

**CHISHOLM CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING – AUGUST 12, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor John Champa called the City Council Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom video teleconference instead of in person due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and Minnesota Governor Walz's Executive Orders. All votes were done by roll call vote.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Council Members Tracy Campbell, April Fountain, Adam Lantz, Travis Vake, Jim Varda, and Mayor John Champa

Absent: None

Also present: City Clerk-Treasurer/Administrator Bill Manney, City Attorney Bryan Lindsey, Building Official Mandy Galli, Consultant Engineer Jim Johnson, Fire Chief Bob Brown, Library Supervisor Katie Christenson (joined meeting at 6:00), Police Chief Vern Manner, Public Works Supervisor Larry Folstad, Recreation Director Tammy Nevalainen, Administrative Assistant Margaret Gornick, and Terry Hartikka with Mesabi Community Television

**ADOPT THE AGENDA**

Moved by Councilor Campbell and supported by Councilor Fountain to adopt the Agenda with the following changes, corrections & deletions: Item 5C1) should be 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW Project; Item 7B3) should be Refuse Collection / Heavy Equipment Operator #2; Delete Item 7E2) COVID-19 Plan for Arena; Delete Item 7F3) Public Safety Building; Remove page 57 (Estimate for Town of Balkan Canister Site Expansion) and Item 7A1) Change the amount on Resolution No. 0820-57 from \$4,999.00 to \$999.00.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**REPORTS**

Councilor Campbell congratulated the Chisholm Police Department staff & Police Chief Vern Manner for solving the Nancy Dougherty case. She is very proud of them and the community and Police Department. She attended the Police Commission meeting last Tuesday, they talked a little bit about the hiring process and the Nancy Dougherty case. The Chisholm Police Department had 55 calls for the town of Buhl and spend an average time of 4.5 hours per day in Buhl. She attended the working session on Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup> for the Public Safety Building. Councilor Lantz didn't have a formal report but stated it is a great time to live in Chisholm. He said the drive-in movie night and parade during Doc Moonlight Graham Days were great. People from all over came to watch the parade. He mentioned there have been some close calls on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Lake Street with young officers from other communities when they are trying to respond to an emergency. He is very proud of the City of Chisholm's employees, from the police to the janitors. Keep up the good work. He's glad to be a part of this great community.

Councilor Fountain reported August has been a productive month. She attended two MAPE negotiation meetings with Councilor Adam Lantz, Administrator Bill Manney & City Attorney Bryan Lindsay. She also attended the City Council working session for the Public Safety Building with Five Bugles Design on August 5<sup>th</sup>. Chisholm celebrated the Doc "Moonlight" Graham Days from August 5<sup>th</sup> thru the 9<sup>th</sup>, which she said was a great success considering what we all are going through in today's world. She thanked everyone involved in the celebration including the people that were in the parade. The Primary Election was held on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 with the polls closing at 8:00 p.m. She thanked all the people who were able to set up, work the polls, disinfect, and make this available to the community by staying with-in the guidelines stated by the Governor. The Chisholm School Board candidate filing period was from July 28<sup>th</sup> through August 11<sup>th</sup>. She spoke with Cheyenne Mikkola-Rahja from the school and the deadline was not extended. The United Way of Northeast Minnesota (UWNEMN) will provide free Children's Dental Services at the UWNEMN building in Chisholm to provide Smiles United dental care every week this month. Appointments can be made by calling 1-866-543-6009. On Thursday August 20<sup>th</sup>, the UWNEMN will be distributing free boxes of frozen sloppy joe meat (three five-pound bags in each box) to anyone in Chisholm that is interested. She reached out to the Red Head Bike Trail Facebook manager and they would like to set up a meeting sometime in the future with the new Economic Development Coordinator. They did not release the Administrative capabilities at this time to the City of Chisholm Facebook Administrator. She thanked Larry Folstad for his dedication to the campground and she appreciates the excellent job that he is doing.

Councilor Vake thanked the Chamber for being the sole city to put on events this summer. He was pleased that the parade went so well. He talked to some people that were in the parade and they were very grateful. He gave a big shout out to the Chamber.

Mayor Champa thanked Vern and the Chisholm Police Department for making the arrest in the Nancy Dougherty murder case. He's shocked but also happy and supports the Police Department and all of the emergency responders. He is getting very frustrated with the MN State Patrol. He feels they should be on highways patrolling for high speeds, no seat belts & drunk drivers. MN State Patrol Officer Elijah Allen is sitting outside of local bars and picking up people as they leave the bar. Some of the stops that he has been making are questionable such as a light for a license plate being burned out. He feels this is our Police Department's jurisdiction and this officer is harassing people.

