

April, 2009 Board of Appeals and City Council Meeting

Board of Appeals

The Ashby City Council met on Wednesday, April 8, 2009 for the Board of Review and Appeals process at Ashby City Hall. Acting Mayor, Lynn Jensen called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with council members Ronnie Jaenisch, George Jordan and, Carl Ulrich present. Absent was Mayor Tom Grover. Also present were Val Martin, Clerk/Treasurer, Richard Walton, City Attorney and Dennis Helle. Visitors were Susan Lohse, County Assessor; and Debbie Thormodson, assessor for the city; Winnie and Adair Thompson, Jim Borgrud, Jim Karl, and Mark Koefod.

Board of Appeals

Acting Mayor Lynn Jensen opened the meeting. The floor was open for questions. The Thompson asked why their value went up as much as it did. Susie Lohse indicated that their new garage was the reason for the increased value. Jim Borgrud asked how one of his parcels was classified. He was told that it was classified residential. It could not be classified as ag land as it is not over 10 acres. Mayor Grover joined the meeting. Jim Karl and Mark Koefod did not have any questions.

Ashby City Council Meeting

The Ashby City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, April 9, 2009 at Ashby City Hall. Mayor Thomas Grover called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with council members Carl Ulrich, George Jordan, Ronnie Jaenisch and Lynn Jensen present. Also present were Val Martin, Clerk/Treasurer; Richard Walton, City Attorney, and Dennis Helle. Visitors: Mark Koefod, Jim Karl and Heather Johnson from Carlson-Highland.

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Ulrich moved to approve the agenda with additions. Jaenisch seconded. MCU

Discussion on what's happening with a commercial building that is half-demolished. More information will be sought.

Visitors

Heather Johnson was present to discuss the 2008 audit report. She went through some of the important points and informed the council that the books fairly presented the accounts of the city financials. She told the council that it was a clean audit with the books, spreadsheets and other items presented to the auditor in good shape. One finding was noted in the audit – segregation of duties. This is due to a small office staff. It occurs in most city's our size and the city is doing several items to mitigate this issue – checks are hand-signed and not stamped, council members physically go through the bills each month before the council meeting and part-time office staff also handles and deposits and money. It was noted that the clerk had a discussion with Randy Highland on what we can do to reduce the cost of the audit. He told her that we are doing everything right and in reality, they have had to spend more time on the audit over the last couple years, due to the state standards that they have to follow. It was noted that the audit fee has not increased because of the increased hours and it will not increase for 2010. Ulrich moved to approve the audit report. Jaenisch seconded. MCU

Audit Report

Jim Karl, manager of the Ashby American Legion was present to request an outdoor permit for July 18th. They would like to have an outdoor dance for Appreciation Days. It will be held in their parking lot, the area would be fenced in, ID's will be checked and everyone over 21 will have their hand stamped. He also requested that several Legion members attend, wearing their uniforms and police the event. Mr. Karl met with Thor Tollefson, Chief of Police last week and he indicated to him that he did not have a problem with it. The Clerk also noted that she had discussed the issue with Tollefson and he told her the same thing. Jensen moved to approve an outdoor license for the Ashby American Legion for July 18th contingent on approval from the Police Chief. Jaenisch seconded. MCU

Legion Outdoor Permits

Jaenisch moved to approve an outdoor permit for the Ashby American Legion on May 2nd for the annual Coot's Banquet. Jordan seconded. MCU

There was a discussion on regulating liquor outside of the licensed facilities. The liquor license is for the building itself and liquor cannot be consumed outside of the building whether it is on their property or not. Letters will be sent to licensed establishments to remind them of this.

Consent Agenda

Ulrich moved to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:

- Approval of all March minutes.
- Approval of bills: Prepaid: \$10,663.29 and Claims for Approval: \$32,202.59 for a total of \$42,865.88. Jaenisch went through the bills prior to council and gave pre-approval.

Jensen seconded. MCU

Consent Agenda

There were three outstanding utility bills scheduled to be disconnected tomorrow.

Outstanding Utility Bills.

Open Forum

There was no open forum due to the Board of Appeals being held prior to the council meeting.

Open Forum

Mayor's Report

Grover attended the regional Mayor's meeting in New York Mills. They discussed the bill that was introduced in the House of Representatives. LGA reductions are significantly lower with this bill compared to the governor's bill.

Mayor's Report

Administration

Grover, Martin, Jensen and Randy Catoe, met with the banker that will soon own the old nursing home building on April 6th. Their intent is to sell the building and he was interested in meeting with a few people from the council and community to get some ideas. Some suggestions were an interim rehab facility, vet's facility, apartments, etc. Martin will contact Jeff Gullickson, Grant County Veterans' Services to see if he could make some contacts and see if the veteran's administration may have some interest in it.

