

Regular Meeting

**Echo City Council**  
**Tuesday, September 12th, 2023**

There was a public hearing concerning the changing of the Ordinance regarding the water/sewer billing payment policy. The council would like to have all water/sewer bills paid in full every month. The council answered any questions that any residents had as best as possible. The current billing says that payment is due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. To help prevent the nonpayment of bills to go past the 30-day threshold, the clerk recommended that if bills aren't paid by the 20<sup>th</sup> a note will be placed on the residents' door on the 21<sup>st</sup> informing them that their water will be shutoff if not paid by the 28<sup>th</sup>.

The regular city council meeting of the City of Echo Minnesota was called to order by Mayor James Busack at 7:00 pm at the Community Center.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**Present:** Mayor James Busack, Councilman Mark Schettler, Councilman Darren Gjerset, Councilman Reid Hanson, Councilman Dan Larsen, Clerk Brian Pitzl, Public Work Supervisor Bryan Nielsen, Fire Chief Matt Dunphy, First Responders Chief Chastity Kuehn.

**Citizens/Guests:** Ray Sweetman: Sweetman Sanitation, Tayler Williamson, Don Williamson: West Central Sanitation, Wayne Pettit, John & Elizabeth Jones, Jerrick Kosel, Jon Denzer, Nena Swan, Matt Van Winkle, Prescott Sanitation Representatives,

**Open Forum:** Interest was shown by two individuals for a vacant lot owned by the city. The city will put the property out for sealed bids. Motion made by Councilman Gjerset, seconded by Councilman Larsen to advertise for sealed bids with a due date of noon on October 9<sup>th</sup> with opening of bids at the October 10<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting. Motion carried unanimously. Jerrick Kosel addressed the council regarding a couple city ordinances and inquired why we have them. The first ordinance pertained to the placing of firepits on property. He said that the 25-foot buffer from any structure is not obtainable on his property. He was informed that it is a state statute, and the city follows the state in this matter. The second issue was dog and cat licensing. Wondered what the purpose of the license is. He was told that it has to do with showing proof of rabies vaccinations. The council will revisit this issue at a future meeting. Jerrick was also asking about conceal and carry rules concerning parks in town. Someone else brought up the issue of stray cats in that were killing their chickens. Council suggested that the person set up a live trap to catch the cats and release them out in the country. Trucks from coop still driving on a city street that they were notified to not drive on due to deterioration of the road. Councilman Hanson will speak to the coop regarding this issue.

**Approval of Minutes & Resolutions:**

Motion to approve, August 8th, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes, was made by Councilman Gjerset, seconded by Councilman Schettler. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve August 22<sup>nd</sup> Special Meeting Minutes was made by Councilman Gjerset, seconded by Councilman Larsen. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Reports:**

Matt Dunphy, Fire Department; the Fire Department has 2 tanker trucks. One has a dual battery system with the other a single battery system. The chief requested that the tanker with one battery be converted to a dual battery system. Motion made by Councilman Schettler, seconded by Councilman Larsen to approve the update to the fire truck as needed. Motion carried unanimously.

Chastity Kuehn, First Responders – Chas gave money to the city clerk to deposit from the fundraiser held during Echo Days. Would like to order a Slishton Traction Splint and 2 Pelvic Binders at a cost of around \$700.00. Motion made by Councilman Larsen, seconded by Councilman Gjerset to approve the purchase. Motion carried unanimously.

Maintenance Supervisor Bryan Nielsen– Blade is in for the payloader. It will be about 2 weeks before they can get it in to do the wiring. Options to get the payloader to Marshall were weighed and it was decided to have Titan Machinery to pick up and deliver the machine. Snow blower would be an 8-week time frame to receive. Motion made by Councilman Hanson, seconded by Councilman Gjerset to buy the snowblower at a cost of \$10,000 with money used from the sale of excess city property. Will look into an email regarding the lead service line inventory project. The lift station service pumps were inspected recently and are in compliance. Needs to have the generator inspected and calibrate the lift station this fall.

Mayor Busack – Julie Pingle who works with the animal rescue shelter in Tracy, will be notified that the city request that anyone who receives a rescue animal have that pet licensed before receiving a second animal.

Councilman Schettler – Brought up the issue of trucks being parked on properties that look like they are not operable. A letter had been sent to the owner regarding the issue. The clerk will contact the city attorney to see what the next steps are to deal with the matter.

Councilman Gjerset -

Councilman Hanson –

Councilman Larsen – Revisited the issue of the property west of Hwy 67 and the annexation of the property. Clerk will look at what the procedure is for this process.

Clerk Pitzl – City Clerk will be out of the office on September 28<sup>th</sup> for a dentist appointment. The office will be closed. Asked the council what the policy was regarding renting the community center on Fridays. Currently, a group of citizens meets for coffee and fellowship on Friday mornings. The council suggested that this be handled on a case-by-case basis as it has been a rare occurrence that it has been rented on Friday mornings.

## **Old Business**

Aged balance report for past due water bills was discussed. The clerk was instructed to send out letters of disconnection to customers with water bills over 90 days past due with shut off with not paid in full. Motion made by Councilman Hanson, seconded by Councilman Larsen to change the city Utilities Ordinance Chapter 6 section 6.108 "Collection of Fees" to read "that water bills are due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, if not paid then a notice will be given on the 21<sup>st</sup> and the resident will have 7 days to pay the bill or have their water disconnected". Motion carried unanimously. Decision was made to close the meeting before adjourning to discuss the garbage RFPs. Representatives from the proposal submitters introduced themselves and were thanked for their submittal, told they would be notified right away the next day as to the decision of the council.

## **New Business:**

A citizen complaint was brought to the council's attention. The complaint stated that the mayor was speaking out of line concerning a resident and driving his ATV on their property without permission. The complaint also mentioned a conflict with a neighbor. The citizen also enquired about what the policy was when the water was shut off on a property, why the owner was still charged the base sewer rate when the empty lots weren't charged. The mayor along with a councilmember will meet with the party to resolve the issue. As far as the neighbor issues, the council stated that was a personal matter and should be dealt with by both parties. The council will send out a letter to the resident informing them that the vacant lots do not have sewer access, so they are not charged the base fee.

A different complaint was brought before the council regarding an incident when a page was sent out for the first responders. The individual was upset that no one was able to respond to the page, so the person had to wait for the Cottonwood ambulance to arrive. The Echo First Responders are volunteers and not paid to be on call, so on rare occasions there may not be anyone to respond. Discussion was held on what options were available to help in situations like this. First Responder Chief will look at ways to make sure that this does not happen again.

## **Consent Agenda:**

Motion made by Councilman Larsen, seconded by Councilman Gjerset to approve the consent agenda consisting of Bills, Payroll, and Bank Information. Motion carried Councilman Larsen absent.

Motion was made by Councilman Larsen, seconded by Councilman Schettler to close the meeting to discuss Garbage RFP's. Conversation was had concerning the bids received. Pros and cons of all bids received were discussed. After a brief debate, a vote was made to determine who should be chosen. All members voted to hire Sweetman Sanitation to handle the city's Refuse collection for the next 3 years.

**Adjournment:** Motion was made by Councilman Schettler, and second by Councilman Larsen to adjourn regular meeting at 8:50, motion carried unanimously.

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Mayor James Busack

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City Clerk- Brian Pitzl