

**City of Gem Lake
City Council Meeting – January 17, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

Mayor Gretchen Artig-Swomley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers Jim Lindner, Len Cacioppo, Laurel Amlee and Ben Johnson were present. Also present: City Attorney Kevin Beck, City Treasurer Tom Kelly, Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence, Commission Member Don Cummings, and residents Nick Cress, Rick Bosak and Gayle McMahon.

Swearing in of New Councilmembers

Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence swore in the new Councilmembers individually with the official oath. Mrs. Lawrence had each new Councilmember individually raise their right hand, repeat the oath back and sign the affidavit. The Council welcomed back Councilmember Lindner and Councilmember Cacioppo, who were re-elected to four year terms to the Gem Lake City Council.

January 17, 2023 Agenda

A motion was introduced by Councilmember Linder to accept the agenda, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, agenda accepted.

Minutes

A motion was introduced by Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Amlee to approve the December 20, 2022, City Council Meeting Minutes. Voice vote taken, 4 voted yes, motion passes, minutes approved. Councilmember Cacioppo abstained because the zoom call got disconnected part way through the meeting.

Consent Agenda

- Resolution #2023-001 2023 Gem Lake Appointments List**
- Additional Modifications to Fee Schedule**
- LMCIT Liability Coverage Waiver Form**
- Annual Designation of City Official Depository**
- Authorization of Electronic Funds Transfer**
- Electronic Funds Transfer Policy**

All items on the consent agenda were reviewed by the Council and the Mayor had a comment on the Resolution that the Data Privacy Representative be changed to Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence. Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve all the items listed on the consent agenda as is and with the Mayor's recommendation for the Resolution, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, consent agenda is approved.

Committee Reports

Nothing to report, no meeting was held in January.

Old Business

Newsletter

A newsletter is ready to go out for February containing stories on topics discussed in past meetings. Some future stories that could be featured in the next Newsletter would contain topics such as the swearing in ceremony, defining charitable gambling and an overview of Merrick, the appointments list, and a story created by Councilmember Lindner on safety around railroad crossings.

THC Ordinance Proposal

Many cities have been approving moratoriums on the topic regarding the sale of THC within the City. At this time the City is not required to have an Ordinance, but would like to begin creating one. The City of White Bear Lake is currently working on one that Gem Lake would like to review when completed and then possibly adopt as our own. Mayor Artig-Swomley asked if anything is going on at State level

regarding this to which Councilmember Johnson responded that a bill has been introduced. The City should have some sense of how things are progressing around May 2023.

Corridor Project Final Report/Next Steps

Members from the Corridor Project Committee will be attending the February 21, 2023 City Council meeting to give the council and those in attendance an overview of the project and suggested next steps.

New Business

COLA Discussion

The City of Gem Lake Employee Manual states that when determining if a COLA increase will be given the City will follow the CPI. The CPI for 2023 is sitting at 5% for civilian workers. While an increase is not guaranteed each year, the budget included a 5% increase for all city employees. Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to approve a 5% increase for civilian workers retroactive back to January 1, 2023, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, COLA increase has been approved.

Gem Lake Infrastructure Issues

Gem Lake Proposed Water System Planning

State and federal funding for a municipal water system, whether it is a partial or full system, can take up to two years to obtain. With this in mind, the Mayor would like to invite City Engineer Justin Gese to the February meeting to discuss how the city could get the ball rolling on funding applications. It is clear from prior discussions that any funding request could be easily withdrawn if the city decides not to go head with a full or partial water system at this time.

Internal Management

Additional Check Signer

Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested that one more person be added as an additional signer for the City. In the case that the City Treasurer and Mayor are both away and something needs a signature that the City Clerk is unable to sign. Councilmember Lindner was asked if he could be added as an additional signer, to which he accepted.

Councilmember Cacioppo introduced a motion to add Councilmember Jim Lindner as an additional signer to the City's account, seconded by Councilmember Amlee. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, Councilmember Lindner will be added as an additional signer.

