

M I N U T E S  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
May 6, 2024  
5:30 PM  
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Steve King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Laura Helle, Jason Baskin, Michael Postma, Joyce Poshusta, Geoff Baker and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Police Chief David McKichan, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Park and Rec Director Jason Sehon, Human Resources Director Tricia Wiechmann, City Attorney Craig Byram, Library Director Julie Clinefelter, and Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace

APPEARING IN PERSON: Austin Daily Herald, KAUS Radio, Honorary Council Member Miguel Garate, Austin Bruins Hockey Team representative Brian Schultz

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Fischer, approving the agenda. Carried.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, approving Council minutes from April 15, 2024. Carried.

#### AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Mayor King read the Buddy Poppy Day proclamation.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, approving the consent agenda as follows:

Licenses:

Outside Liquor Sales: Eagles on Wednesdays from June 5 – August 28, 2024

Outside Liquor Sales: Eagles on July 5, 2024

Outside Liquor Sales: Eagles on August 2, 2024

Liquor Catering: Bicabut, Inc, 113 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE

Sign Installer: Scenic Sign Corporation, St. Cloud, MN

Tree Service: Adam B. Meyer Construction Co LLC, 2907 17<sup>th</sup> Street SE

Mobile Business: Mimi's Cones, 1208 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW

Mobile Business: Linos Taqueria LLC, Rochester, MN

Temporary Liquor: Austin Area Chamber of Commerce on July 16, 2024  
Tobacco: (transfer): Everest Apollo Gas & Liquor LLC, 903 W Oakland Ave  
Tobacco: (transfer): Everest Apollo Gas & Liquor LLC, 901 W Oakland Ave  
Tobacco: (transfer): Everest Apollo Gas LLC, 3011 W Oakland Ave  
Gas Station: (transfer): Everest Apollo Gas & Liquor LLC, 901 W Oakland Ave  
Gas Station: (transfer): Everest Apollo Gas LLC, 3011 W Oakland Ave  
Edible Cannabinoid (transfer): Everest Apollo Gas & Liquor LLC, 903 Oakland Ave  
Edible Cannabinoid (transfer): Everest Apollo Gas & Liquor LLC, 901 Oakland Ave  
Edible Cannabinoid (transfer): Everest Apollo Gas LLC, 3011 W Oakland Ave

Appointments to Board and Commissions:

Oballa Oballa to the Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board – term  
expiring December 31, 2026

Claims:

- a. Pre-list of Bills
- b. Financial Report
- c. Credit Card Report

Event Applications:

Mental Health Walk on May 18, 2024  
Graduation Open House on June 9, 2024  
2nd Annual Recovery Walk on September 14, 2024  
Eagles Car Cruise in on Wednesdays from June 5 – August 28, 2024  
Eagles Parking Lot Party on July 5, 2024  
Eagles Parking Lot Party on August 2, 2024

Carried.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement requested by Jeffrey M. & Nan E. Hanegraaf. They are proposing to build a single-family home at 2009 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE valued at approximately \$437,000.00. City Administrator Craig Clark stated that the application is in conformance with the City's policy for tax abatement.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Baskin, approving the Tax Abatement Application from Jeffrey M. & Nan E. Hanegraaf. Carried 7-0

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement requested by Greg & Courtney Hackensmith/Pinewood Builders, LLC. They are proposing to build a single-family home at XXXX 11<sup>th</sup> Street NE valued at approximately \$325,000.00. City Administrator Craig Clark stated that the application is in conformance with the City's policy for tax abatement.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Baskin, approving the Tax Abatement Application from Greg & Courtney Hackensmith/Pinewood Builders, LLC. Carried 7-0

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement requested by David Anderson. He is proposing to build a single-family home at 2806 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW valued at approximately \$350,000.00. City Administrator Craig Clark stated that the application is in conformance with the City's policy for tax abatement.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Fischer, approving the Tax Abatement Application from David Anderson. Carried 7-0

A public hearing was held for a tax abatement requested by David Hillier/Turtle Creek Construction. They are proposing to build a multi-family townhome at 3000 & 3002 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW valued at approximately \$700,000.00. City Administrator Craig Clark stated that the application is in conformance with the City's policy for tax abatement.

There were no public comments.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Baskin, approving the Tax Abatement Application from David Hillier/Turtle Creek Construction. Carried 7-0

## **BID OPENING AND AWARD**

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City of Austin has identified in the CIP a project at the Austin Municipal Airport for replacement of the aircraft fueling system. They received three bidders on this project. The bids came in lower than anticipated.

The low bidder was Minnesota Petroleum Services at \$742,386.10. The bid includes 2 10,000-gallon above-ground tanks, piping, concrete, automatic tank gauge controller, software, probes, sensors, and cleaning and removal of the existing underground storage tanks. Mr. Lang recommends awarding the bid to Minnesota Petroleum Services.

Council Member Baskin asked Mr. Lang why we were placing the fuel tanks above ground instead of below ground. Mr. Lang stated that new construction of tanks is generally above ground. This makes it easier for monitoring issues. Council Member Baskin asked if there were any environmental concerns with the tanks being above ground. Mr. Lang stated that this was a neutral concern as you would have the same types of issues with them being above ground or below.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baker, adopting a resolution awarding the bid for replacement of the aircraft fueling system at the Austin Municipal Airport to Minnesota Petroleum Services. Carried 7-0

## **PETITIONS AND REQUESTS:**

City Administrator Craig Clark requested Approval of the Austin Associates Organization (AAO) Memorandum of Agreement for Take Home Vehicles.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution approving the AAO Memorandum of Agreement for Take Home Vehicles. Carried 7-0

Director of Administrative Service Tom Dankert requested approving an off-sale liquor license transfer to Everest Apollo Gas & Liquor LLC dba Apollo Liquor.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Poshusta, adopting a resolution approving an off-sale liquor license transfer to Everest Apollo Gas & Liquor LLC. Carried 7-0

Director of Administrative Service Tom Dankert requested approving an off-site gambling license for American Legion Post 91 at the Mower County Fair from August 6, 2024 to August 11, 2024.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adopting a resolution approving an off-site gambling license for American Legion Post 91 at the Mower County Fair. Carried 7-0

Director of Administrative Service Tom Dankert requested participation in the Office of the State Auditor's Voluntary 2024 Performance Measurements Program. Mr. Dankert stated that the City has participated in the survey for the last several years and has received around an additional \$4,500.00 in Local Government Aid by completing the survey.

