

I. CALL TO ORDER.

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Litchfield was held in the City Council Chambers at the City Hall Monday, April 17, 2023, commencing at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Dingmann called the meeting to order.

A. ROLL CALL:

Mayor	Ron Dingmann	Present
Council Member-at-Large	Malinda Larson	Excused
Council Member Ward I	Eric Mathwig	Excused
Council Member Ward II	Darlene Kotelnicki	Present
Council Member Ward III	Betty Allen	Present
Council Member Ward IV	John Carlson	Present
Council Member Ward V	Sara Miller	Present
City Administrator	Dave Cziok	Present
Assistant City Administrator	Joyce Spreiter	Present
Operations Coordinator	Mario Provencher	Present
Operations Engineer	Mike Geers	Present
Police Chief	Pat Fank	Present
City Attorney	Mark Wood	Present
City Engineer	Chuck DeWolf	Present
Independent Review	Amy Wilde	Present
KLFD	Tim Bergstrom	Present

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. CONSENT AGENDA -

Each item on the Consent Agenda was considered. No items were added or deleted.

A. COUNCIL MINUTES TO APPROVE:

- 1. City Council Meeting – April 3, 2023

B. FINANCIAL REPORTS TO APPROVE:

- 1. Electronic and Wire Transfer Report

C. CLAIMS TO AUTHORIZE FOR PAYMENT:

- 1. Computer List of Bills for \$107,318.74

D. OTHER PAYMENTS:

- 1. 2022 Water Treatment Facility Imp Project –

**CITY OF LITCHFIELD
 RESOLUTION NO. 23-4-77
 AUTHORIZE PAYMENT NO. 5
 FOR THE LITCHFIELD WATER TREATMENT FACILITY
 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

WHEREAS, a contract has been awarded for the above titled item, and

WHEREAS, recommendation has been made and is on file to approve this payment,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Litchfield hereby approves Payment No. 5 for the 2022 Litchfield Water Treatment Facility Improvement Project totaling \$168,419.90 as attached and on file.

Resolution No. 23-4-77 – Cont’d.

Adopted by the City Council this 17th day of April, 2023.

Attest:

Approved:

ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

MAYOR

E. ORDINANCES – SECOND READINGS: None.

F. LICENSES:

1. Lawful Gambling Permit –

**CITY OF LITCHFIELD
RESOLUTION NO. 23-4-76
LAWFUL GAMBLING PERMIT TO CONDUCT OFF-SITE GAMBLING FOR
AN EXEMPT ORGANIZATION LITCHFIELD LIONS CLUB**

WHEREAS, an application for a lawful gambling license to conduct off-site gambling was considered from the Litchfield Lions Club,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED to approve the application to conduct off-site gambling from a Lawful Gambling license for the Litchfield Lions Club for June 12, 2023, at Eagles Club, 389 South CSAH 34, Litchfield, MN, and to direct submittal of a copy of this resolution with their application to the State Gambling Control Division.

Adopted by the City Council this 17th day of April, 2023.

Attest:

Approved:

ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

MAYOR

- 2. Sales on Public Property
 - a. Little Red School House
 - b. Litchfield Early Childhood Programs

3. Liquor/3.2 License Application – Family Dollar

G. OTHER ROUTINE MATTERS:

1. Employment Offer –

**CITY OF LITCHFIELD
RESOLUTION NO. 23-4-75
EMPLOYMENT OFFER FOR
PART-TIME POSITIONS**

WHEREAS, the City needs employees for part-time positions; and

WHEREAS, the funds to fill these positions were approved in the 2023 Budget; and

WHEREAS, the supervisors will adjust the wage schedule for 2023 part-time employees to fill these positions, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Litchfield to offer 2023 part-time employment with the City of Litchfield, to the following:

Resolution No. 23-4-75 – Cont’d.

