

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, December 8, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Mills at 7:00pm. Benson, Marker, Mowery and Miller present.

Citizens Present: David Denn, Mary Skamser, Sherrill Reid, Dale Stull, Curt Moe, Diane Mills, Lon Pardun, Jeff Comins, Andy/Karen Kramer, Jack Warren, Dick Johnson, Gordon Maltby, Jim Finnegan, Jon Muller, Dave Snyder, Andy Pratt, Tom Wiedner, Larry Gilbert, Peter/Christine Cundall, Kristina Smitten.

Citizens Considerations –

Kristina Smitten – MarLa Update – The last day of operation for the Marine library by Washington County will be December 30th of this year. MarLa then plans to close the library for fourteen days to do some updating, including painting, carpet cleaning, etc, and then re-open January 8th. MarLa will also be hosting volunteer training dates in December and January for everyone signed up to help out. The grand opening will be January 13th and 14th. MarLa plans to request that the City Council consider replacing the lighting in the library with more efficient lighting, which Kevin Nyenhuis is willing to work with the City on. MarLa is also working on an agreement between themselves and the City regarding responsibilities, and will also be hosting a fundraiser on February 18th and would like to request the Council waive the rental fee. The City Clerk will check the availability of that date, and add to the January agenda for approval.

Planning Commission – Dan Willenbring has submitted his letter of resignation from the Commission. Benson noted that Willenbring will be joining the Village Center Committee in a leadership role. Andy Creager's term is up December 31st, and he has agreed to renew a two year term. The Commission has selected Jack Warren as the interim chairman until a new Chairman is appointed.

Marker moved and Miller seconded to accept the resignation from Dan Willenbring from the Planning Commission effective immediately. Motion passed unanimously.

Miller moved and Mowery seconded to re-appoint Andy Creager to the Planning Commission for a two year term, to expire on December 31, 2013. Motion passed unanimously.

Benson moved and Marker seconded to appoint Jack Warren as the interim Chairman to the Planning Commission until a permanent Chairman is appointed. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports –

Jackson Meadow – No Report.

Public Safety – Lon Pardun, Mary Skamsner and Diane Mills were in attendance to present the recommendation for dissolving the ambulance service and changing over to a Rescue Squad, along with supporting documentation. Lon Pardun began by explaining the current hardship the department faces with a lack of members. There are very few daytime members available, and an average call time with a transport is two to three hours. This is very taxing when that person is leaving their job to go on a run. There is also the issue of the current members being on call an average of eight nights per month, which is a very big commitment. Between January and October of this year, Marine responded to 173 calls. Of those 173 calls, only 24 were in the Marine service area and the remaining 149 were outside of the service area. Pardun also noted that of those 24 calls within the Marine service area, only 33% were actually transported by Marine. The financial impact on the residents would be approximately \$14,910 annually, or \$24 per resident per year. The Department also plans to use the proceeds from the sale of the ambulance to purchase a new rescue vehicle. Marker noted that this decision has been in the works for a very long time, and extended his gratitude for the members for volunteering as this is a remarkable time commitment. Mowery's biggest concern is that the citizens of Marine continue to receive excellent care.

Gordon Maltby, resident, was very impressed with the Department's presentation, and agrees with their decision to change to a rescue squad.

Jim Finnegan, Scandia Fire Chief, believes that the BLS service was an asset to the community many years ago, however with the current ALS service available and the excellent patient care they provide, a rescue squad is the way to go for a community like Marine. Finnegan explained that another benefit of this change is there is an opportunity to pull people from the fire squad as trained first responders, which will help to prevent burn out.

Christine Cundall, resident, questioned if there are younger members of the fire squad that would be willing to service on both the fire and rescue squad. Chief Denn stated there are currently seven or eight fire squad members signed up to become first responders. How this is beneficial, is those first responders from the fire squad would be able to attend a rescue call with an EMT. Currently that is not the case.

Deputy Chief Diane Mills advised the rescue squad would continue to be under the Medical Direction of Regions, and the current training requirements for the department would not change. The department would then transfer its transportation license to Lakeview, and Lakeview would be the ALS response for Marine's service area. Jon Muller, Lakeview EMS Director, stated Lakeview is very interested in obtaining Marine's license. He agrees that the rescue model proposed is the best thing for a community like Marine.

Sherrill Reid, resident and ambulance member, stated that the EMSRB would allow Marine to shrink its service area, which would help to eliminate some of the call volume. Jim Finnegan advised shrinking the service area would not change the need for ALS response, nor would it cure the staffing/call time issues.

Mayor Mills moved and Marker seconded to approve the recommendation made by the subcommittee of the Marine on St. Croix Public Safety committee (attached). Motion passed unanimously.

Chief Denn advised there are three new probationary members on the department that require Council approval. The Chief is still waiting for the results of the background check on two of these members.

Mowery moved and Miller seconded to approval Justin Plaff as a probationary member, and to approve Carlos Cuellar and Dakota Mechelke as probationary members contingent upon their pending background checks. Motion passed unanimously.

Benson questioned if the Chief sends out monthly officers reports or updates. Chief Denn advised he does periodically, and includes the two Council liaisons in charge of Public Safety. Benson would like those reports distributed to all Council members in the future.

