

**MINUTES of: City of Carlos Regular Council  
Meeting City Hall/ Office, Carlos, Minnesota  
Tuesday, October 17, 2023 7:00 PM  
Meeting was available to be attended in person or over Zoom.**

**Mayor Todd Burgess called City of Carlos Regular Council meeting to order at 7:00pm**

**1. Pledge of Allegiance @ 7:00 pm**

**2. Roll Call** was taken: Mayor Todd Burgess; Council Members Ronna Berghoff, Ashley Wildman, and Donna Eveslage were present. James Young was absent. Also in attendance: Fireman TJ Carlson, City Clerk/Treasurer Lori Johnson, Donnie Froemming, Bryan Balcome. Engineer Jared Voge attended via Zoom. Also in attendance via Zoom was Dan Nokovich.

**3. Meeting Minutes from September** were reviewed. Motion to Approve September 14, 2023 Minutes was made by Donna Eveslage; seconded by Ashley Wildman. Motion passed.

**4. Mayor requested Petitions from the Public:**

**Dan Nokovich:** Proposing a Carlos City Repentance, Ask for Forgiveness, Prayer and Blessing. Council suggested having this meeting before next council meeting November 9<sup>th</sup>. Dan agreed and requested that maybe it be done in front of his property on Main Avenue. Details to be determined.

**Chris Miller:** Rose a concern about Nuisance letter sent to a friend and a second letter sent from attorney threatening a fine of \$1000. He said the issues were taken care of and he wanted to make sure she would not be fined the \$1000 and would get no more letters. Council Person Donna Eveslage acknowledged that everything had been corrected on that property and she would not get any more letters and will not be fined.

**5. REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:**

**a.) City Treasurer Report given by Lori Johnson**

September 30 Balance City Checking Account:	\$225,094.93
September 30 Balance Savings Account:	\$253,953.17
September 30 Balance MPFA Debt Service Fund:	\$ 25,192.99
September 30 Balance CD#1237632: Special 6 mo., 5.1%	\$101,369.57
September 30 Balance CD#1237634: Special 10 mo., 4.25%	\$99,879.59
September 30 Balance Bremer Savings Account:	<u>\$367,512.02</u>
<b>Total City of Carlos Assets September 30, 2023:</b>	<b>\$1,073,372.30</b>
Carlos Fire Dept CD #1237127: 12 mo., 3.75%	\$ 67,397.66

**RECEIPTS** for Month of September: \$34,807.35

**DISBURSEMENTS** or Month of September \$54,204.56

**CLAIMS** #2447 - #2466 for month of October: \$20,072.47

**Late Fees** on September water bills sent on October 6<sup>th</sup> totaled: \$220.57

**CLAIMS 2447 -2466 OCTOBER 2023**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Claim#</u>	<u>Check#</u>	<u>Amount</u>
10/17/23	Douglas Cty Sheriff	2447	11524	\$875.00
10/17/23	Alex Rubbish	2448	11525	\$118.44
10/17/23	Thornton, Dolan, Bowen	2449	11526	\$857.50
10/17/23	LMCIT	2450	11527	\$9,190.00
10/17/23	gWorks	2451	11528	\$757.00
10/17/23	DSG	2452	11529	\$56.82
10/17/23	Hawkins	2453	11530	\$1,236.25
10/17/23	D&D	2454	11531	\$235.00
10/17/23	XS CONSULTING	2455	11532	\$500.00
10/17/23	XS CONSULTING	2456	11533	\$955.00
10/17/23	GSOC	2457	11534	\$14.85
10/17/23	ACE	2458	11535	\$7.00
10/17/23	RMB	2459	11536	\$180.77
10/17/23	Menard's	2460	11537	\$59.85
10/17/23	Ultimate Safety Concept	2461	11538	\$3,487.15
10/17/23	Alex Tech College	2462	11539	\$700.00
10/17/23	Great Plains Fire	2463	11540	\$605.00
10/17/23	Brothers Market	2464	11541	\$35.73
10/17/23	MFSCB	2465	11542	\$105.00
10/17/23	Evan Hacker	2466	11543	<u>\$96.11</u>
				<b>\$20,072.47</b>
10/17/23	Payroll Ck to Evan Hacker		11544	\$10.00
10/17/23	Payroll Ck to W. Johnson		11545	<u>\$153.75</u>
				<b>\$163.75</b>

Donna Eveslage made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report and Claims, Ronna Berghoff seconded it. Motion passed.

