

City of Comfrey Minutes
April 9, 2024 at 6:30 PM
Comfrey Community Center

The City Council of Comfrey met in regular session on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 6:30 PM in the community center with all council members present. Also in attendance were S Berberich, J Veerkamp, A Vogel, J Evers and City Attorney Paul Muske. Mayor Richter presided.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited.

The agenda was reviewed with no additions.

The March 4, 2024 regular meeting minutes were approved on motion made by Redman, second by Evers and carried unanimously.

Total bills in the amount of \$84,784.72 were reviewed and approved on a motion made by Redman, second by Evers and carried unanimously.

A resolution expressing acceptance and appreciation for donations to the first responders from the First Responder Association of \$3000 towards the purchase of a carbon monoxide sensor and from Mathiowetz Construction of \$500 on a motion made by Arnsdorf, second by Evers and carried unanimously.

The March financial report was reviewed and approved on a motion made by Arnsdorf, second by Kastner and carried unanimously.

Berberich reported the new trailer is here and he will get the 1990 Hull listed for sale by sealed bid with a minimum bid price of \$1000 to be opened at our May meeting. The light post bases are being manufactured this week. He will be getting seal coat prices for our May meeting. There are locations staked for 13 new trees to be planted between the North and South parks. Redwood Falls Nursery was contacted for pricing and estimates were given for a cost of \$250 for 10 gallon potted trees and \$475-\$500 for 25 gallon potted trees. A motion was made Arnsdorf, second by Evers and carried unanimously to purchase and plant 7 twenty-five gallon potted trees and 6 ten gallon potted trees using donations made to the city first and any remaining cost from the general fund. To date the city has received \$6450 in donations designated for parks and the purchase of trees.

Mayor Richter announced Steve Berberich received the Wastewater Treatment Facility Operational Award from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for 2023. The award recognizes operators who meet all operational and testing standards throughout the year.

Fire Chief Berberich reported the department had a very busy month of March with several grass fires. The new side by side has proved its worth already.

First Responder Captain Veerkamp reported they received a donation from Mathiowetz Construction for \$500.

The January library board minutes were reviewed. The March minutes will be presented in May. They will be reviewing the library policy for possible updates at their next meeting.

Hanson Communications was awarded a Border to Border Broadband grant of \$395,138 to install fiber internet in the City of Comfrey. They hope to start work as early as this summer if all goes as planned.

City Assessor Amos Vogel was present and reviewed the new procedure put in place by the county for assessing properties. He has concerns it may increase his time assessing properties by 20 – 30%. A motion was made by Kastner, second by Evers and carried unanimously to increase the per parcel rate by \$1.40 to help cover the additional time and training needed for the 2025 payable evaluations.

Use of the Public Safety Aid from the State in the amount of \$17,023 was discussed and a motion was made by Redman, second by Arnsdorf and carried unanimously to put the money towards our Brown County police contract costs in 2024.

A motion was made by Evers, second by Arnsdorf and carried unanimously to hire SW Dust Treatment to treat our gravel roads in town at an estimated cost of \$2247.

A motion was made by Arnsdorf, second by Evers and carried unanimously to not waive the monetary tort limit set by the State of Minnesota.

Volunteer for the Springfield Food Shelf Jane Evers was present and updated the council on the increased use of the food shelf but at the same time grants and aid has decreased. Many people from the community and surrounding area are able to get help from the location in Springfield and they are seeking donations to help cover added expenses and the purchase of food items. A motion was made by Arnsdorf, second by Evers and carried unanimously to donate \$1000 to the Springfield Food Shelf.

A quote from ARC Electric to install new emergency lighting in the municipal building at a cost of \$2394.98 was review and approved on a motion made by Kastner, second by Redman and carried unanimously. The current lighting is obsolete and cannot be repaired.

The handicap approach by St Paul's Catholic church was discussed and the council recommended filling in the cracks and remove the lifted piece from around the pole.

A Temporary On-Sale Liquor License for 3 locations was requested by Comfrey Area Pride for Community Days, July 12th & 13th, 2024 and was approved on a motion by Kastner, second by Redman and carried unanimously.

Information was reviewed for the 5-year Comfrey Wastewater Treatment Facility permit. It is currently in the pre-public notice stage with a 60-day public notice for comment to follow.

Mayor Richter discussed the opportunity to apply for a local climate action grant which would include a 5% match by the city. The grant would help cover the costs of a new heating and cooling system for the municipal building. Reviews of the current system and estimates from St. James Electric and Schwickert's will be done at no charge to the city. A motion was made Evers, second by Redman and carried unanimously to apply for the grant. Region 9 will assist with the application process.

The meeting was adjourned on motion made by Arnsdorf, second by Evers at 7:35 p.m.