

St Stephen City Council Minutes
November 13, 2024
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CALL TO ORDER: 6:33 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Lisa Marvin

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Marvin – Mayor, Gene Skaj, Danita Traut, Steve Trobec, and Thomas Vouk, Council

ALSO PRESENT: Ken Lahr, Heather Imdieke, City Clerk and Kurt Niemeyer, Treasurer.

GUESTS: Tim Meland, Stearns County Sheriff, Randy Sabart, Sue Dege

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: There was an addition to the agenda, Mayor Marvin added “Special Meeting” under “New Business.” Gene Skaj made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition, Steve Trobec seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

MEETING MINUTES: The month at the top of the minutes was changed from September to October. Updates were made to page 3 under Albany Communications, the 4th sentence, was updated from “lower Smoley Field” to “Albany Communications Building in Smoley Field.” Also on page 5, under Military Convoy, in the first sentence, the date of the Military Convoy was changed from October 15th to October 5th. Also, on page 2 there was clarification added to which fire truck should be considered to sell. A motion was made to approve the October Minutes with the changes by Danita Traut, seconded by Steve Trobec, all in favor, motion carried.

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

READING OF RECEIPTS: Receipts were reviewed. There was a question on page 1 on 9/24/2024 from the River Runners, it said gambling permit and was changed to 75th Anniversary Celebration. A motion was made by Steve Trobec to approve the receipts with the one change, this was seconded by Gene Skaj. All in favor, motion carried.

TREASURER’S REPORT: For the period: 09/1/2024 to 09/30/2024

Beginning Balance	\$1,806,581.58
Total Receipts	\$485,228.17
Total Disbursed	\$390,006.84
Ending Balance	\$1,899,425.62
Less Deposits in Transit	\$317,039.45
Plus Outstanding Checks	\$0.00
Total Per Bank Statement	\$2,216,465.07

Workers’ comp audit was sent in and accepted by Berkley Risk Management so that may adjust our rate on insurance. CD will expire on 12/8/2024 with Falcon. Falcon was unable to tell Kurt what new rate will be, the rate on the current CD is 4.96%. Kurt is waiting for an email with that information. A motion to approve the treasurer’s report was made by Danita Traut, and seconded by Tom Vouk. All in favor, motioned carried.

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PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

- Dog Complaint – There was a dog complaint made by a resident regarding a dog being walked without a leash. This individual sent pictures of the dog being walked without a leash. St Stephen has a leash ordinance and after discussion, the Sheriff's department will research this complaint and issue a ticket or warning, if applicable, and report back in December's City Council Meeting with the actions taken.
- Edward Peternell – Not in attendance

RELIEF ASSOCIATION:

- The relief audit has been submitted fully. We have received a donation for \$40,000 from the relief association to the fire equipment fund.

ST. STEPHEN FIRE & RESCUE:

- There were 10 calls in October, 7 so far in November, 109 calls year to date. Training this month is on chimney Fires. New rescue tools have been ordered and delivered.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

- Sirens went off last week

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

- Road and Bridge: Someone hit a mailbox on 6th Ave, Bob provided a piece of scrap metal to the homeowner to fix his mailbox. Bob is asking if we should charge the homeowner for that. It was determined we would not charge him as it was a piece of scrap. Mayor Marvin asked if this is something we would typically do, it is not, this is between the person who hit the mailbox and the homeowner. Going forward, this will be handled by the parties involved.

A neighbor of Bob's would be interested in the fencing that is not currently being used and is wondering if it would be for sale. Per Tom, we cannot sell it unless we put it up for bid and we would need to open it city wide. A motion was made by Gene Skaj to sell the fencing for bids, this motion was seconded by Steve Trobec. All in favor, motion carried. Bob to provide more detail on the fencing such as lengths as well as heights and provide this information to Mayor Marvin and Heather and this will be posted on the St Stephen website, on Facebook, and in the door of city hall. The city will accept sealed bids only for two weeks from the date of posting.

- Snow Plow Plan: Mayor Marvin and Bob met with Burski and came up with a plan as to who will be plowing which areas. Heather to reach out to Burski and Josh Traut for bids for the winter plowing. Bob has picked up a few fuel filters as well as other minor parts for the snow plow as we are capable of doing the simple maintenance ourselves, that way we don't need to pay Friedrich's for these services. Additionally, Bob is looking into potential issues with batteries in the new snow plow, something seems to be draining them quickly. He is suggesting that we purchase a decent battery charger in case of an emergency.

