

**CITY OF SAINT PETER, MINNESOTA**  
**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**  
**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**SEPTEMBER 14, 2020**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Saint Peter was conducted in the Senior Center of the Community Center and by virtual software on September 14, 2020. Under M.S. 13D.021, the City is able to conduct meetings by electronic means in the event of a state-wide emergency. Governor Walz has declared a state-wide peacetime emergency and as such this City Council meeting was conducted both in-person and remotely using GoToMeeting software.

A quorum present, Mayor Zieman called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The following members were present through the virtual platform: Councilmembers Shanon Nowell, Brad DeVos, Stephan Grams, and Emily Bruflat. The following members were present in the meeting room: Mayor Charles Zieman and Councilmembers Ed Johnson and Keri Johnson. The following officials were present: City Administrator Todd Prafke (in person), City Attorney James Brandt (in person) and City Engineer Jeff Domras (virtual).

**Approval of Agenda** – A motion was made by Johnson (E), seconded by Nowell, to approve the agenda. With all in favor, the agenda was approved.

**Approval of Minutes** – A motion was made by Bruflat, seconded by Johnson (K), to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2020 regular City Council meeting. With all in favor, the motion carried and the minutes were approved. A complete copy of the minutes of the August 24, 2020 regular City Council meeting is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Proceedings 19.

**Consent Agenda** – Mayor Zieman reviewed the items included on the consent agenda with the addition of two part-time Recreation Leader appointments in the Recreation and Leisure Services Department. In motion by Johnson (E), seconded by Bruflat, Resolution No. 2020-102 entitled "Resolution Approving Consent Agenda" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-102 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

**2021 Preliminary Levy** – Finance Director Vogel presented the proposed preliminary tax levy that provided for a reduction in the tax rate from 51.58 to 51.53 and which would mean a \$0.62 decrease in property taxes on a \$150,000 house. Vogel noted the Community Center debt had been retired and the funds that had originally been used to pay that debt would be used for Community Center operations (\$170,000) and Parks (\$100,000). Vogel also noted the budget would not be balanced, but the reserve levels would continue to be well within the 35-50% range authorized by the City Council. Vogel stated the final levy to be adopted in December could be the same or lower than the preliminary levy, but could not be higher. In motion by Johnson (K), seconded by Grams, Resolution No. 2020-103 entitled "Resolution Adopting Preliminary 2020 Tax Levy Collectible In 2021" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-103 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

**USDA Debt Issuance For River's Edge Hospital** – City Administrator Prafke recommended approval of a resolution that would accept USDA's offer of a series of four loans totaling

\$33,320,000 to serve as permanent financing for the River's Edge Hospital Expansion project. Prafke noted the 2.25% interest rate is the most cost effective way to provide for permanent financing and the loans included money to refund the original Hospital loan that was issued as a general obligation bond backed by property tax revenues. Prafke reiterated that the entire amount would now be secured by the Federal government. In motion by Nowell, seconded by Johnson (E), Resolution No. 2020-104 entitled "Resolution Accepting The Offer Of The United States Of America To Purchase Taxable Health Facilities Revenue Bonds, Series 2020 And Providing For Their Issuance" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-104 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 23. Mayor Zieman noted the historical significance of the Council voting on such a large expenditure which impacted the entire community.

**MMUA Safety Contract Renewal** – Public Works Director Moulton requested execution of a renewal contract with the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) for administration of the City's safety program. Moulton indicated staff continued to be very receptive to the training program and the City continues to see fewer incidents. City Administrator Prafke reported the City's experience modification rating of 0.68 is substantially lower than the industry average of 1.0 and lower than last year's rating of 0.92 which is partly due to some previous big losses coming off the experience timeline, but also reflective of the excellent job done through the MMUA safety program and employee efforts. Councilmember Nowell asked if the contract only provides one MMUA Safety Coordinator. Moulton reported the City is assigned a specific Safety Coordinator as part of the program, but MMUA also provides specialized training from other employees most specifically in the area of Linemen services.

Councilmember Johnson (K) expressed her excitement at the low experience modification rating and asked if had ever been lower. Prafke noted 0.68 was the lowest in at least twenty-two years.

In motion by Bruflat, seconded by Grams, Resolution No. 2020-105 entitled "Resolution Authorizing Execution Of Renewal Safety Contract With Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA)" was introduced. Upon roll call, with all in favor, the Resolution was declared passed and adopted. A complete copy of Resolution No. 2020-105 is contained in the City Administrator's book entitled Council Resolutions 23.

## **Reports**

**Mayor's Report** – Mayor Zieman reported he had received numerous compliments about the "unbelievably great" plantings in the highway medians this year and congratulated the Public Works staff on their work in this area. City Administrator Prafke commented he recently saw a bride and groom taking wedding photos in the median gardens.

**COVID-19 Update** – City Administrator Prafke reported COVID-19 activities such as enhanced cleaning are continuing and the City's advisory boards continue to meet virtually. Prafke also noted policies and hours at the Community Center had been changed to reflect the policy of being "available safely together".

**EV Charging Stations Update** – Public Works Director Moulton reported the electric vehicle charging stations were energized and once the rates were programmed in, the charging stations would be available for public use. Councilmember DeVos asked how the rates were set.

Moulton indicated ZEF Energy, the contractor on the project, had recommended rates and in December, staff would ask for official approval of the rates.

Councilmember Nowell reported people were enthused about having the charging stations available, but residents in downtown apartments had been expressing concerns about the loss of parking during snow emergencies. Prafke noted only three parking spaces are being used by the charging station in Municipal Lot #2. Prafke also commented a local business had expressed concern because they use the public lot for parking their private commercial vehicles.

Councilmember Johnson (E) questioned if people would be towed or ticketed or both if they park non-electric vehicles in the charging station spots. Moulton indicated no decision had been made on the issue.

Prafke also noted that once the chargers were available for use, information would be included on the State online directory of chargers.

**Hospital Update** – City Administrator Prafke touched on the change in leadership (CEO) at River's Edge Hospital and reported the next regular meeting of the Hospital Commission would include discussion on how to move forward in recruiting a replacement for former CEO Joseph Stratton.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Johnson (E), seconded by Johnson (K), to adjourn. With all in favor, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

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Charles Zieman  
Mayor

ATTEST:

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Todd Prafke  
City Administrator