Moved by Council Member Baskin, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution approving participation in the Office of the State Auditor's Voluntary 2024 Performance Measurements Program. Carried 7-0

Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director Jason Sehon requested approval for ice removal at the Riverside Arena. Mr. Sehon stated this request originally came from the Austin Bruins Hockey Team. The Austin Bruins stated they would contribute \$12,000.00 and man power to assist in removal of the ice.

Mr. Sehon stated that funding to remove the ice is not currently in the 2024 budget and staff are requesting that funds come from contingency.

Motion made by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Fischer. Carried 6-1. Council Member Baker Objecting.

Director of Public Works Steven Lang spoke about the Storm Sewer Inventory Project. He stated the program would be for the inspection and inventory of the City's storm sewers. This project is budgeted in the storm water fund over the next four years and would be broken into four phases. He stated they have a proposal from WHKS in the

amount of \$150,000 and Mr. Lang is requesting approval for the Storm Sewer Inventory Project.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution approving the Storm Sewer Inventory Project. Carried 7-0

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City of Austin is requesting an entitlement transfer from the City of Walker in the amount of \$150,000. The City would repay this entitlement transfer in 2026. Mr. Lang requests the approval of this entitlement transfer for the Airport T-Hangar project.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution approving an Airport T-Hangar Entitlement Transfer from the City of Walker. Carried 7-0

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated the City of Austin is requesting an entitlement transfer from the City of Wadena in the amount of \$150,000. The City would repay this entitlement transfer in 2027. Mr. Lang requests the approval of this entitlement transfer for the Airport T-Hangar project.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Postma, adopting a resolution approving an Airport T-Hangar Entitlement Transfer from the City of Wadena. Carried 7-0

Public Works Director Steven Lang stated that SEH submitted a proposal in the amount of \$87,700.00 to oversee the construction and administration of the fuel system replacement project at the Austin Municipal Airport. He stated funding to cover engineering services would be 30% local funding and 70% state grant. Mr. Lang recommends approval for engineering services with SEH for the airport fuel system replacement project.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Fischer, adopting a resolution approving engineering services for the airport fuel system replacement with SEH. Carried 7-0

Moved by Council Member Postma, seconded by Council Member Helle, adopting a resolution accepting donations to the City of Austin. Carried 7-0

#### REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Council Member Helle reminded the public that the City does not recognize “No Mow May.” She stated that 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Fest will be on June 5<sup>th</sup>. She stated the Park and Rec Department is working with the pickleball community to see if they can convert some of the old tennis courts to pickleball courts. She commended the tree trimmers on the good work they are doing. She stated the Taste of Nations is coming up this month. She stated there are 14 days left until filing for local office.

Council Member Postma stated he listened to Jason Sehon and Jenna the Naturalist Intern about the Emerald Ash Borer presentation and was very impressed. He stated it is great to

see all the new home tax abatements. He commended Riverland Community College on the home they built. Council Member Postma recognized Joe Fuhrman for his achievements in the community.

Council Member Baker stated he completed the assessments with Sicora Consulting and they did a really nice job. He encourages everyone to invest the time that Sicora is asking.

Council Member Baskin stated the Port Authority urges the passing of a bonding bill in support of an expansion for the Hormel Institute. He stated he will be out in Colorado presenting on the work Austin is doing as a “Welcoming Community.”

Austin Bruins Hockey Team representative Brian Schultz spoke to the council. Mr. Schultz wanted to clarify who the Bruins were and what they do in and for the community. The Bruins have had 14 seasons in Austin and want to be in Austin for generations to come. Mr. Schultz wanted to raise awareness about the quality of the ice and the quality of the playing boards in Riverside Arena. He stated there are player safety concerns associated with this and the youth hockey coaches and the school coaches are also concerned with the conditions of the ice in the arena. Mr. Schultz was concerned when he made the request for the ice to be repaired and he was told there was no money in the budget and it wasn't planned for even though it was in the contract with the Bruins that the ice would be replaced every fourth. Mr. Schultz worked with Mr. Clark and Mr. Sehon to create a good relationship to get the ball rolling on getting the ice replaced. He stated that The Bruins made a good faith effort and that is why they contributed \$12,000.00 to the repair of the ice at Riverside Arena. They wanted to be good community partners to the City. He stated this year The Bruins through their foundation gave back \$60,000.00 of charitable donations. Mr. Schultz is requesting assistance with a long-term plan with the future of Riverside Arena and the future of hockey in Austin. He believes that with the assistance of the City and The Bruins organization they can make Riverside Arena something great for the downtown Austin area.

Mayor King thanked Mr. Schultz and stated he appreciates their partnership and they are great corporate and community partners.

Moved by Council Member Baker, seconded by Council Member Postma, adjourning the meeting to May 20, 2024. Carried.

Adjourned: \_\_\_\_\_ 6:03 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ May 20, 2024 \_\_\_\_\_

Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

City Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_