

Present: Mayor – Joyce Hudson
Council members Jeff Kennedy
Jim Aden
Tim Strauser
Jeff Whiting
City Administrator Bruce Clymer
City Clerk Connie L. Dalrymple
City Attorney Mike Bacon

Press: Gothenburg Times - Beth Barrett

Also present: Shane Gruber, Eppie Sisneros, Chris Healey, Stan Jordan, Louis Bovitz, Angie Nichols

Mayor Hudson opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Advance notice and a copy of the agenda were given to the Council and members of the press. City Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, a copy of which is available for public inspection on the north wall of the Council Chambers.

Whiting moved, Strauser seconded, to approve the consent agenda that included:

City Council minutes – December 16

Police Report – December

Roll call vote: Yea – Kennedy, Aden, Strauser, Whiting. Nay - none.

Aden moved, Kennedy seconded, allowing payment of the claims against the City, \$63,570.44 ; Public Works Division \$90,190.20; and the December 24 payroll of \$30,752.22. Roll call vote: Yea – Whiting, Strauser, Kennedy, Aden. Nay - none.

OPEN FORUM:

- Council reviewed a 4th quarter report of building permits and the annual building permit tally.

Whiting moved, Aden seconded, to pass and approve Ordinance 840 prohibiting the addition of flouride in the city water system, on third and final reading. Roll call vote: Yea – Strauser, Whiting, Aden, Kennedy. Nay – none.

Kennedy moved, Whiting seconded, approving the final drawdown of \$1500 to Dawson Area Development for administration of CDBG 08-DTR-006. Roll call vote: Yea – Strauser, Aden, Whiting, Kennedy. Nay – none.

Administrator Clymer reviewed the proposed utility rate ordinance. Several sections involved language clarifications and changes that aligned the ordinance with current practice. Nebraska Public Power District is increasing wholesale rates 6.89% and the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool rate study suggests Gothenburg implement a 9% increase because we have absorbed much of NPPD's previous increases. Administrator Clymer recommends a 5% overall increase. He feels this will be sufficient for our needs because our budget always has allowance for projects and purchases that do not occur. The increase would breakdown as: 5.7% to residential rates, 4.4% to industrial / general service rates, and 6% to municipal rates. This computes to a projected increase of \$173,469 on the same electrical usage. The projected increase from NPPD is \$185,000 so the City will still absorb some of the increase from NPPD.

According to the Rural Water Association survey of water rates, Gothenburg has very reasonable and comparable water rates with unmetered residential rates. However, the average industrial rate is \$1.10 - \$1.40 / gallon while we are at 46 cents. While not opposed to a water rate / use study, Clymer is proposing a 15% increase on industrial / general service customers

Chris Healey expressed opposition to the increase on industrial customers and feels any increase should include residential. He also feels residential water use should be policed and the summer restriction enforced.

Summer restrictions are voluntary and most abide by the request. Enforcement would involve a major language change in the ordinance, definition of penalties and probably the installation of water meters. The issue is comparability; residential rates are comparable among communities our size, general service and industrial are not.

The ordinance also proposes a 5% increase in sewer rates to offset the cost of the Avenue I sewer project. General Service and Industrial rates will be based on 100% of the water usage instead of 70%. Discussion was had on rates and Administrator Clymer was asked to find out the cost of a water and sewer rate and use study.

Aden moved, Kennedy seconded, to introduce Ordinance 842 setting utility rates as proposed, to be effective with January usage. Roll call vote: Yea – Whiting, Kennedy, Strauser, Aden. Nay – none.

Stan Jordan asked to use Ehmen Park on June 6 for his annual technical school scholarship fund raising event. The event includes a motorcycle show and rally, car show and music. He would also like to use 15th and 16th Streets and Avenue F by the park for car show parking. The event will be from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Aden moved, Strauser seconded, approving the request as presented. Roll call vote: Yea – Whiting, Kennedy, Strauser, Aden. Nay – none.

The Downtown Revitalization project was reviewed. The finished plan includes three objectives: physical projects, economic development projects, and marketing. There will be Town Hall meeting on January 15 at noon to review the objectives and discuss specific projects to be included in the application for grant funds that must be submitted by January 31st. There will be a public hearing on January 20 on the \$250,000 grant.

Aden moved, Strauser seconded, authorizing signature of Amendment #1 to Miller and Associates contract for the sewer system study. Roll call vote: Yea - Whiting, Kennedy, Aden, Strauser. Nay – none.

Craig and Larry Franzen experienced some significant delays in construction of their new building at 818 Ave F. Therefore it will not be on the tax rolls until January 1, 2010. Proposed Resolution 2009-1 moves the effective date of the tax increment financing from 2009 to 2010.

Kennedy moved, Whiting seconded, to pass and approve Resolution 2009-1 regarding tax increment financing on the Franzen project. Roll call vote: Yea – Strauser, Aden, Whiting, Kennedy. Nay - none.

Aden moved, Kennedy seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Roll call vote: Yea – Strauser, Whiting, Kennedy, Aden. Nay – none. The next regular meeting will be January 22 at 5:00 p.m. due to lack of a quorum on January 20.

Joyce Hudson, Mayor

Connie L. Dalrymple, City Clerk