<u>Department</u>	<u>Re-Hires</u>	<u>New Hires</u>
<i>Liquor Store</i>		Giovanni Alvarez

Adopted by the City Council this 17th day of April, 2023.

Attest:

Approved:

ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

MAYOR

H. COMMUNICATIONS TO REVIEW :

1. Minutes & Reports:
 - a. Police Commission Minutes – November 9, 2022 and March 15, 2023
 - b. Planning Commission Minutes – April 10, 2023
 - c. Airport Advisory Minutes – April 10, 2023

After review, it was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Council Member Allen, to adopt the following:

**CITY OF LITCHFIELD
RESOLUTION NO. 23-4-80
APPROVING CONSENT AGENDA**

WHEREAS, the Consent Agenda has been assembled and presented; and

WHEREAS, all requests to have items removed have been duly noted,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED to approve the Consent Agenda as presented except for items, if any, which were requested to be removed for individual consideration.

Adopted by the City Council this 17th day of April, 2023.

Attest:

Approved:

ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

MAYOR

Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye, whereupon the resolution was declared adopted.

III. TIMED ITEMS –

A. 5:30 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING – BOARD OF REVIEW

Interim Meeker County Assessor Melissa (Missi) Voigt addressed the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (City Council) and citizens on behalf of the City of Litchfield. She gave an overview of the information provided by the Meeker County Assessor’s office included in the Council agenda packet. She reported the State requires values to be between 90% and 105% compared to what properties are selling for and what the Assessor’s Office has them valued at. Voigt shared there were 83 qualifying residential sales resulting in a 97% ratio. She reported that no changes were made with commercial property.

This being the time, date and place set, with all notices published and posted as required by law, Mayor Dingmann opened the 2023 Local Board of Appeal and Equalization hearing regarding property valuations in the City of Litchfield, where citizens had the opportunity to present and appeal, at 5:39 p.m.

An attendance list is on file.

Following were property owners present to address the Council:

1. John Mauritz – 710 Ames Ave - Parcel No. 27-2946000 – Mr. Mauritz requested the Meeker County Assessor’s Office view his property for a current valuation.

Meeker County Appraiser Scoblic reported that he conducted an interior and exterior review of the property. He discussed comparables and shared that the property has a crawl space that was taken into consideration. Meeker County Appraiser Scoblic recommended no changes to the 2023 EMV for Parcel No. 27-2946000 based upon the results of viewing the property.

John Mauritz reported that the house was built last year. He shared that he had lived in the county for 20 years. While acknowledging the research he did was with 2022 valuations and not 2023, he shared that his house is valued more than any of the other similar properties with only one other house on the street valued more.

Meeker County Appraiser Scoblic responded that his unimproved bare lot was valued differently in comparison to the addition of water/sewer infrastructure to the property which increases the value by 20%.

Council Member Allen inquired about the crawl space with Meeker County Appraiser Scoblic responding that the crawl space is cemented out and valued accordingly where the other comparables are slab on grade. The crawl space adds about \$15,800 in value.

Mayor Dingmann explained that Mr. Mauritz can appeal to the Meeker County Board of Appeal and Equalization if he doesn’t agree with the City of Litchfield Local Board of Appeal and Equalization decision.

After review, it was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Mayor Dingmann, to accept the Meeker County Appraiser recommended 2023 EMV of \$388,000 for Parcel No. 27-2946000 with no changes. Council Member Miller shared that she understands Mr. Mauritz’s concerns and explained that past results have shown the formulas used have been accurate. Mr. Mauritz was reminded that he can appeal the decision at the Meeker County Board of Appeal and Equalization. Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye whereupon the motion carried.

Following are property owners who were not present but requested the Meeker County Assessor’s Office review their properties:

1. Steven Schmidt – 704 Park Village – Parcel No. 27-8213000 – Mr. Schmidt requested the Meeker County Assessor’s Office view his property for a current valuation.

