



CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 14, 2025 AT 6:30 PM
FINLAYSON CITY HALL

CORRECTED AS NOTED IN THE MAY 12, 2025 MINUTES (RED)

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:32PM by Mayor Auchter, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **ROLL CALL:**
 - a. Council members present: Dave Auchter, Barb Morgan, Kim Schaefer, Jeff Flaws, Rhonda Kriesel
 - b. Council members absent: None
 - c. Others present: Wyatt Lucht, Bill Morgan, Joe Luedtke, Ed Melzark, John Mikrot, Randy Millner, Liz Bernhardt.
3. **OATH OF OFFICE:** Mayor Auchter introduced newly appointed Councilmember Rhonda Kriesel and administered the Oath of Office. Kriesel briefly introduced herself to the Council.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *A motion was made by Morgan to approve the March 10, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried. A motion was made by Flaws to approve the March 21, 2025 Emergency Meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.*
5. **PUBLIC FORUM :** None
6. **CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA:** *A motion was made by Auchter to remove staff reports from the consent agenda, and add them to the main agenda. All in favor. Motion carried. A motion was made by to accept the agenda as modified with the following additions under New Business. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - a. NB N – Flower Garden/Planters
 - b. NB O – Planning & Zoning Committee member opening
 - c. NB P – Emails
 - d. NB Q – Committee Assignments
 - e. NB R – Connex Storage Unit by Water Tower
 - f. NB S – Community Club Fourth of July
7. **CONSENT AGENDA:** *A motion was made by Morgan to approve the consent agenda, with the removal of staff reports. All in favor. Motion carried.*
8. **A: STAFF REPORTS:**
 - a. Water & Sewer Contractor (John Mikrot): Reviewed items on his written report. Council inquired about valve costs; Mikrot noted they range from \$1,200 to \$1,300 each in the event of failure.
 - b. Zoning Administrator (Ed Melzark): Reviewed all items on his council report two building permits issued for Hedtke and Flaws; no further discussion.
 - c. City Maintenance (Randy Millner): Reviewed items from his report. Sought direction on previously purchased speedbumps for the alley by the post office; Council approved their use. Discussions regarding black dirt, straw and sidewalk patching occurred. Millner will follow through by repairing sidewalk by Catholic church, purchasing black dirt, and obtaining straw. **Clarified that he will notify homeowners when he will begin working on the sidewalk repair by the old Catholic church.**
 - d. Bar Manager (Joe Luedtke): Written council report not provided. Added that the new cooler is working great. Inquired about a minor policy being revised. Per MN Statute, there are only three permitted circumstances when a minor, aged 18-20 may legally enter a licensed premise:
 - i. Employment (to perform work duties, including serving alcohol)
 - ii. Dining (they may enter to consume meals)

- iii. Social functions (they may attend social events held in areas where alcohol is not served.)

Clerk will work with Luedtke to revise signage and post to clarify. Luedtke also reported that Sam Nelson is obtaining her ServSafe Food Manager certification, and that they had a Health Inspection last week. Recommended to have the hood vent cleaned annually. **Referenced MN Statute “340A.503” regarding underage persons. Luedtke will schedule an annual hood-vent cleaning in the kitchen.**

- e. Fire Chief (Wyatt Lucht): Reviewed all items on his council report. Lucht reported that FD needs “no parking, fire lane” etched into the asphalt outside of the fire hall. Wyatt will get specs to clerk to price out.
- f. City Clerk (Liz Bernhardt): Informed council there were no changes or additions to items already on council report. Auchter clarified that the city asks property owners for permission to clear the ditches and access pond, and that easements are preferred but not required. Clerk provided update on financial reports provided, that the fund balance template used now was recommended by the auditor, and that a revision of all fund balance reports back to 12/2023 was completed, and carry-forward monthly amounts were corrected, using 12/31/23 figures provided by city auditor. Council inquired if a simple report from QuickBooks was possible. Clerk replied that it is, but with the realignment and revision of the chart of accounts, it is messy and not as simple right now. Fund balance report provided (summarizing all funds) to council matches monthly P&L from QuickBooks, with the city-wide total as a whole. Clerk looking into costs for QuickBooks options. **Clerk will consider labor costs as well as program costs for accounting software. If and when the MN Paid Family and Medical Leave program goes into effect, there may be an associated cost to the city. The exact cost and implementation timeline are currently unknown, and will be determined by the State.**

