING OF REGULAR AGENDA

Administrator Wickham noted that there is an update under the architectural services agreement, and the Council could consider approving it. A copy of the agreement was given to the Council to consider.

MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER TRADEWELL TO APPROVE THE REGULAR AGENDA AS PRESENTED. SECOND BY COUNCIL MEMBER WYLIE. MOTION CARRIED. 5-0.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

Richard Klabachek – North of Viking Boulevard on Lake George Boulevard

Mr. Klabachek read a document from Robert J. Borer of Nebraska that addressed the election.

4. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES

A. City Council Minutes – October 14, 2024

MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER WEST TO APPROVE THE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 14, 2024. SECOND BY COUNCIL MEMBER BRAY JOHNSON. MOTION CARRIED (4-0-1) MAYOR ROLF ABSTAINED BECAUSE HE WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE OCTOBER 14, 2024 MEETING.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda contains several items, which are acted upon by the Council in one motion. Upon request by any one Councilmember, City staff, or the public a consent agenda item may be removed and put on the regular agenda for discussion and consideration.

- A. Claims and Accounts
- B. Resolution 24-110 Resignation of City Clerk
- C. Resolution 24-111 Appoint Deputy City Clerk
- D. Resolution 24-112 Pay Increase for Deputy City Clerk
- E. Resolution 24-113 Purchase a Set of Soccer Goals
- F. Resolution 24-114 2025 Contract Renewal – Embedded Systems

Mayor Rolf pulled item D from the Consent Agenda and requested the Resolution be revised in order to back pay the position to October 21st when Ms. Pease started doing the work. He thanked Ms. Pease and City Staff for stepping up and taking on additional duties to help the City get through the elections.

MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER WEST TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS A, B, C, E, F. SECOND BY COUNCIL MEMBER TRADEWELL. MOTION CARRIED. (5-0).

MOTION MADE BY MAYOR ROLF TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEM D, AS AMENDED. SECOND BY COUNCIL MEMBER WEST. MOTION CARRIED. (5-0).

6. FIRE DEPARTMENT

- A. Fire Chief Updates

Fire Chief Engler stated there was an OSHA inspection at both fire stations with no citations. A Heart Safe event will be on Tuesday, October 29th at 10:00 am at St. Patrick's Catholic Church. In addition, there will be a Heart Safe event tomorrow at 7:00 pm. The remaining AEDs have been purchased which are required for the Heart Safe community designation. He mentioned the Fire Department is looking at doing a food drive for the community.

The statistics for the month of September included:

- 3 Building fires
- 1 Vehicle fire
- 2 illegal burns
- 31 Medical calls
- 3 Motor vehicle accidents

1 Rescue
3 Public assistance calls
11 Dispatched and cancelled
1 Special Incident Type
56 total calls for the month of September
513 calls for the year

Council member Wylie asked how the Fire Department was doing with hiring. Fire Chief replied that they are struggling, just like the rest of the country. He mentioned that they are creating a video to put on social media to recruit more hires. Two more people have been hired.

Council member West asked Fire Chief Engler to share an update from the Anoka County Fire District meeting and the changes that will be coming from the Academy. Fire Chief Engler replied that the Anoka County Fire District is looking to hire someone to oversee training for the Academy.

7. CODE ENFORCEMENT UPDATE – RUM RIVER CONSULTANTS

Rum River Consultants Carri Levitski and Tanner Behning gave a presentation regarding an overview of the program. Ms. Levitski reviewed the process for compliance.

Mayor Rolf mentioned that he is not in favor of issuing citations in order to create revenue for the City. However, he would like to learn more about the program in order to have compliance, resources, education, and inform residents. Council member West agreed.

The Council discussed having a work session on November 12, 2024.

Ms. Levitski reviewed the cases year to date. Council member West requested having the total number of each case type as a follow up item.

Council member Wylie mentioned that he would like to discuss escrows for new houses to complete landscaping projects during a work session.

8. CONSULTING ENGINEER

A. Engineer Updates

Engineer Schwartz updated Council that the second lift of asphalt was installed in the Sims Trail Crossing development. The City received a preliminary plat submittal for Wickstrom Estates South and it will be on the November Planning Commission agenda.