Clerk reported she had sought out information from area banks regarding interest rates as requested. Bremmer Bank is currently working on a proposal they will present next meeting. In the mean time they have already raised our interest rate in the MM Savings Account we have with them to 3.25%. Did Council want to discuss transferring some funds immediately from First Western Bank Savings (where we get 1% interest) to the Bremer account? Ashley Wildman made a motion we move \$100,000 from our FWB Savings to the Bremer Savings; Donna Eveslage seconded it. Motion carried.

**BRANDON COMMUNICATIONS: RICK KORKOWSKI**

- Brandon Communications has been leasing space on Carlos water tower for 10 years already. Current Lease Agreement is set to expire this coming January. At first the amount was set at \$50 per antennae, then increased to \$75 and is now at \$77. There are 5 antennas currently on the water tower. Also included in this agreement the City receives Internet at the office and at the Fire Hall. The connection at Fire Hall is not working (might be a faulty router); internet in the office works, but is slow.
- Ashley Wildman made a motion to update the contract to \$80 per antennae for the next 5 years; Ronna Berghoff seconded it. Motion passed.
- Rick stated they would look into the Internet speeds we are currently receiving to see if anything can be done to improve them.

**b.) Engineer Report, Jared Voge:**

- We received an acknowledgement that Carlos’ Capital Bonding request was completed, submitted, and accepted.

- Jared’s Memoir regarding MNDOT was distributed to Council Members. Local Road Improvement Program & Grant Navigator criteria has recently been defined. Jared wanted Council to be aware that the Carlos project to overlay additional streets will probably not fall under the parameters of this grant. Jared wanted Council to be aware of this probable outcome before investing time and resources to apply for this grant. Council then agreed that we should not apply for this grant.
- That’s all Jared has for this evening; open and available for any questions. There were none.

**c.) Public Works Report:** Jeff Gunderson was not in attendance; however he had reported he is caught up with everything. One issue Jeff is working on now is getting everything winterized at ball field to prevent irrigation system and plumbing in bathrooms from freezing. Council agreed he should just go ahead and do it. Donna Eveslage asked if Jeff had ordered the signs we discussed last month yet. Clerk said she will check with Jeff to see where that’s at.

**d.) Carlos Clerk Report, Lori Johnson:**

- Meters read 9/29/23. Water bills were done and sent October 6<sup>th</sup>. Late Fees this month were \$220.57. I sent out eight shut off letters; four of them have taken care of their past due balances, two have called and said they are working on it, two I have not heard from. Unfortunately, this year the deadline for shut-offs has changed from October 15<sup>th</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup>. We can no longer shut anyone’s water off; all we can do is keep adding the late charges, keep calling them and in November add their past due balance to their property taxes.
- I registered for LCM Fall Forums. This year they are presenting the information in a series of webinars. They will be next week, an hour each day Monday thru Thursday. The topics include Bring Americans Together, Tax Increment Financing, Cannabis industry, and AI. The cost was \$30 which I paid with City Credit Card. Should be educational.
- The Earned Sick & Safe Time new law goes into effect Jan 1, 2024. CTAS has sent me a notice saying their software will be updated to accommodate this new law. I am also scheduled for a “Lunch & Learn” webinar on Oct 30 with MN Small Cities Organization.
- There is a Mayor for the Day contest for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders put on by LMC. There are 3 winners chosen who each receive \$100. Just wondering the Council’s thoughts on this.
- I am not sure where we stand on Trunk and Treat. I have not heard anything back since I sent Brenton an email telling them we had not done this in the past, but would be willing to start it. *Council said not to worry about it anymore for this year; possibly have community start organizing earlier next year if they want to have this.*

**e.) Fire Department Report: Fire Chief Colten Steidl**

CARLOS FIRE DEPT. CALL LOG SEPTEMBER 2023						
	<u>City of Carlos</u>	<u>Belle River</u>	<u>Carlos Township</u>	<u>Alex Township</u>	<u>Mutual Aid</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
<b>MEDICAL</b>	0	0	7	1	0	8
<b>FIRE RESCUE</b>	0	0	1	0	0	1

