



2 6th Avenue SE
St. Stephen, MN 56375
320-251-0964

CITY OFFICIALS

Jeff Blenkush
Mayor

Gene Skaj
Council Member

Danita Traut
Council Member

Steve Trobec
Council Member

Tom Vouk
Council Member

Kurt Niemeyer
Treasurer

Julie Jacobs
City Clerk

Website:
cityofststephen.com

St. Stephen City Council Agenda – December 2, 2020

Call to Order: 6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Approval of November Meeting Minutes

Finances

Reading of Claims

Reading of Receipts

Treasurer's Report

Petitions, Requests and Communication

Jerry Mehr, permit for KC gun raffle

St. Stephen Fire & Rescue

Emergency Management

7:00 PM ~ Public Hearing: Truth in Taxation, 2021 Budget

Reports

Road & Bridge

Planning Commission

Park

Sheriff's Report

Health Committee

Unfinished Business

12th Ave. NE Improvements

Cleaning up after dogs in the parks

9th Avenue Status Update

Rental of City Hall

Smoley Development – speed limit signs request

Noise Complaints (2)

New Business

Total Energy Systems, LLC – Estimate to replace block heater and battery

The Newsleaders – the legal newspaper for the City of St. Stephen

Miscellaneous Announcements

Newsleaders Publication 2020: Dec. 11 & 24

Meeting Adjourned

**MINUTES
ST. STEPHEN CITY COUNCIL
DECEMBER 2, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Jeff Blenkush

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Blenkush – Mayor, Gene Skaj, Danita Traut, Steve Trobec, and Thomas Vouk

ALSO PRESENT: Kurt Niemeyer, Treasurer, and Julie Jacobs, City Clerk GUEST: Jerry Mehr

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Jeff Blenkush stated to add under minutes to approve the canvassing minutes and the special meeting minutes. A motion was made by Gene Skaj, seconded by Steve Trobec, to approve the amended agenda. All in favor, motion carried.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER MEETING: November City Council Meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Gene Skaj, seconded by Danita Traut, to approve the amended November 4, 2020 minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

The Canvassing Meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Gene Skaj, seconded by Danita Traut, to approve the November 12, 2020 Canvassing Meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

The Public Hearing minutes were read by City Clerk, Julie Jacobs. A motion was made by Gene Skaj, seconded by Danita Traut, to approve the November 23, 2020 public hearing minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

READING OF THE CLAIMS: November claims were reviewed. A motion was made by Gene Skaj, seconded by Tom Vouk, to approve the claims. All in favor, motion carried.

READING OF RECEIPTS: Gene Skaj inquired about the truck payment. Kurt explained the transfer of funds went into the truck account. A motion was made by Gene Skaj, seconded by Steve Trobec, to accept the receipts. All in favor, motion carried.

TREASURER’S REPORT: For the period: 10/1/2020 to 10/30/2020

Beginning Balance	\$1,864,116.56
Total Receipts	\$122,488.63
Total Disbursed	\$183,494.64
Ending Balance	\$1,803,110.55
Less Deposits in Transit	\$0.00
Plus Outstanding Checks	\$44,401.57
Total Per Bank Statement	\$1,847,512.12

Treasurer’s report was reviewed. Kurt Niemeyer stated \$10,000 was received from the Fire Relief Association. CARES funds from Brockway Township of \$27,375 was received. The LGA funds of \$95,480.81, will be arriving shortly. Kurt explained Falcon Bank CD interest decreased to .6% from 1.6% previously. Dolores Supan inquired if the treasurer report dates were correct. Kurt explained the dates are always a month behind due to the bank reconciliation statement being received at the end of each month. A motion was made by Gene Skaj, seconded by Steve Trobec, to approve the treasurer report. All in favor, motion carried.

PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Jerry Mehr, Knights of Columbus gun raffle permit – Jerry Mehr is requesting a gambling permit for a gun raffle planned for May 3, 2021, at Trobec’s Bar. A motion was made by Tom Vouk, seconded by Steve Trobec, to approve the gambling permit for the Knight of the Columbus gun raffle. All in favor, motion carried.