Council member Tradewell asked Engineer Schwartz about graveling shoulders in the new developments. Engineer Schwartz replied that the subcontractor put in the gravel. Council member Tradewell mentioned he would like to discuss the gravel further in the future.

B. 221ST Ave NW Ped-Bike Crossing

Engineer Schwartz presented a memo from Anne Holzem who is the Safety Engineer from MSA Professional Services. The memo addressed the 221st Avenue NW Trail and bicycle/pedestrian crossing. He also presented the Anoka County's Lake George Regional Park Master Trail Plan and encouraged Council members to reach out to their County commissioners to try to get the trail crossing funded sooner.

Council member Bray Johnson noted that the County had an open house about resurfacing County Road 22 next summer. They do not have plans to include a left turn lane on Silverod Street NW and Viking Boulevard NW going west because there are no traffic statistics. She asked if that could be revisited because cars are passing on the right side and it is dangerous.

Council member West added that there should be at least some reinforcement in the area. Engineer Schwartz replied that he could have one of his transportation engineers look at the crash statistics.

9. CITY ATTORNEY

A. Attorney Updates

Attorney Sathe stated he did not have any specific updates.

10. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES & DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2025 Residential Recycling Program – Anoka County

Administrator Wickham gave an overview of the City's recycling program and funding for the program from Anoka County. The funds are in the form of a reimbursement. Public Works is looking to purchase a plastic bailer for the recycling center.

MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER WEST TO APPROVE THE 2025 RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING PROGRAM. SECOND BY COUNCIL MEMBER TRADEWELL. MOTION CARRIED. 5-0

B. Architectural Services Agreement Update

Administrator Wickham gave an overview of the architectural services agreement.

MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER WEST TO APPROVE THE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES AGREEMENT. SECOND BY COUNCIL MEMBER BRAY JOHNSON.

Council member Wylie asked how long the process would take. Administrator Wickham replied that the design process has begun and construction would begin in late summer or early fall of 2025 with occupancy in 2026.

MOTION CARRIED. 5-0

Administrator Wickham mentioned that the Council would receive updates throughout each phase.

C. Site Survey and Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment for Fire Station/City Hall Project

Administrator Wickham gave an overview of services the City needs to retain for construction outside of the architectural design services agreement for the new building.

Council member Wylie asked if on the certificate of survey, the present building would be plotted. Engineer Schwartz replied that it would be an ALTA survey and locate all of the buildings, structures, man holes, etc. Council member Wylie asked if it was necessary and wondered if they could plot the survey with the new building on it. Engineer Schwartz replied that it was possible. He noted in Newport, when they were putting in a new fire house they discovered various easements while going through the surveying process. He mentioned that there could be some cost savings by not doing an ALTA survey but there would be risks involved. Administrator Wickham added that utilities would be located through the survey.

Attorney Sathe mentioned that they could create a title commitment to ensure everything is good to go.

MOTION MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER WEST TO APPROVE THE SITE SURVEY AND PHASE 1 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT FOR FIRE STATION/CITY HALL PROJECT. SECOND BY COUNCIL MEMBER BRAY JOHNSON. MOTION CARRIED. 5-0

D. Administrator Updates

Administrator Wickham stated during the last City Council meeting, the Council approved the sewer and water agreements for the ponds for the City of St. Francis and the agreements have been sent to St. Francis and will be reviewed during their next City Council meeting.

Administrator Wickham mentioned that there would be extended City Hall hours for early voting for the election. The building will be opened until 7:00 pm on Tuesday, Saturday, and Sunday.

11. MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS/UPDATES

Council member Bray Johnson reminded the Council about the Anoka County Local Elected Officials Dinner meeting on October 30, 2024. Anoka County is doing the Green Light initiative from November 4-11 to recognize veterans. She encouraged community members to turn on a green light to honor veterans. She thanked the Parks Commission and Staff for recommending new soccer goals. She also thanked the election judges for their hard work and working extra hours. She mentioned that election judges are asking for paper poll pad training and she could speak with Administrator Wickham about that at a later time.