- Mike Michaelson has retired from the fire department due to moving out of the area.
- Two new applicants: Daniel Hewitt as Fireman and First Responder and Megan Hewitt as First Responder. Comments from several people that knew them said they are good people. They were voted on by the Fire Department a couple months ago and have been attending meetings and training. Council said they respected Chief Steidl’s and Fire

Departments' opinion and recommendation. Donna Eveslage made a motion to officially have Daniel and Megan Hewitt become part of the Carlos Fire Department; Ashley Wildman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- Looking at getting all Firemen equipped with Wildland gear; this would have dual certification to also cover auto extraction and mass protection. The cost would be \$700 per person, with possibly an option of fleece liner for the jacket. The full turnout gear that they already have is too heavy for grassfires. This gear would total \$18,000 to \$20,000 for everyone in the department. They are thinking of using the ARPA Funds we currently have. They are also looking into a newer First Responder rig and are planning to use the funds (approximately \$60,000) that are currently going through the legal process of becoming available. Ashley Wildman made a motion to approve the use of ARPA funds to purchase the Wildland Grassfire Gear for all Fire Department; Donna Eveslage seconded it. Motion carried. *Clerk asked Chief what plans he had for DNR matching grant of \$2500 that needs to be used by June 2024; Colten responded they would probably use that to purchase whatever new hoses they needed.*

**f.) Ball Park Committee Report:** Donna Eveslage stated she had seen the field being used last Thursday from shortly after noon until 7-8 in the evening. Ronna Berghoff stated she thought the regular season is until October 15<sup>th</sup>; and possibly more for play-offs. Regardless of how long they are scheduled, the irrigation and plumbing will be shut down and winterized now.

**g.) Sheriff Department Log:** Looks good.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. DISCUSSION on “NUISANCE PROPERTIES”** Committee Member Donna Eveslage reported: Most residents have been willing to work with us; a number of properties have been cleaned up. Donna and Jackie plan on taking a drive around to check on a couple of residences to see how they are progressing. If they see signs the people are definitely working on making the required improvements, they did not send those folks a second letter. There were five that were sent second letters. At this point Donna is thinking that no one will need a third letter.
- B. NEW FIRE HALL**  
Fire Hall Committee Members Ronna Berghoff and Todd Burgess reported:
- Attorney's Draft of Joint Powers Agreement has been sent to Carlos Township, Belle River Township, City of Carlos and Fire Chief Colten Steidl.
  - Klecker has been sent edits required to make the Joint Powers an Insurable Entity as stated by Clarke Comer.
  - Next step will be a Committee meeting to discuss draft.
  - Email will be going out to coordinate when all Committee members will be available for meeting to finish Joint Powers Agreement.
- C. REAL DEAL INVESTMENTS, LLC. Donnie Froemming:**
- Not in a financial position to spend \$600,000 to put roads in on the property. Also he realizes that City is currently committed to Fire Hall project, so they are not able to consider financing these roads either.
  - To keep the project moving along, Donnie spoke to his Attorney and had him draft a letter requesting a Variance to allow a gravel road to be put in for now.
  - He would like this gravel road to be a private road exclusively accessing his properties, not open to public thruways.

- Donnie's Proposal would not put any burden of cost on the City; Real Deal Investments would bear the cost of this gravel road completely.
- Council maintained the road should be the developer's responsibility; Donnie points out that he assumed the City would put in the road and recover expenses through tax assessments.
- Council asked who would be responsible for maintaining this gravel road. Donnie said he would be completely responsible for all maintenance of this.
- Council stated concern that this gravel road would continue to be gravel; that is not the outcome the City sees or would like to take place.
- Donnie said his plan is to develop his lots in Miltona, sell them, and use the profits to invest in the Carlos properties.
- Council would like to see more detailed information (cost and time line) on these plans to consider possible ways the City might be able to come alongside with some partial assistance.
- Donnie Froemming agreed to get more detailed information to present to Council at a future time.