Roads - Miller advised that the Mill Site signage has been approved by MnDOT. There will be two signs, one southbound between Elm Street and County Rd 4, and the second northbound just before Berkey Street. The only requirement is that the City place a brown blaze sign on the corner of Berkey and Judd St. prior to the installation of the two highway signs. The total cost of the signs and installation will be \$2276. Gordon Maltby, Judd Street resident, prefers there not a sign on the corner of Berkey and Judd Street as that will induce the amount of traffic down that dirt road. Dale Stull also disagrees with the placement of that blaze sign and would also like to see the trees and bushes trimmed on that corner to improve visibility. Miller stated that is the only placement option is the City wants the Mill Site signage on the highway. Curt Moe would like to see a few garbage cans placed at Burris Park.

Personnel/Building Inspector – A letter was received from Eckberg Lammers advising the City that Dave Snyder will be leaving their firm and transferring to the firm of Johnson and Turner. A request was made to make the decision whether to stay with Eckberg Lammers, or stay with Dave Snyder and change firms. Representatives from Eckberg Lammers were in attendance, along with Mr. Snyder to answer any questions from the Council. Benson believes that good guidance and council comes from good relationships, and thinks that Dave Snyder has done that for the City. Benson stated he appreciates Eckberg Lammers as a firm, but recommends the City retain Dave Snyder as the City Attorney. Marker also believes that Eckberg Lammers has been a great firm to work with, however considers Mr. Snyder to be the City's Attorney. He thinks that there is a need to separate the attorney from the firm, and supports Benson's recommendation.

Benson moved and Marker seconded to retain Dave Snyder as the City Attorney, and to make Johnson and Turner the new firm to represent the City. Motion passed unanimously.

Animal Control Contract – Last month the Council postponed approving the \$90 check to Sherrill Reid for the pickup of a cat pending further discussion of the contract. Ms. Reid advised that clause was added back in 2009 when the Humane Society informed the City they could no

longer bring animals to their facility if cats were excluded. Ms. Reid stated she makes every effort not to pick up cats unless it's absolutely necessary, and also will not bring any feral cats to the Humane Society to help keep unwanted costs down. The Council was happy with this arrangement.

Public Safety Request – Benson requested there be job descriptions for key leadership positions within the Public Safety Department. Clerk Peterson advised those descriptions are in the Public Safety ordinance in the current City Code. Benson also reminded everyone that it is their obligation as City representatives to be professional and not let emotions interfere.

Recreation – Curt Moe met with Everett Myers and Carl Nordgren to discuss and update the trail map and has reviewed that map with City staff. The GPS of the Jackson Meadow trails is scheduled to be complete by March 1st. Moe also questioned how any minor changes to the trail at the maintenance shop should be handled if any are needed once the ski trail is established. The Council thought Mowery could make the decision as the Council liaison. Miller noted that the history of the Council has been to develop a full comprehensive trail plan and potentially have a City trail map available for residents. He stated that past conversations with Everett Myers have indicated that there are some trails in town the Mr. Myers would like to prevent from becoming public. Miller is also concerned about the second proposed trail Myers added to his GPS map at the maintenance shop. This is another example of a trail being proposed without a comprehensive trail plan. Mowery also reported that Jason Husveth, Scandia resident, has offered to help map out the City trail system pro bono, and will be meeting this weekend to discuss the details.

Finance – The Truth in Taxation meeting was held on Thursday, December 1st. The City Council cut over \$21,800 from the proposed budget and agreed to set the levy at a 1.6% increase over 2011. This increase represents the income lost from the library rent for the Village Hall. Benson noted that the 2012 budget will also be affected by the change in the ambulance, and the Council will continue to discuss as the change takes effect. Miller reminded the Council that the City will no longer be giving Jackson Meadow a check to cover trail expenses, and that they will now need to submit receipts for reimbursement up to the allotted \$1200.

Clerk Peterson also presented the proposed 2011 Reserve Fund allocations. The total amount proposed this year is \$76400.

Miller moved and Marker seconded to approve the 2012 levy at 656115.74, which represents a 1.607% increase over 2011. Motion passed unanimously.

Miller moved and Benson seconded to approve the 2011 Reserve Fund allocations as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Hall/Restoration – The water tank issue is still not resolved. Mayor Mills is still waiting to meet with the Restoration Society.

Cemetery – No Report.

Village Center – Miller requested information on how the scope of the Village Center concept plan applies to other proposed City projects along with a cost projection, and that public meetings be held to discuss what the scope and context of the concept plan is.

Wastewater and Water Systems – No Report.

Consent Calendar – Miller questioned the \$90 check to Sherrill Reid for transporting a cat to the Humane Society. Ms. Reid's contract does include cat pick up, however the Council has had previous discussions with Ms. Reid stating they did not advocate picking up cats. Miller would like to hold this check and continue this discussion at the next Council meeting.

Miller moved and Marker seconded to approve the Minutes of 9/08/11 (No October Minutes), Treasurer's Report dated 9/11, 10/11, the List of Bills for 11/10/11 minus the \$90 check to animal control, Zoning Administrator's Report, Planning Commission Minutes (None), and the October Maintenance Report. Motion passed unanimously.

Old/New Business – None.

Mayor Notes/Clerk's Report – None.

Adjournment – *Miller moved and Marker seconded to adjourn at 10:04p.m. Motion passed unanimously.*

Minutes taken by Lynette Peterson, City Clerk