

Grand Meadow Council Meeting
August 14, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.
Grand Meadow Community Center

PRESENT – Mayor James Christian, Councilor Blayne Stejskal, Councilor Christy Benson, Councilor Ryan Queensland, City Administrator Scott Kerrins, City Clerk Chris Hyrkas, Officer Domanic Merkel (GMPD), Derek Olinger (Bolton & Menk) and Sarah Burmeister (Library).

ABSENT – Councilor Aaron Myhre

CALL TO ORDER – The monthly meeting of the Grand Meadow City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPEN FORUM – None

CONSENT AGENDA

A. S. Kerrins stated item 2 was erroneously on the agenda and should be removed. Motion by R. Queensland, second by C. Benson to approve the consent agenda including the change. Motion carried.

REPORTS

- A. Library** – Written report submitted. No questions from council.
- B. Ambulance** – Written report submitted. S. Kerrins added that the ambulance is short on responders this week, due to vacations.
- C. Public Works** – Written report submitted. After extensive discussion regarding the bids for the pond road ditch, motion by R. Queensland, second by B. Stejskal to approve the bid from Bustad Dozing and Excavating contingent upon the cost not changing if work isn't completed until Spring.
- D. Police** – Written report submitted. No questions from council.
- E. Fire** – Written report submitted. No questions from council. B. Stejskal asked if the building roof would be repaired this year, which J. Christian confirmed it would.
- F. City Clerk** – C. Hyrkas reported things have been going well.
- G. City Administrator** – In addition to the written report submitted, S. Kerrins reported the Employee Policy will need to change, due to the new Paid Family and Medical Leave and Earned Sick and Safe Time laws.
J. Christian inquired about the Pine Lawn Park fire pit listed in the report. S. Kerrins explained that Dalton Thompson had camped at the West side of Pine Lawn and noticed the concrete fire pit needed repaired and volunteered to do it for free with the city's permission, which S. Kerrins provided.

While on the subject of parks, J. Christian announced that the Grand Meadow Lions were donating thirteen trees to replace the removed ash trees. Additionally, bids for a new fence and asphalt were being obtained.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Construction Project

- i. General project update** – D. Olinger reported the street and utility work is moving along. Work is being conducted on the North end of 1st Street and then the remainder of the streets needing to be milled will start. Lift station work has slowed down, due to finding a contractor to finish the inside of the building. The remainder of work consists of completing electrical, moving equipment to new building, and grading.
- ii. Street utility – Pay application # 7** – Motion by R. Queensland, second by C. Benson to approve pay application # 7 in the amount of \$252,442.66. Motion carried.
- iii. Lift station – Pay application # 9** – Motion by C. Benson, second by B. Stejskal to approve pay application # 9 in the amount of \$32,438.73. Motion carried.
- iv. Pavement/Infrastructure Management Plan Proposal** – D. Olinger presented information for Bolten & Menk to provide a plan. The plan would consist of a pavement conditional rating map, utility conditional rating/material map, maintenance and reconstruction map, and high-level cost estimates/budgets. This would provide a plan to prioritize work needed to maintain, repair, and reconstruct streets and infrastructure. The fee estimated to complete this plan would be \$13,600.00. J. Christian asked how long it would take to be completed. D. Olinger responded within one to two months. No action was taken.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Annexation** – 322 2nd Ave SW – S. Kerrins explained the property owner is requesting to annex his building site into the city and transfer the agricultural land to the township. B. Stejskal questioned how this would affect the city's property tax revenue, which S. Kerrins stated it would increase, because property taxes are higher on residential than agricultural. Motion by B. Stejskal, second by C. Benson to approve the request. Motion carried. S. Kerrins will work with the City Attorney to complete the process.
- B. Building permit** – 208 2nd St NE – The property owner is requesting to build a garage, which was approved by the Planning and Zoning Committee. Motion by B. Stejskal, second by R. Queensland. Motion carried.

