



Goodhue, Minnesota 55027

Goodhue City Council Meeting Minutes

6:15 pm, November 29, 2023

In-Person Meeting, First Floor Conference Room, City Hall

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Council Members Present: Mayor Ellen Anderson-Buck, Patrice O'Reilly, Joe Benda, Jason Thuman, Chris Schmit

Council Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: Jason Mandelkow

Guests: Cailin Richard, Robert Vose, McCrae Olson, Derek Weckerling, Travis Thomforde, Joe Zigneso

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### **Call to Order**

6:09 pm

### **Adoption of Agenda**

Unanimous adoption of agenda with a motion from Benda and a second from O'Reilly (5-0-0) with two amendments to the agenda, creating Other items 5(a) Special Assessment and 5(b) Set Special Meeting.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

With a motion from Schmit and a second from Thuman (5-0-0), Council unanimously approved Goodhue City Council Special Meeting Minutes from November 8, 2023 and Goodhue City Council Work Meeting Minutes from November 8, 2023.

### **Old Business**

There were no Old Business items presented for discussion.

### **New Business**

Fire Chief Weckerling and Assistant Fire Chief Thomforde made a presentation to City Council, requesting to **hire four new members to the fire department**, bringing the total number of members to the maximum allowed of 30 firefighters. The Chief was recently made aware of a state statute that required background checks of firefighters, and that all proposed new hires have to be approved by City Council. In addition to these requirements, the Chief also requested funds to conduct physical ability tests for all incoming firefighters, to ensure they are able to perform their duties and protect the City from liability. The Chief received a quote from the Mayo Clinic,

who would be able to perform a physical for each new hire for \$300 a person with the option to add additional screenings or tests. A background check would cost the City around \$100 a person. There was discussion between Council and the Chief and Assistant Chief on current trainings, annual requirements for existing firefighters, requirements of fire departments in surrounding communities, the legality of the proposed requirements and implementing a mentorship program within the department. The City requested to have a member of Council involved in the interview process for applicants, and unanimously appointed Council member Thuman as the fire department liaison. Council unanimously agreed that the fire department could open up applications immediately, and they would include a notice with upcoming utility bills. The Chief agreed to bring all recommended hires to City Council for approval.

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented **Resolution 23-1** for approval, requesting Council approve the Goodhue Lions request to sell pull-tabs at their event on December 9, 2023. With a motion from Thuman and a second from Benda (5-0-0), Council unanimously adopted Resolution 23-1.

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented a **Resolution to declare the Goodhue Police Department's squad cars as surplus and authorize the sale of them to Guardian**. Public Works Director Mandelkow spoke to Guardian and received their purchase offers for both vehicles, and City Attorney Vose drafted the Resolution. Guardian offered to pay \$14,000 for the Ford Explorer and \$4,000 for the Chevy Impala, and will come pick-up the vehicles upon adoption of the resolution. With a motion from O'Reilly and a second from Benda (5-0-0), Council unanimously adopted the Resolution.

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented a request to **sell the Panasonic Toughbook to the Goodhue County Sheriff's Office**. The Mayor shared that this would be the second Toughbook purchased by the Sheriff's Department from the City, they are offering the same purchase price of a \$150 contract credit and the Toughbook was determined to be surplus earlier in the month. Council member Schmit inquired about the future need of the equipment if the Police Department were reinstated; there was consensus among Council that this technology would be outdated and need to be replaced at that time. With a motion from Benda and a second from Schmit (5-0-0), Council unanimously approved the sale of the Panasonic Toughbook to the Goodhue County Sheriff's Department.

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented the **2024 Contract with Red Wing Computers** to City Council for approval, sharing this was reviewed by Council at their November work meeting. With a motion from Thuman and a second from O'Reilly (5-0-0), Council unanimously approved the 2024 contract with Red Wing Computers.



Mayor Anderson-Buck presented an item to appoint an **Interim City Clerk** in the current City Clerk's absence. This position is not to replace the existing clerk, but to step-in and assist with administrative items such as signing resolutions and accounting documents. City Attorney Vose shared that somebody outside of Council needed to be a signer on documents. The Mayor shared that she spoke to Gas Manager Kyle McKeown and he was willing to assist the City and become the Interim Clerk with the understanding it was for signatures only and no other clerking duties. With a motion from Schmit and a second from O'Reilly (5-0-0), Council unanimously appointed Kyle McKeown as the Interim City Clerk.

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented a **Liquor License request from the Jaycee's** for approval, sharing it was to serve beer and mulled wine at the Christmas Festival on December 2, 2023. The application form was filled out and dated in October, but action had not been taken at the October Council meeting. With a motion from Thuman and a second from Benda (5-0-0), Council unanimously approved the Jaycee's Liquor License for December 2, 2023.

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented an item on the **3M Lawsuit** for action, requesting Council decide if the City should join in the lawsuit or not. City Attorney Vose shared that the lawsuit, which is similar to a class action lawsuit, gives cities who have public water supplies with PFAS indicators the opportunity to sue 3M for manufacturing forever chemicals, which can be harmful to humans in significant doses. The City of Goodhue can opt-out or stay in the lawsuit; if they opt out, it allows them the chance to sue 3M in the future. If the City stays in the lawsuit, they could be financially compensated an amount of which is to be determined. Council unanimously agreed to have the City remain in the lawsuit, and requested that Public Works Director Mandelkow to oversee the project.

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented an item to approve or deny the **City Clerk's Unpaid Leave of Absence request**. The employee made a written request for an unpaid leave of absence, which included all of the necessary information. The date of return on the request was noted as December 19, 2023, which is four weeks out from the return to work date on the last request. The request can be granted at the discretion of the City Council. There was discussion amongst Council on the employee insurance policy, if there was a maximum amount of unpaid leave time and if the City was subject to FMLA laws. City Attorney Vose shared there was not a maximum amount of unpaid leave, the City was not subject to FMLA laws and the City can set a return date that if not met is considered a resignation from their position. City Attorney Vose shared that the language in the City's personnel policy is standard, and provides a good balance between the City being fair to their employees and providing flexibility while also needing to know when

an employee will return to perform their duties and responsibilities. Council unanimously agreed that it would be beneficial to have a finite date of return. With a motion from Schmit and a second from Benda (5-0-0), Council unanimously agreed to grant the unpaid leave request with a return date of December 19, 2023, that if not met is considered a resignation from the position, and the employee will be responsible for paying their own health insurance on leave per the City's policy.

### **Other Items**

Mayor Anderson-Buck presented a **special assessment** for approval, sharing it had already been reviewed by City Council at a previous meeting, and would allow the City to make a special assessment on property taxes for past-due utility bills. With a motion from Schmit and a second from O'Reilly (5-0-0), Council unanimously approved the special assessment.

Mayor Anderson-Buck requested City Council **call a special meeting** to discuss hiring additional staff for City Hall. There was discussion amongst Council on their availability, unanimously agreeing to hold a special meeting on Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at 5:00 pm.

### **Public Comment**

Public Comment was opened and closed without any presentations from public attendees.

### **Approval of Bills**

There were questions from Council on attorney fees, who has access to the security cameras being paid for by the City, radar feedback sign effectiveness, a late Xcel utility bill, streetlight repairs and loads being taken from the sewer plant. With a motion from O'Reilly and a second from Schmit (5-0-0), Council unanimously voted to pay the bills as stated.

### **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn was made at 7:14 pm by O'Reilly and seconded by Benda (5-0-0).

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Respectfully submitted,  
Cailin Richard, EDA Coordinator