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A letter was sent to the Commissioner of Public Safety awhile back on behalf of the Range Mayor's Association notifying them of the situation. The head person from the Virginia office met with Police Chief Manner to discuss the issue.

Consultant Engineer Jim Johnson gave a status update on various projects that are being worked on. The Public Safety Building Water Main Loop Project is done and was inspected by Larry Folstad, Leon Wegener, Jim Johnson & the project engineer from JPJ Engineering. There are a couple of punch list items left that deal with drainage and some seeding needs to be done. The rest of the project looks very good. On the 13<sup>th</sup> Street NW Project, most of the construction is done. The turf restoration needs to be replaced in some areas by the sub-contractor and some seeding needs to be completed. The 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue West project is done except for the restriping of the Pickle Ball Court by the sub-contractor. Bids are due electronically for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW Project on Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. and he hopes to award the bid at the August 26<sup>th</sup> council meeting. Jim asked Administrator Manney, City Attorney Bryan Lindsay and Mayor John Champa to stay on the zoom conference call after the council meeting adjourns tonight to discuss the Novakovich property that is located on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW.

Public Works Supervisor Larry Folstad reported on the new garbage system and thanked PUC Clerk Denise Kealy for her help with this project and also thanked the vendor. He is excited to roll this system out. The individual carts will be ordered tomorrow and will be delivered to the residents the week of October 19<sup>th</sup>. Yellow bags are required to be used in the carts until January 1st, 2021. He has two employees in the Public Works Department out on extended sick leave at this time. He will be working on an aggressive hiring schedule soon. The east entrance sign to Chisholm that was signed over from the Chisholm Beautification Association (CBA) to the City is beautiful. He thanked Mrs. Carole Gornick, the representative for the CBA for her role in getting the sign. The sign will not interfere with the present castle at the east entrance. They are in the middle of the arena LED light upgrade project. The upgrade is a turn key project and will save money right away on the electric bill for the arena (as soon as Ed Chamernick flips the switch). The Away with Geese beacon lights should be installed on Longyear Lake by Friday. He is receiving calls from concerned citizens already. The Campground is full for Labor Day week-end, with a waiting list.

Fire Chief Bob Brown echoed what everyone said about Vern and the Chisholm Police Department. It helped bring closure as he worked with Nancy Dougherty at the Chisholm Ambulance at the time. The Fire Department has had 2 calls for August and 14 calls in July for a total of 99 calls year to date. Lieutenant Jake Worlie has 8 years of service and Council Member Jim Varda has 10 years of service with the Fire Department. The Fire Department has been busy with a lot of trauma calls. The staff assisted the ambulance service with the setup of landing zones. They assisted St. Louis County for the COVID-19 testing. They also participated with the Chamber for the parade during Doc Moonlight Graham Days. Engine 1 has been out of town for service since a week ago Monday. They acquired two houses to be used for upcoming training purposes.

Police Chief Vern Manner thanked everyone for the accolades for solving the Nancy Dougherty murder case. He thanked Administrator Manney for putting funds in the budget to cover the cost associated with solving this case and for putting his faith and trust in the departments that assisted with this case to bring it to closure. He will be working on the rules/policies/procedures for the burn pile and have something for the council to review at the next meeting. He will address Councilor Lantz's concerns with other Police Departments in the area, regarding young officers from other communities, that are trying to respond to emergencies and are driving above the speed limit on Lake Street & 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.

Recreation Director Tammy Nevalainen reported the plans have been sent to contractors and are due electronically on August 20<sup>th</sup> for the build of the skating rink shack building. At the staff meeting today, they talked about Flag Football and the Youth Center. She feels it's not a good idea to offer football at this time. With the school not having football and City Hall being closed due to COVID-19, she will see how things go with the school before determining what to do with the Youth Center. The hiring process for the Youth Center Attendants will take time.

City Attorney Bryan Lindsay has been in contact with the former tenant for the leased space downstairs of City Hall and reported they have had some setbacks with their business and will let the City know a firm date that they will be moving the balance of their property out of City Hall and will notify him and the City in the very near future.