Council member West agreed with Council member Bray Johnson's comments regarding poll pads and asked if there would be further communication from the County to the City. He mentioned that Administrator Wickham had confirmed that the pads had been returned on time. Administrator Wickham replied that the pads were returned last Tuesday and the last communication from Anoka County was that the pads will be returned to the election judges on Election Day. Council member West asked the Council where they stood on the issue.

Mayor Rolf explained that he wants to make sure the election is done correctly. He reviewed the history of where the City is at regarding poll pads. He mentioned that the City was the first to want to do the post-election review to make sure the machine is accurate. The Council agreed to move forward with a post-election review with poll pads. He added that he feels like the County is bullying the City. He noted that on the other side, he does not want to put election judges in a poor position by potentially being charged with a crime. Council member West agreed.

The Council discussed what the Statute meant, what the repercussions would be, and how this could be different in the future. Attorney Sathe replied that there are steps the City can take after the election to challenge the processes. Council member Wylie requested that Attorney Sathe bring the information to the next Council meeting.

Council member Tradewell expressed his concern about election judges not showing up due to the Council's decision.

Louise Woodbury – 3133 191st Avenue NW

Ms. Woodbury mentioned that the Council decided not to use the poll pads five weeks before the national general election. She added that the Council understands that the government can move slowly and that it seems disingenuous to blame the County after

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the Council made a decision so close to the election. She thanked Administrator Wickham for mentioning that there needs to be party balance for election judges.

Attorney Sathe reviewed the process of the City notifying the Secretary of State about using electronic pads.

Richard Klabachek – North of Viking Boulevard on Lake George Boulevard

Mr. Klabachek stated he is an election judge for Precinct 1 and would be there for Election Day. He added that they have received a backup paper roaster, and the entire time there has been electronic poll pads. He added that there has not been training on the paper poll pads because it is the responsibility of the State and County.

Mayor Rolf explained that he does not want to jeopardize the election judges or make the State look bad because something went wrong. He suggested using a different tactic and to figure out how to avoid the issue in the future. He stated he does not like the electronic poll pads but mentioned it would be best, for this year, to use them. He added that he would like to readdress it moving forward.

Kevin Shepherd – 18375 Dahlia Street NW

Mr. Shepherd reminded the Council that during the last election cycle in 2022, the County Attorney refused to prosecute a County Sheriff who violated the law by being called to a polling station by a non-election judge. The County Sheriff said he was doing it because of a prosecutor's discretion. He asked the Council if they thought the Sheriff would use his discretion to not come for City employees.

Attorney Sathe mentioned that the Council did not need to take action regarding the Resolution that is in place. Since the certification has already been sent to the Secretary of State on September 30th, the Council could not send notice to undo this. He added that the Council could take the steps of the Resolution after the election.

Council member Wylie asked Staff about the status of the pumping septic tanks around Lake George. Administrator Wickham replied that he would follow up.

Council member West asked Staff if there would be additional fire rings for the lighting event. Administrator Wickham replied that there was no Resolution for it but would work on it.

Council member Bray Johnson asked if there have been a lot of anonymous complaints this summer. Administrator Wickham replied that there have been more complaints and many have followed the process.

Mayor Rolf asked for an update on the wastewater and to sell the land. Administrator Wickham replied that the title work has been done, and just needs to be put back on a

Council agenda. Mayor Rolf requested that it would be added to the next Council meeting.

Mayor Rolf asked about the deadline for the Winter newsletter. Administrator Wickham replied Friday, November 8th.

Mayor Rolf noted that he watched the meeting last time online and it was difficult to hear and see people who were speaking. He asked if there was something that could be done to improve it like having a high school student help with the audio and visual for the Council meeting. Council member West noted that he spoke with a student who was interested in helping and was already connected with Administrator Wickham.

Mayor Rolf requested that a charitable gambling contribution be added to the November 12th agenda for the St. Francis Madrigal Choir. Mayor Rolf thanked City Staff and election judges for stepping up and helping out with elections.

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER WYLIE. SECOND BY COUNCIL MEMBER TRADEWELL. MOTION CARRIED. (5-0) MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Loren Wickham, City Administrator