

Minutes of Sweetser Town Council
December 14, 2023

I. The meeting was called to order by Matt Stewart at 7:00 pm; the roll was called as follows:

Roll Call:

Charles Myers-Present

Matt Stewart-Present

Travis LeMaster-Present

Kyle Taylor-Absent

Chuck Briede-Present

The roll was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer.

II. **Minutes**

After discussion, Travis LeMaster made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 30, 2023, meeting as submitted. Chuck Briede seconded the motion.

Charles Myers-Aye

Matt Stewart-Aye

Travis LeMaster-Aye

Kyle Taylor-Absent

Chuck Briede-Aye

After discussion, Travis LeMaster made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2023, Public Works meeting as submitted. Chuck Briede seconded the motion.

Charles Myers-Aye

Matt Stewart-Aye

Travis LeMaster-Aye

Kyle Taylor-Absent

Chuck Briede-Aye

III. **Bills**

After discussion, Travis LeMaster made a motion to approve the Bills Docket of December 14, 2023, as submitted. Charles Myers seconded the motion.

Charles Myers-Aye

Matt Stewart-Aye

Travis LeMaster-Aye

Kyle Taylor-Absent

Chuck Briede-Aye

IV. **Public Forum**

- Ed Hartman, a resident of southeastern Grant County, spoke to the council about massive solar farms that are permitted by Draft 4 of the current solar farm ordinance that was signed by the county commissioners. Draft 4 has very small setback requirements that could allow the solar farms to be installed near the town limits. Mr. Hartman suggested that the Sweetser council could draft and submit an amendment of the ordinance to the Area Plan Commission.

V. **Department Reports**

Police Department – Marshal Ryan Hornback was in attendance.

- Ryan reported:
 - A summary of the recent calls answered by his department.
 - 194 calls in the two-week period. He said there have been 3,881 calls year-to-date. That is 523 more calls than in the same period last year.

- The training status and schedule for him and Deputy Jim Kinzie.
- Reported that Kelly Chevrolet told him a new Tahoe would be \$49,525. We are on a waiting list, but there is significant shortage of vehicles: they have access to less than 50% of the current demand. They estimated there was about a 10% chance we could procure a vehicle through them in 2024. They are making appeals to try and obtain more supply.
- The deputies have requested a small emergency kit, caution tape, and evidence markers. Ryan will get those items ordered.

Maintenance Department – Operations Manager Patrick Kendall was in attendance.

- Patrick reported:
 - He conducted a six-month performance review with Ed Arenas.
 - We have already burned up two wires in the new well feed. He said this makes it more urgent we get a spare for backup.
 - Five of the new light fixtures have been installed.
 - He is anxious to move on the installation of a PVC corrugated lined ceiling at the plant. Patrick addressed questions about ventilation and air flow.
 - The new pump was installed at the Short Street lift station. He is going to attempt to rebuild the old one to use as a backup. His goal is to have a backup for each lift station.
 - He has been talking with the Swayzee Street Superintendent about obtaining some treated road salt to mix in with our untreated road salt.
 - He is looking at adding glycerin, a sunflower seed processing byproduct, to the treatment process to make it more efficient.
 - The Town of Andrews has agreed to purchase the leaf vac trailer for \$7,500.

Parks Department—President Steve Kelley was in attendance.

- Steve reported that the Billy Goat leaf blower worked very well. He is going to build a cradle for the trailer hitch so they can attach it to the truck.
- He brought the “Sweetser” sign he ordered that will be located at 500 W and State Road 22.

VI. Continuing Business

- Clerk reported that the with exception of 2023, all the ordinances had been submitted for the codification project.
- Patrick reported the Dollar General water and drainage issue had been corrected. Matt said we should have Michael dismiss the complaint.

After discussion, Travis LeMaster made a motion to authorize Town Legal Counsel Michael Hotz to dismiss the complaint against Dollar General. Chuck Briede seconded the motion.

Charles Myers-Aye

Matt Stewart-Aye

Travis LeMaster-Aye

Kyle Taylor-Absent

Chuck Briede-Aye

- Matt opened the bids the town received for the CCMG 2023-2 project. Three bids were received:
 - Brooks Construction \$184,615.00
 - E & B Paving \$187,318.50
 - Gaunt & Son Asphalt \$194,752.25

Mitch Hansel of USI Consultants said all the bids were less than the grant amount of \$203,500. Since we have not received the signed contract back from the State, he recommended we take the bids under advisement for now.

After discussion, Chuck Briede made a motion to take the three bids received for the CCMG 2023-2 project under advisement until we receive the signed contract from the State of Indiana. Charles Myers seconded the motion.

Charles Myers-Aye
Matt Stewart-Aye
Travis LeMaster-Aye
Kyle Taylor-Absent
Chuck Briede-Aye

- Mitch reintroduced the proposed contract for a CCMG 2024-1 project. Council said we would wait to act until we have the survey mapping results and better determine the scope of the proposed project.
- Michael Hotz was not in attendance so there was no update on the Title VI compliance work.
- Clerk reported the town audit is in “disengaged” status. Clerk needs to submit some requested data and the audit will resume.
- We are waiting to hear back from the Grant County Sheriff’s department about a radar sign.
- No update on the Readi 2.0 Town Hall/Public Safety Project.
- John and Kyle will be meeting with Keystone Software, but a date has not been set.
- The 2023 Salary Ordinance (2022-6) was amended by Ordinance 2023-4. Ordinance 2023-4 contained some errors and omissions. To correct these errors and omissions:

Travis LeMaster made a motion to rescind Ordinance 2023-4, an amendment to Salary Ordinance 2022-6 for 2023. Chuck Briede seconded the motion.

Charles Myers-Aye
Matt Stewart-Aye
Travis LeMaster-Aye
Kyle Taylor-Absent
Chuck Briede-Aye

After discussion, Travis LeMaster made a motion pass on first reading Ordinance 2023-6, an Ordinance amending Ordinance 2022-6, the 2023 Salary Ordinance. Chuck Briede seconded the motion.

The amendments are:

- Raise the Maintenance Assistant position cap to \$21.50 per hour,
- Create the Temporary Maintenance position with a cap of \$15 per hour,
- Create the Seasonal Mower position with a cap of \$10 per hour, and
- Eliminate the three tiers of Deputy Marshal pay and replace it with one rate of \$25 per hour from the date of hire.

Charles Myers-Aye
Matt Stewart-Aye
Travis LeMaster-Aye
Kyle Taylor-Absent
Chuck Briede-Aye

VII. New Business

- Consideration commenced of the 2024 Salary Ordinance. Kyle and the clerk had prepared and distributed recommendations and budget scenarios. Matter was tabled.
- The clerk distributed information about the current medical insurance offered by the town as well as some alternative plans available to the town through the AIM Medical Trust. Matter was tabled.
- The next council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 7 pm.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Potter