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ST. STEPHEN FIRE & RESCUE: Gene Skaj reported there were twelve calls in November, with 115 total calls in 2020. Training will be done on-line due to the pandemic restrictions in place and the suggestion of the Fire Marshall. Gene reported, per the Stearns County Health Department, in the last month St. Stephen has had nine positive cases of COVID, with a total of 69 this year. Brockway Township has had 89 positive cases of COVID, with a total of 490 this year. Gene shared new radios have been received and are programmed.

Gene Skaj shared Peter Kroll was on leave, due to health reasons. Peter has received a doctor's statement to return to the Fire Department. Gene explained with Peter's length of leave, the City Council needs to approve Peter Kroll to be rehired for the Fire Department. A motion was made by Steve Trobec, seconded by Danita Traut, to hire Peter Kroll for the St. Stephen Fire Department. All in favor, motion carried.

Stated the fire pumps annual check was completed and everything passed.

RELIEF ASSOCIATION: Gene Skaj reported they are waiting to receive the two percent monies from the state.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Jeff Blenkush reported for Paul Ritter the sirens worked and batteries were replaced for the weather station on the City Hall's roof.

Total Energy Systems, LLC – Estimate to replace block heater and battery: Jeff Blenkush shared during Total Energy Systems' annual generator check it was discovered the block heater and battery needs to be replaced. The estimate from Total Energy Systems, LLC was reviewed. Consensus of council members was to repair the generator. A motion was made by Steve Trobec, seconded by Danita Traut, to approve the estimate received from Total Energy Systems, LLC to repair the generator at the City Hall. All in favor, motion carried.

7:00 PM ~ Public Hearing: Truth in Taxation, 2021 Budget: The regular meeting was closed for the 2021 Budget approval. Jeff Blenkush stated a copy of the 2021 proposed budget has been given to all council members and attendees. Jeff asked if anyone in attendance has any questions or comments regarding the proposed budget three times. Jerome Supan inquired how the road and bridge numbers were figured. Discussion held regarding how these numbers were figured. Jerome inquired if all the snow removal funds were used last year. Tom Vouk stated budgeted was \$46,118, and \$36,917 was used. Public hearing closed at 7:05 PM.

Jeff Blenkush asked if council members have any questions. Danita Traut shared she received an inquiry why the clerk and treasurer positions increased by \$2,000. Danita explained to the inquirer this position became two positions and that was the reason for the increase. Gene Skaj inquired why the \$6,000 for St. Stephen Fire Annual Audit was a separate line item. Gene understood when this was discussed it was only separated for the council's clarification. Kurt Niemeyer stated it was separated for clarification, but can be noted as one-line item. Consensus is this be one-line item. Tom Vouk still feels the budget is being raised too much. Tom suggested splitting the difference of local government aide and the 6th Avenue number. Meaning road and bridge would cover \$35,000, and the budget would cover the other half. Danita Traut agrees with Tom's suggestion, plus the residents are already being taxed for 6th Avenue. Discussion held. Danita inquired about the two-line items for road and bridge. Kurt clarified the road and bridge line item levy for \$22,386 is a subtraction. Tom suggests a total levy of \$260,557, the difference of \$36,414.84 would be subtracted from Road Construction/Engineering line item. Discussion held regarding the levy amount change. A motion was made by Danita Traut, seconded by Tom Vouk, to change the levy total to \$260,557, with the balance to be taken from the road construction/engineering line item. All in favor, motion carried.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

1. **Road and Bridge:** Jerome Supan inquired about 9th Avenue status update. Liz Halet stated at the October meeting there were two proposals received by the property owner. Liz shared the property owner stated he has a Declaration of Building Restriction with the City of St. Stephen, dated January 18, 2008. The property owner wants this lifted for signing the easement agreement. Council discussed potential resolutions to easement acquisition. Dan Schultz suggested the City Council members receive a copy from the attorney of Declaration of Building Restriction, and the 2008 minutes are reviewed regarding this, and talk with a past council member who is familiar with this agreement. This involves four properties, and only has one property owner not willing to agree to this. Liz forwarded the Declaration to Jeff Blenkush during the meeting and this was read by Jeff. Liz was unable to find anything in the minutes two months prior and two months after this date. Discussion held how this declaration came about, and who owned this property when this was split in three parcels. Consensus is that this needs to be looked in to further. Will be put on the agenda when some questions are answered.