City Clerk Credit Card Increase

The Acting City Clerk is requesting an increase to the City Clerks credit card. The City Clerk is the one that purchases most items for the City and with a \$500.00 limit is not always able to purchase product or training classes until the bill has been paid. An increase would help the clerk to be able to purchase items needed for the office, with the Mayor and Councils approval, and other training classes without needing to use the Mayor's credit card or waiting until the bill has been paid. Councilmember Cacioppo suggested the limit be increased from \$500.00 to \$2000.00.

Councilmember Cacioppo introduced a motion to increase the Acting City Clerks credit card limit to \$2000.00 for approved purchases for the City, seconded by Councilmember Lindner. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, Acting City Clerk will request a credit limit increase.

Nuisance Ordinance Discussion

Over a dozen complaints have been received at Heritage Hall regarding several properties in Gem Lake. Neighbors have expressed numerous concerns about excessive junk, excessive numbers of parked cars, the appearance of industrial or business activity, etc. These concerns have pointed out the need to revisit the city's nuisance ordinance and see if improvement is possible. Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested turning this project over to the planning commission for review. Some suggestions could be to ban camouflage fencing,

ban on street parking along Scheuneman Road and add language stating that your yard cannot look like a junk yard. The Planning Commission will be discussing this ordinance at their February 14, 2023 meeting.

Charitable Gambling Donations

White Bear Lake Emergency Food Shelf

Mayor Artig-Swomley suggested that the Council make a donation in February in the amount of \$1500.00 to the White Bear Lake Emergency Food Shelf. Councilmember Lindner introduced a motion to request a donation in the amount of \$1500.00 for the White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, Acting City Clerk will request a donation to be approved at the February Council meeting.

Community Outreach to Other Cities and Government Bodies

Vadnais Heights Proposal

The proposal sent to Vadnais Heights regarding restructuring of the Villas bills might be making some progress to help reduce bills. Vadnais is possibly agreeing to allow Gem Lake to put in a new meter than can be read by Vadnais for irrigation. This would make it possible for Vadnais to read the meter and then divide it amongst the 30 houses to help put it into the first tier for billing instead of the third.

Purple Line Response Letter

Mayor Artig-Swomley attended a virtual meeting where discussion was had on redesigning bridges and that there is currently no end point determined for the line. The next meeting will be held on March 15, 2023. Mayor Artig-Swomley will respond with a letter regarding the 30% plan.

Presentations from the public, 2 minutes maximum

Commission Member Don Cummings commented on how great the plowing has been since changing over to White Bear Township Public Works, the only concern he voiced was that the public path is being plowed too wide. Acting City Clerk Melissa Lawrence has already reached out to the Township regarding this and will reach out again to come to a conclusion.

Resident Gayle McMahan of 1101 Goose Lake Road shared that so far only one (1) vehicle has gone into the ditch at her house this year. Before the guardrails were added there were quite a few more that would go into the ditch. Ms. McMahan had another comment regarding Goose Lake road and its condition. Currently it feels as though you are driving along a railroad track, and it needs repairing. Councilmember Lindner will reach out to Ramsey County Public Works again and see about getting them in to a meeting in the near future to discuss the County roads.

Open Items for Council Members to Bring Up

Councilmember Lindner had a question regarding the MS4 report and if it would need to be completed for 2023. He shared that their website states you do not have to, but would like to get some clarification on that.

Monthly Financial Reports

None to report, City Treasurer was on vacation and nothing was submitted.

Claims

Councilmember Lindner made a motion to pay the bills, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo. Voice vote taken, all voted yes, motion passes, and bills will be paid.

Future Council Meetings

City Council, Tuesday, February 21, 2023, Workshop, Monday, February 13, 2023 is CANCELED.

Attendance Inquiry

Councilmember Cacioppo is unsure if he will be able to attend in person, possibly remotely.

Adjournment

Being there no further business, following a motion from Councilmember Lindner, seconded by Councilmember Cacioppo, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Melissa Lawrence