#### **D. AUDITOR 2023**

- Clerk reported that:  
24 Request for Proposals have been sent out.  
15 have responded that, No- they are not able to take on another Audit Client at this time.  
8 have yet to respond.  
1 Audit Firm has stated that they are interested and are in the process of preparing their proposal.
- Miranda Wendlandt from CLA did send an email stating that their proposal for Audit 2023 is \$19,084.
- The deadline for submitting these Proposals was stated to be November 7<sup>th</sup>. By the November Council meeting, I will have more information to report.

#### **COUNCIL REQUESTED INPUT FROM ENGINEERS concerning the gravel road Real Deal Investments is proposing:**

- Jared responded that ultimately it is up to Council to decide
- Jared said his experience with a private road along side public utilities can result in a nightmare situation
- However, a cul-de-sac could be put in with a gravel road temporarily; it has been done.
- Jared also pointed out that there also additional plats that need to be submitted
- Jared said it would be important to involve Jason Murray to see what kind of finance arrangements are possible: there is TIF, 429 and others but this is not Jared's area of expertise.
- Bryan Balcome suggested the assessment to the new properties might be the way to go. Bryan also stated that using the alley would not work because there are required set backs etc.
- Jared suggested that if the City took out bonding, it would be recovered from the properties at the same term as the bond.
- Another point is that since Donnie plans to maintain ownership of these properties and rent them out, it creates the total risk on Real Deal Investments instead of being spread out amongst different owners. If something happened to Donnie, then the City would be on the hook for the total cost.
- Council suggested they could see the City partially helping with the costs, maybe 25-30% because ultimately the City will benefit from the land being developed. That would require detailed plans and involvement from the City's Finance Advisor as to the best method to accomplish this.
- One example to consider is the Pine Haven development that sat basically empty for about 20 years; it is now starting to fill in. The lots are going for \$60-70 thousand plus you have to put in your own water and sewer.
- Council agrees that they want to see a thru road put in that parcel.
- It was brought up that the 2015 project as well as the road on Muyres Avenue were spread over the entire tax base of the City (along with raising fees for water and sewer), rather than assess the homeowners immediately affected by the improvements.

- The question was raised as to why part of 5<sup>th</sup> Street East was not finished. It is a public road. It was agreed that that road needs to be tarred at some point.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Request City to Hire Grant Writer**

- Clerk brought up all the many, many grants that are available at this time and wondering if we are missing out. Clerk stated that she is not able to look into all of these, with each having their unique complicated criteria, in the 3 days a week that she works.
- Jared Voge said he understood the overwhelming-ness of all these grants, because these days your inbox just gets flooded with them.
- Council stated if there was a grant available for a Capital Improvement Project that we were already considering, it would be worth it to look into it. However, we do not want to randomly start some project simply because there is grant money available.
- Council stated that possibly this can be New Business for next month: taking a look at our Capital Improvement Plan.

## **MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Donna Eveslage said she has been contacted about the fact that there is a property that is zoned commercial that is growing marijuana plants. Ronna Berghoff googled the new MN rules regarding this: a personal residence may have up to 8 marijuana plants, with no more than 4 being mature plants; also they must be in an enclosed locked space that is not open to public view. The photos show these plants are all mature. It was determined that we should have Douglas County Sheriff come and look at this and advise us.
- Question was brought up as to whether resident who had requested to put a new tree in the public right of way; and Council said “No”, had gone ahead and planted one anyway.
- Clerk brought another issue regarding someone who put up a shed that is too close to alley, not adhering to City set back rules. Council responded that whoever has the complaint should come to Council meeting. Some remedies might be to require them to move it, require them to seek a variance, pay a fine.
- Clerk presented a letter from WCI requesting a donation. Council said that we have not donated to them in past, so will not donate at this time.
- Mayor Burgess put out a reminder that the letters for those residents who are past 60 days behind on their water/sewer bills should be getting the letters that their bill along with the additional fees will be Certified to their Property Tax if not taken care of before November 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **REMINDERS of UPCOMING EVENTS:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:** Ashley Wildman made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ronna Berghoff seconded it. Motion passed. Meeting Adjourned at 9:22pm



Lori D. Johnson, City of Carlos Clerk/Treasurer