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **City Wide Garage Sales** confirmed 1st weekend in June, 2025. Clerk inquired city’s responsibilities. Council confirmed previous clerks posted it on the website and Facebook page, and kept a listing of participants.
- b. Confirmed **MS150** on June 7; no city involvement required.
- c. **Camera storage quote for the liquor store** \$1177.50. Discussion only; item tabled. No motion made.
- d. Review **Kurita control panel quote** for Water fund of \$56,000 – no action taken.
- e. **Fluoridation grant** received \$2500 – requested by council that clerk forward to council.
- f. Confirm **2025 Water Fund levy intent** (requested by auditor.) Council confirmed that the 2025 water levy is intended for use toward capital improvements to the city’s water infrastructure, with such improvements anticipated in the near future.
- g. Review **Macguire Contract for tower cleanout inspection 2025-2030**. Discussion only; item tabled. No motion made.
- h. Approve **Finlayson-Giese Sportsman’s Club application for gambling within city limits**. *Motion made by Morgan to approve application. All in favor. Motion carried.*
- i. Review **Employee Supervision and Reporting Structure policy** – referred to Personnel Committee.
- j. Update on **Creamery** – Auchter reported that Norm Kester is interested in purchasing, and would help to eliminate some of the blight, possibly this year. Clerk asked for clarification if Creamery is the city’s and Auchter confirmed it is not, but it is in the city’s interest to have the blight & hazard remedied.
- k. **City Bank Signatories** – *Motion by Morgan to add Kim Schaefer as additional signer. All in favor. Motion carried.*
- l. **Letters** – reviewed as presented. **The following letter was requested to be restated (in addition to being stated the agenda): 3/13 – Keys Issued – Dawn Tasler, Liquor Store, FG Lions Gambling Manager. No other letters were requested to be restated.**
- m. **Ordinances & Resolutions** – *Motion by Auchter to approve resolutions #2025-11 through #2025-14 as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.*
 - i. Resolution #2025-11 – Policy for the Sale of Surplus City Property
 - ii. Resolution #2025-12 – Accepting Donation from Dennis & Nancy Liebelt
 - iii. Resolution #2025-13 – Accepting Community Fire Dept Donations
 - iv. Resolution #2025-14 – Accepting Donation from Jodi Carlson

v. Resolution #2025-15 – Authorizing Reimbursement to Ethan Bjorklund

Discussion was held regarding the fundraising and reimbursement process. The Clerk previously informed the Council that it is unlawful for the City to pay for expenditures directly related to fundraising activities. However, due to the unique circumstances surrounding the event, the Clerk drafted Resolution #2025-15 to approve a final reimbursement, with appropriate notation acknowledging the situation. *Motion by Schaefer to approve Resolution #2025-15 as presented. All in favor. Motion carried.*

- n. **Flower Garden/Planters:** Auchter informed the Council that Deb Trent had volunteered to manage the planting of flowers throughout the city again for 2025. Council discussed flower maintenance. While volunteers were appreciated, some councilmembers expressed concern over past upkeep and city involvement in funding. *Motion by Auchter to allocate \$300 from the Public Works budget toward city beautification. Flaws and Kriesel voted in favor; Morgan and Schaefer opposed. Motion carried 3–2.*
- o. **Planning & Zoning Committee:** Auchter reported that there is an “alternate” member position open on the Committee and requested that the clerk post the open position on the website.
- p. **Emails:** Auchter requested that the clerk, when sending emails that the council is BCC’d on, identify who she is sending emails to in each email in the salutation, so that the receiver can see if it was just to them, or if the entire council, committee, etc. has also received the communication.
- q. **Committee Assignments:** Auchter requested to review committee assignments again, now that Kriesel has joined the council. *Motion by Flaws for Kriesel to replace Schaefer on the Finance & Budget committee. All in favor. Motion carried. Motion by Auchter for Auchter to be on the Public Works & Infrastructure (PWI) committee. All in favor. Motion carried.* Clerk will draft updated resolution for approval at next council meeting to reflect changes.
- r. **Connex Storage Units by the Water Tower:** Morgan sought clarification on usage/purpose/access of each. It is believed that Mikrot uses it for storage for water equipment, and Millner uses one to store the lawnmower, etc. Unrelated discussion about the fascia on the water plant occurred. No action taken.
- s. **Community Club – 4th of July:** Schaefer inquired if temp liquor license application has been received from the Community Club. Clerk confirmed only temp permit applied for has been the Lions club.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. **Legalities of City Fundraising & Expenditures:** Clerk confirmed with Auditor and MN Statute that fundraising through the City is unlawful. Fundraising should be conducted through area organizations, such as the Lion’s Club, the Community Club, the Sportsman’s Club, a Fire Relief Association, etc. This means the city cannot pay for expenditures related to fundraising, nor can they have any involvement in the fundraiser. Should an organization wish to hold a fundraiser, they may make a donation of the proceeds to the city, and the city will accept the donation via resolution.
- b. **Sidewalk by Catholic Church:** Revisit from 9/24 Council meeting – Millner will get done this summer.
- c. **Sedillo Property Hwy 18:** May will be 3yr non-pay – not addressed.
- d. Easement to property to access culvert by School St – addressed on clerk’s report.
- e. **Capital Improvement Plan:** Public Works Committee & Engineer – decision made to revisit this after the Engineer’s PER is complete, without motion.
- f. **Maintenance Schedules:** Public Works Committee – not addressed.
- g. **Fire Contract Votes Received:** Still need Pine Lake vote to determine new calculation method for 2026; clerk sent 2nd request.
- h. **Resolution #2025-09: Frozen Service Lines Policy:** postponed to May without motion.
- i. **Ordinance Review: Ord 155, Fee Schedule (Water, Sewer, Administrative)**
 - i. Water/Sewer Rates – Public Works Committee to review at next scheduled PWI meeting.
 - ii. Building/Zoning Rate – Planning & Zoning Commission to review
- j. **ESST / PTO Policy – Personnel Committee:** Meeting date set to review Leave portion of the handbook. Updates will be brought to council at next council meeting.
- k. **Broadway Development:** Council needs to determine if they want to pursue correction of mortgages with easements included, which will incur additional City Attorney fees. Clerk will provide council with current update from City Attorney.

11. **CONSIDERATION OF BILLS:** Ordinances/Legislation (none)

12. **ADJOURNMENT.** *Motion by Schaefer to adjourn the regular council meeting at 9:27PM. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Submitted by Liz Bernhardt, City Clerk