Administrator Bill Manney reported Governor Walz extended his Emergency Peacetime Declaration to September 11, 2020. He reminded the council about the zoom meeting for the Chisholm Hibbing Airport Authority on Monday, August 17, 2020. He thanked the workers that helped with the Primary Election. Things went very well. There was a total of 765 voters which is about 29% of the registered voters. 399 people voted at the arena and 366 people voted absentee or used early voting. It was an above average turnout for the Primary Election. Because of COVID-19, ballots must be post marked by 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 12, 2020 in order to notify the county of any ballots received by 3:30 p.m. The results of the number of ballots received on that date are due to St. Louis County on Friday, August 13<sup>th</sup>. He anticipates the General Election in November to be very busy. In order for people to practice social distancing, only 18 people will be allowed in the arena building at one time, unless the COVID standards change. Councilor Campbell asked Bill for an overview of how people can vote by absentee for the election. Bill said they can call City Hall at 254-7900 or sign up on the St. Louis County website. He explained that it is a very simple process to sign up online. He is considering running ads in the paper to educate the public on the process.

**ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA**

Moved by Councilor Lantz and supported by Councilor Vake to accept the Consent Agenda, including the List of Bills, Minutes of the previous July 22, 2020 Public Hearing for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW Project and July 22, 2020 Regular Meeting (with corrections), Payroll and Overtime.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

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(Continued)**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

CARES ACT FUNDING

Administrator Manney gave the council an update on the CARES Act Relief Fund for COVID-19 expenditures. He expects to have an initial list of items at the next council meeting from the consultants that the Economic Development Authority (EDA) has hired. They have spent \$12,500.00 to purchase masks for the school and the entire community. The consultants will provide Administrator Manney with the first list of recommendations on how to spend the grant money and it will be brought to the council for their consideration at their next meeting. The funds need to be allocated by November 15, 2020. This was an informational item at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION NO. 0820-57 PATHBLAZERS SNOWMOBILE CLUB REQUEST

Moved by Councilor Campbell and supported by Councilor Fountain to adopt Resolution No. 0820-57 to authorize the conveyance of land located at Lot 6, Block 2 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> addition to the Chisholm Industrial Park to the PathBlazers Snowmobile Club for \$1,000.00 and for them to receive reimbursement of \$999.00 upon substantial completion of the original project.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

RESOLUTION NO. 0820-58 PLANNING & ZONING  
REQUEST APPLICATION FROM RANGE ENTER

Moved by Councilor Fountain and supported by Councilor Lantz to adopt Resolution No. 0820-58 to approve the Planning and Zoning application request from Range Center, Inc. to sell lots owned by the Range Center to residents adjacent to their property.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

VARIANCE REQUEST FROM TOM KRUCHOWSKI

Motion by Councilor Lantz and supported by Councilor Campbell to grant the variance request from Tom Kruchowski for a variance from 2 feet to 0 feet for the construction of a fence on the property line located at 204 6<sup>th</sup> Street NW. The Planning Commission approved the request at their August 3, 2020 meeting.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

RESOLUTION NO. 0820-59 APPOINT GAGE LEUSTEK  
AS WATER / SEWER UTILITY WORKER

Motion by Councilor Campbell and supported by Councilor Fountain to adopt Resolution No. 0820-59 to appoint Gage Leustek to serve as the Water/Sewer Utility Worker.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR REFUSE COLLECTION/HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR #2

Moved by Councilor Campbell and supported by Councilor Lantz to approve the job description for the Refuse Collection / Heavy Equipment Operator #2 position.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

POST INTERNALLY FOR REFUSE COLLECTION / HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR #2

Moved by Councilor Fountain and supported by Councilor Vake to post internally for the Refuse Collection/Heavy Equipment Operator #2 position and to appoint Administrator Manney, Public Works Supervisor Larry Folstad, and Council Member Campbell to serve as committee members if the position is posted externally.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

LED UPGRADE FOR TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Moved by Councilor Vake and supported by Councilor Campbell to approve the LED Upgrade for Traffic Lights located at the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue & Lake Street for \$4,500.00 with half paid by the MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and half paid by the City of Chisholm. The City will realize a payback in 6 months by upgrading to LED lights. MnDOT has already upgraded the traffic lights by the Library & Firehall at the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue & Lake Street. The City will receive a rebate from MN Power for upgrading the lights at both intersections. Councilor Varda would like Larry Folstad to check with MnDOT on attaching cameras on the traffic lights so the light will change to allow emergency vehicles to have priority to get through the lights.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEWS

Discussion took place regarding Department Head reviews and the need for a professional review process to be in place with measurable goals and expectations. Councilors Varda & Campbell would like to see reviews take place and Councilor Fountain asked Administrator Manney to look into a software program. Councilor Vake would like to put a committee together to come up with some questions. Mayor Champa suggested a good time to ask questions is during the budget process when the Department Heads are in attendance at the budget meetings. He also feels Administrator Manney and the Supervisors review their staff on a daily basis and the council should review appointed officials. This was an informational item at this time.

