**MEETING MINUTES OF THE CITY COMMISSION**

**OF THE CITY OF DEVILS LAKE, ND**

**MARCH 17, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Devils Lake City Commission was held on March 17, 2025 with the following members present: President Moe and Commissioners Hach, Knowski, Pierce, and Uhlenkamp.

**MEETING ITEMS**

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes – March 03, 2025

Commissioner Uhlenkamp made a motion to table the approval of the minutes. Commissioner Knowski seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

**AWARDS AND PROCLAMATIONS**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS – 5:30 PM**

**BID OPENINGS – 5:30 PM**

**VISITORS OR DELEGATIONS**

***\*Limited to five minutes per guest, unless extended by presiding officer***

1. Lake Region Heritage Center Update and Quarter 2 Release of Funds

Lisa Crosby with the Lake Region Heritage Center provided an update on the events they have put on and are planning for the upcoming months ahead. Commissioner Knowski made a motion to approve the release of quarter two funds to the Lake Region Heritage Center. Commissioner Uhlenkamp seconded the motion, and the motion was approved was approved unanimously on a roll call vote.

1. Lake Region Public Library 2024 Annual Report

Maddie Cummings from the Lake Region Public Library provided the annual report to the Commission. She said they executed significant capital improvements, such as painting in the interior of the library and HVAC improvements. She said circulation of most library materials has been on the rise over the last couple of years.

1. Lake Region State College - Canopy Study Grant Review and Next Steps

Lloyd Halvorson with Lake Region State College presented to the City Commission on the findings from the Canopy Study they conducted in conjunction with the City. He thanked the City for the partnership. He said the canopy study found that the vast majority of all trees on park district, city, and school district property were green ash, which will mostly all die due to the emerald ash borer and its spread into North Dakota. He said there were over 4,000 green ash trees identified as part of the canopy study. Mr. Halvorson said that 1,600 of those ash trees were found on City boulevards, the Oehlke Arboretum, Cemetery, and Library. The City Administrator said with so many ash trees on City boulevards, the reliance on adjacent property owners to plant, water, and maintain newly planted trees might need to be re-evaluated, with more City involvement to ensure new trees reach maturity. President Moe said the costs could be concerning if they all had to be removed at one time. The City Administrator said the Shade Tree Committee and City Commission will likely need to play an active role in forestry strategies moving forward in the years to come. Commissioner Knowski asked if the Emerald Ash Borer has been identified in the Lake Region. Mr. Halvorson said it has not, but was identified in Moorhead, MN. Mr. Halvorson said having this lead time is a blessing and a curse – given it gives the community time to take action, but also time to procrastinate. Commissioner Pierce said they discussed an action plan for ash tree removal at the last Shade Tree Committee meeting.

**COMMISSION PORTFOLIOS**

1. Fire Department 2024 Year End Report

Commissioner Pierce – the Fire Chief highlighted the Fire Department’s 2024 Year End Report. He said they had 248 calls for service which was down from 2023 and did 236 inspections in 2024. He also spoke about future equipment needs for the department.

Commissioner Pierce said he has meetings with F5 project representatives and human service center officials.

Commissioner Uhlenkamp – The City Engineer said they will be removing snow downtown tonight.

Commissioner Hach – The City Engineer said paperwork was submitted to the USDA for their review of the automated truck design and specifications. He added that for Engineering, they are working on the necessary resolutions for Commission approval for a variety of projects. He inquired if the Commission could have a special meeting on Wednesday March 26, 2025 at noon to review and approve those resolutions. The Commission members said that time worked for a special meeting.

The City Assessor said they will have the Board of Equalization meeting on April 7, 2025. He gave an update on some legislative session business relevant to property taxes and exemptions.

The Airport Manager said they are removing the Jamestown leg of their flights and will now be getting a direct flight to Denver. He said otherwise things are going well.

Commissioner Knowski – The City Engineer thanked President Moe and Commissioner Knowski for their visit out to Public Works and the appreciation they had for the crews out there.

President Moe – The Chief of Police said everything was going well in the Police Department.

The City Administrator said everything was going well in his office. On behalf of the City Attorney, he said there are eight administrative hearings scheduled for April 2 and April 3 regarding blighted structures.

1. 2024 Year End Financial Report

The City Administrator gave a review of the 202 Year End Financial Report.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. City Facility Long Term Planning and Funding Options

The City Administrator said the information provided from architectural firms regarding cost estimates for the proposed relocation of the Police Department to City Hall and relocation of City Hall to an existing place downtown came in on Friday. He said since the information was so fresh that their goal was to provide it for informational purposes, with more further discussion on the findings at the special Commission meeting on March 26. The City Engineer gave an overview of the findings in the reports.

The City Administrator said the Commission will have to make a judgment on whether spending a little more for the renovation of an existing building downtown would be worth the extra cost compared to possibly building new for slightly cheaper. President Moe said he’d like to give all the City Commissioner more time to review the findings in the reports.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Transfer of Liquor License – Thirsty’s Bar and Grill

The owner of Old Sushi and Spirits and Thirsty’s Bar and Grill presented to the Commission on the plans for the bar/restaurant at that location. Commissioner Knowski made a motion to transfer the Thirsty’s Bar and Grill liquor license to Old Sushi and Spirits. Commissioner Hach seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

1. Cost Participation Agreement with NDDOT – 14th Street & 14th Avenue Project

Commissioner Hach made a motion to approve the Cost Participation Agreement with NDDOT. Commissioner Knowski seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

**CITIZEN COMMENT**

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

1. January 2025 Finances

**LIST OF BILLS**

Commissioner Uhlenkamp made a motion to approve the List of Bills. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

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| **SPENCER HALVORSON**  **CITY ADMINISTRATOR/AUDITOR** | **JIM MOE**  **PRESIDENT OF CITY COMMISSION** |