Meeker County Appraiser Scoblic reported that an interior and exterior review of the double wide mobile home was conducted on April 14, 2023. Meeker County Appraiser Scoblic recommended decreasing the 2023 EMV from \$101,300 to \$79,700 for Parcel No. 27-8213000 based upon the results of viewing the property.

Upon Council inquiry on the changes and land ownership, Meeker County Appraiser Scoblic responded that the double wide mobile home was on Park Village property and economic factors were involved in the valuation process. He found a few similar properties that were cheaper and explained that those properties will be adjusted moving forward.

After review, it was moved by Council Member Allen, seconded by Council Member Carlson, to decrease the 2023 EMV from \$101,300 to \$79,700 for Parcel No. 27-8213000. Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye whereupon the motion carried.

2. Donna M Pearson – 227 Swift Avenue North – Ms. Pearson requested the Meeker County Assessor’s Office view her property for a current valuation.

Meeker County Appraiser Scoblic explained that he had been contacted late in the day and was unable to view the property prior to the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization. He read a letter provided by Ms. Pearson requesting a review of her current valuation. Meeker County Appraiser Scoblic recommended no changes and that the appeal go before the Meeker County Board of Appeal and Equalization.

After review, it was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Council Member Allen, to accept the Meeker County Appraiser recommended 2023 EMV of \$111,600 for Parcel No. 27-2946000 with no changes. Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye whereupon the motion carried.

With no further comments, Mayor Dingmann closed the public hearing at 6:00 p.m.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AUDIENCE/PRESENTATIONS –

A. AUDIT PRESENTATION –

Justin McGraw, representing Conway, Deuth and Schmeising, PLLP, addressed the Council concerning the 2022 Audit. He highlighted areas of the financials including the General Fund, Special Revenue and Capital Projects Funds, Liquor Fund, Sewer Fund, Electric and Water Funds. He explained the impacts of the recent bond refundings to the Water, Sewer, and Electric Funds. Justin McGraw reported the General Fund carries a healthy balance in which it can carry 9 months’ worth of expenditures allowing for a buffer until the City receives its LGA allocation and property taxes. He explained that the City has a higher General Fund balance due to the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds received that are included in the fund balance. He added he anticipates the fund balance will be back to the normal balance carried over annually once the City spends those funds.

Council Member Carlson inquired about comparison of the City of Litchfield to other cities in which Justin McGraw explained there are some areas that can be compared but typically cities offer different services making it more difficult to compare. Council Member Kotelnicki inquired about the reserves and expressed concern on the \$31M of debt carried by the City. Justin McGraw clarified that it is a large number but not an issue if you have the ability to service the debt. He added that the debt services funds are earmarked for that purpose.

Justin McGraw responded to Mayor Dingmann’s inquiry on restricted cash in that it is obligated money in reference to refunding bonds. Council Member Allen inquired about the status of closing out the Hwy 12 Downtown Reconstruction Project. City Administrator Cziok explained that the City Engineer was working with MnDOT on finalization of change orders relating to remaining financial responsibilities by both entities.

After review, it was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Council Member Carlson, to adopt the following:

**CITY OF LITCHFIELD
RESOLUTION NO. 23-4-79
ACCEPT 2022 CITY FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT**

WHEREAS, Conway, Deuth and Schmiesing, PLLP have been authorized to conduct an audit of 2022 Financial and other related matters; and

WHEREAS, a detailed report was reviewed previously with staff; and

Resolution No. 23-4-79 – Cont’d.

WHEREAS, the report was reviewed by the Council on April 17, 2023,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Litchfield to accept the 2022 Financial Audit Report as on file, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED to order its submission to other governmental units and to be published as required by State Statute.

Adopted by the City Council this 17th day of April, 2023.

Approved:

Attest:

MAYOR

ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye, whereupon the resolution was declared adopted.

V. COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS –

A. PLANNING COMMISSION

1. Tax Parcel Split Request – By Admiral Benson VFW Post 2818 at 312 S. Davis Ave. –

Mayor Dingmann explained that he represented Council Member Carlson at the Planning Commission meeting and provided the findings and recommendations of the Planning Commission.

After review, it was moved by Mayor Dingmann, seconded by Council Member Carlson, to adopt the following:

**CITY OF LITCHFIELD
RESOLUTION NO. 23-4-78
GRANT WAIVER OF SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS
TO ADMIRAL BENSON VFW POST 2818 AT 312 SOUTH DAVIS AVENUE**

WHEREAS, an application for a Waiver of Subdivision Regulations regarding a tax parcel split was received from Property Owner, Admiral Benson VFW Post 2818 on March 14, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the proposed tax parcel split would subdivide the subject parcel into two lots; and

WHEREAS, both resulting lots meet all requirements of the Litchfield Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission considered this application at their meeting on April 10, 2023 and has recommended that this application be granted and their reasons for such action have been considered by the Council;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Litchfield grants a waiver of the City of Litchfield Subdivision Regulations for Parcels No. 27-2013000, legally described on the attached survey.

Adopted by the City Council this 17th day of April, 2023.

Approved:

MAYOR

ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye, whereupon the resolution was declared adopted.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS – None.

VII. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS – None.

VIII. BUSINESS –

A. HOUSING TASK FORCE UPDATE –

Council Member Kotelnicki provided an update on the status of the housing task force in which a report was included in the Council packet. She explained the buckets provided are not in order of priority. She discussed timelines and the process moving forward. Troy Bruning, Housing Task Force member, shared that the process so far has been good and hopes there is a commitment to move forward. No formal action was taken.

B. POLICE OFFICER APPOINTMENT –

Mayor Dingmann reported the process which took place in order to replace current vacancies within the Police Department and his recommendations for consideration.

After review, it was moved by Council Member Kotelnicki, seconded by Council Member Allen, to adopt the following:

**CITY OF LITCHFIELD
RESOLUTION NO. 23-4-81
APPROVING POLICE OFFICER APPOINTMENTS**

WHEREAS, currently there are two openings which exist for police officers; and

WHEREAS, these openings were advertised; and

WHEREAS, following review of applications, testing, and interviews three candidates were certified to the Mayor for consideration; and

WHEREAS, one applicant dropped out and Mayor Dingmann interviewed both remaining candidates and recommends Hayes Hine and Chandler Theis to fill the vacancies that exist,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Litchfield hereby appoints Hayes Hine and Chandler Theis to fill the police officer vacancies.

Adopted by the City Council this 17th day of April, 2023.

Approved:

MAYOR

Attest:

ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye, whereupon the resolution was declared adopted.

C. CITY WIDE CLEAN-UP –

Mayor Dingmann asked the Council for their thoughts concerning continuation of the City wide clean-up event or possibly exploring other opportunities or ideas. Council Members Allen and Kotelnicki both shared they support an annual clean-up event. Concern was expressed that nothing was lined up for this year and the opportunity may have passed. City Administrator Cziok shared that former Mayor Johnson had initiated and coordinated the event annually and recommended the Council appoint a two member committee moving forward to handle the details.

It was moved by Council Member Kotelnicki, seconded by Council Member Allen, that the City wide clean-up event continue annually with the Council appointing two Council Members to a committee to organize the event and that the topic be put on the agenda for discussion in January of 2024. Upon roll call vote, all members present voted aye whereupon the motion carried.

IX. ADDITIONAL ITEMS – None.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS –

A. WORK SESSION –

The Council held a work session to discuss the verbal intent from Shady’s No. 7 on Lake Ripley to buy the golf course restaurant building. Minutes of the work session are on file. No formal action was taken.

XI. ADJOURNMENT –

It was moved by Council Member Miller, seconded by Council Member Allen, to adjourn the City Council meeting at 6:50 p.m. Motion Carried.

Attest:

ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Approved:

MAYOR