- C. Rezone request** – 310 4th Ave – The property owner is requesting the parcel be rezoned from Industrial to C-2 Commercial. Motion by B. Stejskal, second by C. Benson to schedule a public hearing contingent on seller and buyer agreeing to rezone all of parcel 25.008.0515. Motion carried.
- D. Conditional Use Permit** – 206 ½ Main St S – The council reviewed the written request for a CUP to use the property as residential. S. Kerrins also reported that he had been informed property taxes are delinquent in the amount of \$11,114.23 and was in the process of tax forfeiture. If taxes are not paid, it is estimated the property will be auctioned in November. Motion by R. Queensland, second by B. Stejskal to deny the request. Motion carried.
- E. Rezone request** – 113 Main St N – The property owner (Bryan Owens) is requesting the parcel be rezoned from C-1 Central Business to R-1 Single-Family Residential. He wants to sell the property and stated there's been no interest as it's currently zoned, but he has buyers if it were rezoned residential. He went on to point out that it's surrounded by residential homes except Arvig and that modifications would certainly need to take place. R. Queensland stated he gets both ways and believes it would be a great location for an office building for a professional. B. Owens countered that since COVID, brick and mortar buildings are no longer used, because everyone works at home. R. Queensland asked if he's considered fixing it up as a commercial building and marketing it that way. B. Owens replied yes and no. He doesn't want to go in and remodel it the way he thinks, because the new owner may not like the set up so a remodel would have to be done again. J. Christian commented that he knows there's a need for housing, but would hate to lose another commercial building to which B. Owens said he would argue that point, since it's sat vacant for ten years. R. Queensland believes it sat so long, because it wasn't priced correctly for the area and agrees there's a need for affordable housing, but feels there's also a need for commercial. He is also hesitant to approve the request when no plans have been submitted so the council has no idea what will be done. C. Benson commented that if it's not in compliance with the ordinance and is approved what does this do moving forward. She also wonders if we need to look at the area zoned downtown and believes it would be useful as commercial so understands both sides. B. Owens said one buyer would use it as a single family residential and the other buyer wants to turn it into a duplex. He doesn't see how that parcel is considered downtown when it's surrounded by residential. C. Benson also agreed that it's difficult to make a decision when no plan is being provided and what would be acceptable. B. Owens said his expectation was the buyer would handle that. R. Queensland asked where he has it advertised as a commercial building. B. Owens stated online, Facebook and a couple other places. He also has a friend in Rochester listing it for him. He's had numerous calls interested in it being a daycare until they find out it's zoned commercial. R. Queensland inquired if he knew what it was zoned when he purchased it, to which B.

Owens said absolutely, but the only reason he bought it is because nobody could. He tried for five years and when the opportunity arose, he jumped on it, because you can't have a nice building just sitting there. Discussion continued regarding a garage fitting on the property, parking, and setbacks. J. Christian explained that council has three options. They can deny it, approve it, or table it. C. Benson said she would like to discuss it more with additional information such as a plan. B. Owens said that's touchy, because one owner wants it as residential and the other as commercial so who should he get a plan from. C. Benson asked if both could submit. R. Queensland gathered from the conversation that without more information it would be denied. B. Owens inquired what information and R. Queensland responded with a sketch, blueprint, spec sheet, if the building will be single family or a duplex, and egress. Motion by B. Stejskal, second by C. Benson to table until next month. Motion carried.

F. Water/sewer charges for churches – The Grand Meadow school is opening a daycare at the Lutheran church, which has raised questions regarding water and sewer bills. Currently none of the churches pay for these utilities, but there will be more usage with a daycare. In talking with surrounding communities, Grand Meadow is the only city that doesn't charge churches. B. Stejskal asked if they all had meters. S. Kerrins responded only the Lutheran church. B. Stejskal asked if there was a reason they had never been charged. J. Christian responded no, it's just the way it's been. He was not aware they weren't being charged until last week. C. Benson asked who would pay for the meter installation. S. Kerrins stated he believes it should be the city. R. Queensland asked if the school pays, which S. Kerrins confirmed they do. J. Christian directed S. Kerrins to send letters to all the churches informing them this topic would be discussed at the September council meeting before any decisions were made. S. Kerrins also explained they do not pay property taxes, but do pay assessments.

ADJOURN – Motion by B. Stejskal, second by R. Queensland to adjourn. Motion carried. The time was 7:20 p.m.