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- 9th Avenue: At the October City Council meeting, Ed Peternell brought up concerns with this road being too “low.” He thought that it may be a safety hazard with winter coming if EMS or police were unable to get down that road because it is so low and the snow drifts over it. It has been determined that in the spring of 2025 the city will put down additional gravel on that road.
- Parks: Ken will take care of Ice Rink this winter. He will work with Josh Traut to clear off driveway, parking lot, and rink and Ken will handle the rest of the rink.
- Albany Communications: Will likely wait to put their building in until the spring. The lot will still be cleared this fall. Ken met with the excavator and they will be removing the Sumac tree and adding shrubbery to the area.
- Planning Commission: Amanda Hawkins gave a report on the planning commission meeting from October 8th, 2024. This report included the following:
 - Planning Commission member Nick Griffiths presented a draft of a proposed ordinance to allow chickens in any residential lot. This will be reviewed and further discussed at this month’s meeting.
 - Ken provided an update on permits, at the time of the meeting, there was nothing new to report. Three permits required follow up for final inspection, and there was one application for the White Oak development. Since the meeting, three new permits have been issued, and three have had their final inspections.
 - The owners of 1001 Main Street attended the meeting with questions regarding new feed lots. They have a total of 200.4 acres on the farm and have been in discussion with the county who stated that if the city of St Stephen approved it, they could have 299 animal units. They want to be able to utilize the existing buildings on the farm as they do not have any buildings on the Brockway side of the property. They currently have pole sheds on the back of the property on the St Stephen side. When asked why they would like to have a feed lot they advised that they would like to raise Dairy Steer. There were concerns by other citizens that while this would open up the city to having cattle, this would also open up the city to having feed lots with other animals such as chickens or hogs. There was also discussion about setbacks from wells and pollution caused by feed lots.
 - Regarding feed lots, the planning commission will have someone from the county in attendance of the November meeting to answer any questions and continue this discussion. It was requested that if possible, the county provide a list of everyone in the city of St Stephen that currently have a feed lot as well as their addresses.
 - Planning Commission Mike Gillen presented a guide from the city of New Hope for review. New Hope calls this the property maintenance guide. There was a brief discussion surrounding this and it was determined that a good place to begin this research, if planning feels additional regulations are needed, would be the nuisance ordinances that already exist. Planning will review these in upcoming meetings.
 - 1206 6th Ave SE – Josh Markgraf is here to seek an extension of their variance that has already been granted. There seems to be a concern with where the building will be going. The Markgraf’s would like to put the building at the front of their property, however, the ordinance states that additional buildings cannot be put in front of a dwelling. Per the attorney, this would now require a second special hearing to put the additional building in front of the dwelling. Ken presented a drawing of the land and where they would like to put the building. Due to the topography of the lot, the Markgraf’s feel it makes the most sense for the building to go in the front. There were two other options that

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were presented of where to put the building, but due to the expected usage of this building the Markgraf's prefer to have the building right off the road. There was a motion to extend the current variance by 90 days after the expiration of the current variance, which will be ending in December. This motion was made by Tom Vouk, seconded by Steve Trobec. All in favor, motion carried. The Markgraf's were advised to attend the planning commission meeting on November 19th to discuss the location of the building and gather recommendations from the planning commission.

- Health Committee: Steve Trobec and Lisa Marvin completed the inspection. There are currently no weeds to treat. Form is being completed and Kurt is helping with some numbers, and that will be submitted.

SHERIFF'S REPORT: 36 contract hours for October. There were a couple medical emergencies, one dog complaint and seven traffic stops.

The sheriff's department wanted a list of keyholders for the City of St Stephen if something happened within city hall. Per Mayor Marvin, she is thinking Jeff Drais, and herself should be two of the keyholders, then Heather Imdieke, then Tom Vouk. Mayor Marvin thought that the order should go Jeff Drais, Lisa Marvin, Heather Imdieke, Tom Vouk. She will confirm with Jeff Drais if this is okay, and then tell Heather and Heather will send the form back to Stearns County.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- White Oak County Estates: Traffic signs have been ordered, they will be installed next week or the week after. The developer was not interested in adding temporary stop signs. The developer was advised that until the stop signs were installed that the barricades needed to remain in place. There is an updated punch list, but the things that are left over are quite minor. Tom asked if the punch list would be completed this fall, Randy was unsure of if they are going to continue to try to complete it this fall, but the traffic signs are the biggest issue at this point.
- East Crest Development: Punch list sent to Ferche (developer) three times, in January, April, and most recently on 9/12/2024 and the developer is choosing to not comply. The outstanding items include moving the traffic signs back as they have been installed too close to the road, as well as proof that the ponds have been grated. There is also a request to replace the stop sign on 12th Ave. The biggest issue seems to be the road signs as this is a concern for the snow plows. Sue has been trying to contact Ferche directly. It was agreed upon to give Ferche time to respond and to come back to this next month and continue discussions.

There was a question on who would move the signs if the city were to do this, if we were to pay for this to happen and then bill Ferche. Per Randy, there are local companies that are willing to do this, he is going to send a list of local companies to Heather Imdieke and Heather will contact them so we can receive estimates. We could potentially still move the signs this fall.

Danita asked about the water backup on 12th Ave and in resident's yards. Per Randy, there was some debris causing water to backup onto 12th Ave. The debris has been removed and since then no complaints have been received. Additionally, the paved road is higher than the gravel road was previously. As to the water backup in the resident's yards, the grating in the ponds should help that, however, there is an overflow area that it should drain to in the case of a lot of rain/snow.