Jerome inquired about the brush, leaves, and grass clippings being left at the city maintenance garage. Jerome suggested the grass clippings be pushed aside from the leaves and brush so they can decay. Jeff Blenkush will find someone to take care of this.

Jerome stated the trash guards are up on 12th Avenue, and is concerned if the right size trash guards were placed. Jerome stated they look small and this will become an issue in the spring. Jeff Blenkush will check with Randy Sabart if the proper size were placed according to what was in the design.

Jeff Blenkush stated the pre-deposit to Doug Legatt has not been received. This check will be sent to Doug Legatt.

Dan Schultz inquired about East Crest and who takes care of the snow removal. Jeff will check with Randy Sabart about who's responsible for snow plowing, and the street signs, and site permits.

2. **Planning Commission:** Dan Schultz shared he met with a contractor and a site permit was signed for a home in the East Crest Development. Dan stated the Planning Commission met in November. Tony Ohmann attended inquiring about purchasing half of Rodenwald's property. Dan shared there was a lengthy discussion with the Planning Commission about road construction in this development. Dan is needing guidance from the City Council regarding 2nd Street NE, the buyer is stating he doesn't want a road to go through there. Jeff Blenkush asked for council members thoughts. Noted essentially this road would connect to four developments, currently three existing developments, where there are no current roads. Discussion held regarding the current road plan. Dan stated the city needs to think long term, like 50 years from now, and how the roads built will affect the city then. Consensus is to stay with the current road plans in place. Discussion held how to handle the buyer. Consensus to wait and see what the buyer proposes.

Dan stated the Planning Commission had a lengthy discussion regarding the Czech's property and the accessory buildings. Planning Commission is recommending another site permit visit be done. Dan has several concerns. Jeff Blenkush explained to Liz Halet regarding the non-conforming buildings. Liz will draft a letter stating why another site visit is needed. Dan Schultz and another council member will perform this site visit. Noted Dan Czech plans to attend the Planning Commission meeting next week. The letter will advise Dan Czech not to attend the Planning Commission meeting until this visit can be completed.

The Planning Commission will meet this month. Dan shared there's items on the agenda.

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3. **Park:** Jeff Blenkush shared Design Electric, Inc. completed everything at the skating rink. The skating rink now has lights. Discussion held how to flood the rink.

SHERIFF'S REPORT: no report received.

HEALTH COMMITTEE: All council members received a copy of the letter from the Minnesota Department of Health with COVID updates.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

12th Avenue NE Improvement Project. Jeff Blenkush shared on behalf of Randy Sabart that Braun Intertec completed the soil boring tests and will start working on the design phase. SEH is hoping to have a preliminary design for next month's meeting.

Cleaning up after Dogs in the Parks. Liz Halet shared the City currently has an animal waste related ordinance listed under parks, and not following this ordinance is a misdemeanor. The concern is the waste is being left in the parks, and it's easier to enforce a petty misdemeanor and move this ordinance under animals to include public and private properties. Jeff read the suggested updated ordinance 96.3. Tom Vouk inquired if a public hearing is needed to change. Liz stated yes and public hearing needs to be done. A motion was made by Danita Traut, seconded by Gene Skaj, to approve setting a public hearing on January 6 at 7 p.m. on the proposed language change for the animal ordinance. All in favor, motion carried.

9th Avenue Status Update. Discussed under Road and Bridge.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Newsleader. Julie Jacobs shared The Newsleader is wanting to send letters requesting they continue being the legal newspaper for the City of St. Stephen. Jeff Blenkush stated this takes place at the January meeting. Julie also shared regarding the publishing council members emails in the Sartell – St. Stephen Resource Guide. A handout as to what was printed last year was reviewed. Questioned whether the midconetwork.com emails for council members are used, and they are not. Consensus that the mayor and clerk have emails listed, and city council members' names are listed in this guide.

MISCELLANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Newsleaders deadline dates for 2020: Dec. 11 & 24.

Gene Skaj shared Christmas lights are hung, lights on 6th Avenue South were unable to be hung due to soft soil.

Danita Traut inquired what distance a fence or markers can be placed on your land. Jeff Blenkush stated at the edge of the road's right of way.

Gene Skaj stated the flags and poles are all busted due to the high winds, and will be needing to be replaced.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Gene Skaj, seconded by Danita Traut, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Julie Jacobs, City Clerk


Lisa Marvin, City Mayor