

November 18, 2020

Mayor Flatness called to order the regular meeting of the Rockwell City Council at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 18, 2020. Council members present were Gauley, Meyer, Wentz and Koob with Worley via phone. Also present were Mike Nuehring, Tom Hensley, Jay Siefken, Chief Whitney and Dick Fridley via Zoom.

Wentz moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Motion seconded by Meyer, carried unanimously.

Wentz moved to approve the treasurer's report for the Library. Motion seconded by Koob, carried unanimously.

Hensley had quotes from Dahley Tree Service and Nuehring's Lawn and Tree Service for trimming and removal of trees discussed prior. Mike Nuehring was present and felt that the three trees on Second Street should all be removed as to trimming them. Nuehring also noted the tree on Southview Drive is hard to determine without any leaves on the tree, and he really wouldn't know how it is until they get into it, he would also recommend removing the tree completely. Koob moved by the recommendations of Nuehring to remove all four of the trees. Council discussed the issues with taking down trees and who is responsible for tree expenses. Mayor Flatness stated that by our code the property owner is responsible for trimming trees to ten feet above the sidewalk and street level and this may be one of the situations that need to be visited case by case. Following discussion, Worley moved to second the motion made. Motion carried with Gauley, Wentz, Koob and Worley voting Aye; Meyer voting Nay.

Mayor Flatness stated that with the 2021-2022 budget work approaching the Council needs to consider if the possibility of a second police officer is warranted and feasible. Mayor Flatness presented information on pay scales from surrounding areas and discussed the cost of training for a new officer. Meyer presented information on officer training from Iowa Law Enforcement Academy and Hawkeye College. Mayor Flatness stated that by community size there are guide lines of one officer for every 800 to 900 residents, also noting he has not had enough information from the county for calls for service that would affect Rockwell. Koob noted that the call volume would not be the same here as Mason City or the County so the pay rate would not have to be the same, but would need to be competitive. Gauley noted the overtime and feeling it may be worth considering an additional officer. Koob felt now may be the time to figure this out in the budget as Chief Whitney will not be here forever and we will need to have someone trained. Gauley stated that we have Siefken looking at retirement also, so we could be adding two more at the same time. Koob noted that each department is unique and will take time for training and feels we need to take the next step to progress with an officer. Wentz felt this would be in the community's best interest to help with the work and to make the transition at that point. Gauley and Worley also felt this would be the time to start with the budget for an officer. Hensley asked about considering a part time person to transition into full time when Siefken is ready for retirement. Mayor Flatness noted we have ideas and different avenues to pursue.

Mayor Flatness reported that he has talked with the DOT and the highway 65 bridges will be several more weeks.

Gauley asked about the work at the basketball and tennis courts. Siefken explained that the area between the two courts is for drainage, Heartland put a tile in and we will need to leave this unpaved.

Gauley asked about the grocery store building. Mayor Flatness noted he had contacted the relator and they will be selling fixtures and the building, and he noted some interest in the building.

Wentz asked Chief Whitney if all of the owners of campers and trailers have followed the new ordinance. Chief Whitney noted most have, he has talked with some that were unaware of the ordinance.

Wentz asked about the Main Street property. Mayor Flatness noted that we will not be able to do anything until this clears litigation.

Koob reported on the work at the pool with the work area being backfilled on the outside and the electrical work being done to make sure everything is up to code.

Mayor Flatness noted the Insurance Company has sent payment for the repairs made.

Koob reported that he has a company putting together brochures for the proposed playground and funding request that will be sent to all in the area. Mayor Flatness noted this is a 501C3 project so all contributions are tax deductible. Worley noted that our area farmers are a big part of this community so now would be a good time to ask for contributions. Koob also noted the school uses the park area for gym classes when the weather is good.

Koob asked about some city right of way areas that have been rocked by the property owner, and feels this should be left as was with grass. Siefken noted that for drainage this needs to still be a waterway with a ditch that is six to eight inches lower than the asphalt.

Mayor Flatness noted there will be a land auction in the building tomorrow and Chief Whitney has done some extra leg work to make sure this is accommodated with the Governors guidelines in place.

Mayor Flatness wished all a happy and healthy Thanks Giving.

With no further business, Wentz moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Koob, carried unanimously.

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Michael Flatness, Mayor

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Lorna Weier, City Clerk