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- Fire Department 75th Anniversary Event: The event raised \$28,825.00, after all expenses, there was a profit of \$18,084.00. We still have roughly \$10,000 of our COVID money that could be utilized for the new piece of fire equipment. There was an additional check received for \$40,000 from the St. Stephen Firefighter's Relief Association for the equipment fund that could also be utilized. There was discussion surrounding how the money should be allocated. There was a motion to use all proceeds, minus any expenses from the 75th Anniversary Celebration, as well as the \$10,780.21 for COVID, for the fire department equipment fund by Tom Vouk, seconded by Danita Traut. All in favor, motion carried.
- Military Convoy: Military Convoy came into town on 10/5 at roughly 9:30am. It was windy so they were unable to put up the POW MIA balloon. There was a large turnout with roughly 300-400 people and 30-40 military units. There were also fire truck escorts, as well as the first St Stephen fire truck. Mike Legatt donated small flags so there were small flags being waived as the convoy entered. All participants in the convoy received a gift bag, and Mike Legatt made dash plaques for each driver. Saint Johns donated between 250 and 300 rolls, and 100 cookies. The women's axillary also donated cookies and bars. There was a drone taking video which are on YouTube. There were two busloads of vets from the VA, the model A club was in attendance, and the St Augusta Legion Riders helped with traffic control as well as escorted the convoy through Stearn's County. There were a couple other legion clubs that helped out as well.
- Winter Extravaganza: Will be held on 12/8 at 11:05 after mass. Santa has been secured. There is a \$100 donation from the American legion. The Lion's will help out by handing out refreshments, and the Legion will try to help, but don't know if they can get volunteers. Activities will include crafts, letters to Santa, and other games as well as refreshments.
- Christmas Decorations: The current decorations will go up on November 23rd. We will look to Gene for a follow up at the end of the season to discuss what needs to be added or replaced. The cost for these decorations ranges from \$800-\$5,000.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Donation Resolution: There are several donation resolutions for review:
 - o 11132024 for the 75th Anniversary Event. There are multiple donations noted in this resolution. There was a motion to approve this resolution by Gene Skaj, seconded by Danita Traut. All in favor, motion carried.
 - o 11132024-1 for a Fire extinguisher for the Snow Plow Truck. A motion was made to approve this resolution by Gene Skaj, seconded by Tom Vouk. All in favor, motion carried.
 - o 11132024-2 from the St Stephen American Legion Post 2021 for \$100 for the Winter Extravaganza. Gene Skaj made a motion to approve this resolution, Danita Traut seconded the resolution. All in favor, motion carried.
- Election Canvassing: There was a large turnout on election day. At 7am we had 560 people registered in St Stephen at our precinct to vote, 53 people were registered on election day, after absentee ballots and military overseas ballots, 540 people voted. For Mayor we had Edward Peternell and Lisa Marvin on the ballot, the incumbent, Lisa Marvin, won. Incumbents Steve Trobec and Tom Vouk were both on the ballot for city council, both will be continuing on the City Council. There is a resolution to certify the 2024 Municipal

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General Election results. There is a motion to approve this resolution by Danita Traut, seconded by Gene Skaj. All in favor, motion carried.

- Special Meeting: The Truth in Taxation meeting is to held between November 25th and December 28th. The Truth in Taxation meeting will be held at the December City Council meeting.
- Sportsman Club: No Update

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Ste Gene Skaj seconded by Tom Vouk to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Heather Imdieke, City Clerk



Lisa Marvin, City Mayor

RESOLUTION NO. 12042024 - 1
A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING A DONATION TO THE CITY

WHEREAS, the City of St. Stephen is generally authorized to accept donations of real and personal property pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 465.03 et seq. for the benefit of its citizens and is specifically authorized to accept gifts.

WHEREAS, the following persons and/or entities have offered to contribute the cash or property set forth below to the city:

Donated from: Stearns Electric Association Trust - \$500.00, Fire Relief Association - \$40,000

Fund to go to: The Fire Department Equipment Fund

WHEREAS, the terms or conditions of the donation, if any, are as follows: Fire Department Equipment fund


WHEREAS, this donation has been contributed to the city for the benefit of its citizens, as allowed by law; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that it is appropriate to accept the donation offered.

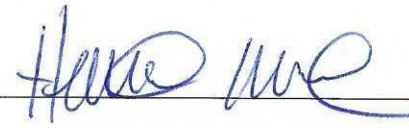
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ST. STEPHEN, MINNESOTA AS FOLLOWS:

1. The donation described above is accepted and shall be used to establish and/or operate services either alone or in cooperation with others, as allowed by law.
2. The City Clerk is hereby directed to issue a receipt to the donor acknowledging the city's receipt of the donor's donation.

Passed by the City Council of St. Stephen, Minnesota this 4th day of December, 2024



Mayor



City Clerk

RESOLUTION NO. 12042024
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WHEREAS, the following persons and/or entities have offered to contribute the cash or property set forth below to the city:

Donated from: Mike Ringstad - \$300, Tom & Nancy Vouk - \$250

Fund to go to: The Fire Department 75th Anniversary Event

WHEREAS, the terms or conditions of the donation, if any, are as follows: Fire Departments 75th Anniversary Event Fund


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City Clerk