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**FIRE DEPARTMENT POSITION DESCRIPTIONS – STIPEND REQUEST**

Councilor Varda would like to bring a recommendation to the next council meeting for the Officers of the Fire Department to receive a monthly stipend for the extra duties that they are performing. This was an informational item at this time.

**SECOND READING ORDINANCE NO. 74  
ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE VII: TRAFFIC CODE, CHAPTER 74  
OF THE CITY CODE ENTITLED “PARKING SCHEDULES”**

Moved by Councilor Vake and supported by Councilor Lantz to approve the second reading of the proposed changes and to adopt the changes to Ordinance No. 74, Amending Title VII: Traffic Code, Chapter 74 of the City Code Entitled “Parking Schedules”. The changes to Ordinance No. 74 will take effect upon publication in the Chisholm Tribune Press on August 26, 2020.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

**ORDINANCE NO. 94.05  
NUISANCE PARKING & STORAGE**

Moved by Councilor Vake and supported by Councilor Lantz to direct City Attorney Bryan Lindsay to draft an amended Ordinance for Nuisance Parking and Storage and to present this at the August 26, 2020 council meeting.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

**BALKAN FIRE / AMBULANCE CONTRACT**

Moved by Councilor Campbell and supported by Councilor Lantz to approve the Balkan Fire / Ambulance Agreement through December 31, 2020 for a fee of \$2,853.96 per month to be paid to the City of Chisholm. The contract will be renegotiated for 2021.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

**RESOLUTION NO. 0820-60 EXTEND LOCAL EMERGENCY**

Moved by Councilor Lantz and supported by Councilor Fountain to adopt Resolution No. 0820-60 to extend the local emergency from August 12, 2020 to September 23, 2020.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

**SCHNORR MUDFEST EVENT - CITYWIDE FESTIVAL REQUEST**

Moved by Councilor Lantz and supported by Councilor Vake to grant the request from Todd Schnorr to hold a Citywide Festival on Saturday, September 19, 2020 from 8:00 a.m. until Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 2:00 a.m. to host the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Schnorr Mudfest, Fishing with Vets Minnesota, event. The request includes authorizing the closure of Lake Street from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue SW and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW to 1<sup>st</sup> Street SW. The request is granted contingent upon a specific COVID-19 Plan to be provided to the City of Chisholm. The council directed City Attorney Bryan Lindsay to review their COVID-19 Plan.

Voting Aye: Councilors Fountain, Lantz, Vake, Varda and Mayor Champa

Voting No: Councilor Campbell

Motion Carried

**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

1. Mayor Champa – COVID-19 is taking about 60% of Administrator Bill Manney and City Attorney Bryan Lindsey’s time & quite a bit of the city staff’s time to respond to COVID-19 related items. He advised the council to allow Administrator Manney to catch up, as he is spending a great deal of time on COVID-19 related items. It is laboring the entire staff right now. Administrator Manney and the staff are working on the RedHead Mountain Bike Park, the Campground, the Bruce Mine Park, the opening of buildings such as the Arena for the election and numerous other things.
2. Councilor Vake – He would like to discuss the amounts that people are being charged for garbage/recycling on their utility bills. He would like to make it very clear what the base charge and dumping fees will be with the new garbage system.
3. Councilor Vake – He would like the Chamber Cash Initiative put on the next agenda.
4. Councilor Vake - He would like to discuss purchasing the empty lot by Anderson Plumbing.
5. Councilor Vake - The opening of City Hall was brought to his attention, someone he talked to feels if the schools are open, City Hall should be open.
6. Councilor Varda announced he is retiring from the Fire Department on September 1st and would like to appoint Councilor Lantz to serve as the Fire Department Liaison.

**ADJOURN MEETING**

Moved by Councilor Vake and supported by Councilor Fountain to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Voting Aye: All

Motion Carried

/s/ John A. Champa,  
Mayor

Attest:

/s/ William Manney,  
City Clerk-Treasurer/Administrator