Council Reports

The Clerk/Treasurer's Report was accepted. The report details work done by the Clerk/Treasurer for the previous month such as:

Clerk's Report

- Central Lakes Trail meeting, along with preparation of balance sheet.
- Several contacts were made regarding economic stimulus funds and available grant money.
- Meeting with OTP regarding energy improvements/suggestions.
- Several reports/spreadsheets for Fire Department.
- Post and published board of appeals and change to council meeting.
- Spreadsheet for tracking on issues related to flooding.
- Meeting with business owner and DEED regarding MN Investment Fund.
- Attended Emergency Management meeting in Elbow Lake.
- Posted notice/called radio stations regarding water conservation and to make sure sump pumps are drained outside.
- Attended Clerk's Conference Training.
- Prepared items for new fire truck proposal.
- Review of audit report – discussed several items with the auditor.
- Called Verizon to switch to government account.
- Compilation of survey results.
- Regional safety meeting.
- Council packets.
- Monthly bills and reports.
- Utility bills and receiving payments.
- Waiting on customers, all financials including deposits, checks, reports; posting and publishing notices; payroll; minutes; policies, and more.

The survey results were discussed. 64 surveys were returned. 51 were from residents, 7 not specified and 6 nonresidents. After reviewing the results the council came to the following conclusions:

Survey Results

- There is a need for better communication. Agendas will be posted in the post office, at city hall and at Ruby's City Restaurant. More information will be contained in the newsletter. The council will continue to do what they can to keep the community informed.
- 36 people felt that the police department was important, 21 responded that it was not important and 6 did not respond. There were surveys that suggested the part-time police officer may not be needed. The council felt this needs to be discussed further.
- Several surveys suggested that people were concerned about taxes and utility charges. The budget committee will be meeting this month to go through first quarter expenses and see where items can be cut.
- Many other items and ideas were suggested.

Martin will be attending the Community Club meeting on April 20th to present the results of the survey to anyone that is interested. Jaenisch moved to give \$25 in Ashby Bucks for the drawing. Any names that were filled out on that part of the survey will have their name in the drawing.

Public Safety

The Police Report was as follows:

Police Report

- Public/Motorist Assist-2
- Property Check Requests-1
- Welfare Check - 1
- Open Door – 2
- Animal Lost – 1
- Assault Inflict Bodily Harm – 1
- Burglar Alarm – 1
- Domestic – 1
- Driving Complaints – 1
- Exhibition Driving – 1
- Education (DARE) – 4
- Education (Safety Class at School) – 3
- Motor vehicle Acc. – 1

There was a discussion on purchasing crosswalk signs. The council felt this was an important issue to address. A letter will be sent to the County Commissioners making a request for purchase of these signs as they need to be placed on the county roads.

Crosswalk signs

Ordinance 33 – An Ordinance Establishing Fee for Emergency Protection Fire Services was presented. Jensen moved to approve this ordinance. Ulrich seconded. MCU

Ordinance – Fire Charges

Jensen moved to authorize the truck committee to go through proposals on April 23, 2009 and make a recommendation to Rural Development for the bid that best fits the criteria in the specifications. Jaenisch seconded. MCU

Authorization for fire truck

It was noted that the Ashby Fire and Ambulance crew has spent 100+ hours transporting patients out of Fargo during the flood. A letter was sent to them, thanking them for their efforts.

Ambulance members – Fargo flood

Public Works

Public Works Report:

- On the night of March 22nd, the lift station high water alarm dialed out due to heavy rain and infiltration of water into the sanitary sewer. The pumps couldn't keep up because of the amount of extra water entering the system. A pumper truck was called in but it was still too much water. The trash pump was started and the water was bypassed. The duty officer was called and all appropriate paperwork was filled out and samples were sent to MCPA.
- Due to the amount of infiltration, sump pump inspections will need to be done soon.
- Street sweeping was discussed. ProSweep was the same price as last year.
- Tree trimming in the parks will begin as soon as possible.

Public Works Report

Ulrich made a motion to have ProSweep do the street sweeping this year as suggested by the Public Work Supt. as long as it stays within the budgeted amount.

Street Sweeping

Jensen moved to approve changes to the Water Ordinance as presented:

Water meters will be provided by the City at no charge to the resident. This applies to new construction and meters that need to be replaced through ordinary wear and tear. If the property owner requests a meter larger than the size normally provided by the City, the cost of the meter will be paid by the property owner. A charge established pursuant to Section 52.51 shall be paid by customers to the city for water meters including installations and check valves and payment for same shall be made at the time of water service application.

Change to water ordinance

Jordan seconded. MCU

Old Business

Martin received as e-mail that suggests we have a very good chance of getting the rehab grant. More information will be in the paper when notification is received.

Rehab grant

New Business

The council discussed whether the City should hold a clean-up day. They decided that every other year seems to work well and will plan on having one in 2010.

Clean-up Day

Joe Hoff had made a request for a porta-potty at Memorial Park for the summer. He is trying to get a League together and this will be needed. Grover moved to rent one if there is a league and if they help pay for it. Jaenisch seconded. MCU

Porta-potties @ Memorial Park

We will have an adult working for the month under the CEP program. One of the projects may be shingling of the ambulance portion of City Hall and possibly the park shelter. The only cost to the city will be materials. The ambulance portion will be paid through the ambulance fund and there is money available in the building maintenance fund for the park shelter. Cassavant will check the park building to see if he feels it is needed and the ambulance department will be contacted regarding their portion. Jaenisch moved to go ahead with these projects, if needed. Jordan seconded. MCU

CEP worker

Adjourn 7:45 p.m.

Valerie Martin, Clerk