City of Wendell
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2022

Mayor Rebecca Vipperman called the regular meeting of the Wendell City Council to order at 7:00 PM. Council members present were Council President BJ Marshall, Councilman Shaun Spencer, Councilman Juan Gonzales, and Councilman John Gnesa. City Attorney Tim Stover was not present, but David Gadd of Stover, Gadd and Associates was present in his place.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Councilwoman Marshall made a motion to approve the August 18, 2022, regular council meeting minutes as presented. **Councilman Spencer** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilman Spencer-** Aye, **Councilman Gonzales-** Aye and **Councilman Gnesa-** Aye; motion passed.

Councilwoman Marshall made a motion to approve the September 15, 2022, regular meeting minutes as presented. **Councilman Gonzales** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-** Aye, **Councilman Spencer-Aye, Councilman Gonzales-** Aye and **Councilman Gnesa-** Aye; motion passed.

BILLS

Councilman Gonzales made a motion to approve the bills as presented in the amount of $17,428.98. **Councilman Spencer** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall**- Aye, **Councilman Spencer**-Aye, **Councilman Gonzales**- Aye and **Councilman Gnesa**- Aye; motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS (discussion/action items)

Public Hearing – Maverik Sign Variance Application

Mayor Vipperman opened the Public Hearing and briefly introduced the topic to be discussed. Code Enforcement Officer Nathan Lewis presented the application from Maverik requesting a variance to place a 100' tall sign at the new Maverik store location. 35' is the maximum height by City Ordinance. Kevin Deis, representing Maverik, stated that when the company builds near a highway, they prefer a large sign that can be seen above any buildings or structures nearby. Councilman Gnesa inquired how they measure surrounding structures. Mr. Deis stated that they use balloons to measure the height. By comparison, Maverik measured the tallest structure near the build site and found it to be 40' tall.

Councilman Gnesa asked if a shorter sign would accomplish the same goal. Mr. Deis stated yes.

Mayor Vipperman stated that public comment was now open:

For Variance:

NONE

Neutral:

NONE

Against:

Don Bunn: against the sign, stated that more information before the meeting would have been beneficial, the sign is too large and does not provide a benefit to the city in his opinion, and stated that our ordinance allowing 35' is enough. He also felt that the new Maverik will increase traffic and a new stoplight may become necessary at the intersection, making it Maverik's responsibility to provide one.

Tom Mattix: against the sign, stated that the proposed 100' sign is too big and will look terrible.

Mitch Bunn: against the sign, stated that Maverik is not an Idaho corporation, the smaller Maverik in town cost the community one business already, and power poles are 42' tall making a 100' sign simply unacceptable. He suggested that Maverik look into acquiring billboards along the freeway giving them better results than a single 100' tall sign, it alters the skyline unfavorably, yes it brings jobs but not the same kind of workforce as family- oriented Valley Wide

Coop.

Luke Bunn: against the sign, stated he and his wife just purchased a home close to the location and is concerned about light pollution affecting his neighborhood. He also feels it changes the skyline unfavorably and also suggested billboards instead of the sign.

Mayor Vipperman asked multiple members of the audience if they had any comments, none did so the public comment section was closed.

Kevin Deis, representing Maverik, offered rebuttals to the objections from community members. He stated again that it is common practice to have higher signs for their stores, measures are taken to keep the brightness down as much as possible, and the lights around the store all point down to reduce the affects of the lights on surrounding properties except out back for safety reasons. He stated that research has shown that the 100' sign is more successful than billboards in other locations in surrounding states. He stated that he will investigate billboard options as well as other signage options. Mr. Deis went on to explain that Maverik is a Utah owned family company, they own their own oil company which reduces fuel prices to the public, and they try to stay local as much as possible for services such as trash, snow removal, and landscaping. He stated that Maverik also tries to hire locally as much as possible.

Mayor Vipperman closed the public hearing at 7:40 PM

NEW BUSINESS (discussion/action items)

Decision on Maverik Sign Variance Application

Councilman Spencer stated that the variance request does not meet the qualifications stated in Ordinance 534. Councilwoman Marshall agreed, Ordinance states it cannot be over 200 sq ft, can only be 35' in height, and must be at least 10' from any adjacent property. Councilman Gonzales and Councilman Gnesa stated that they shared the opinions of the other councilmembers. Councilman Spencer made a motion to deny the variance request based on 5-16-3 of, as it does not meet the qualifications for B, C and D. **Councilwoman Marshall** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-** Aye, **Councilman Spencer-Aye, Councilman Gonzales-** Aye and **Councilman Gnesa-** Aye; motion passed.

County Commissioner Ron Buhler- Gooding County Broadband Project

Ron Buhler, Gooding County Commissioner, presented a broadband project that would provide quality, affordable internet access to Wendell if we chose to participate. This is a collaboration with Eminent Technical Solutions, Region IV, and several nearby communities. There are grants available to accomplish this goal. Curtis Bennett, CEO of Eminent Technical Solutions, was on speakerphone to discuss the collaboration with Region IV, helping cities and counties to create a technology report for cybersecurity, broadband, etc., creating internet projects, building infrastructure, and helping cities with plans to suit the needs of the community. Depending on the way the agreement is written, the infrastructure could belong to the city, county, or both but Eminent would provide upkeep and run it, providing cheaper and faster services to our citizens. The City of Wendell is asked to provide a letter or resolution that would show outline our participation with creating a technology report for Wendell. Our city is under no obligation beyond that unless we choose to go further. Michelle, McFarlan, Region IV was also present to discuss the broadband project. She stated that Region IV would be able to help Wendell with a resolution that would show our participation in the collaboration for the betterment of the community and other communities involved. **Councilwoman Marshall** made a motion to move forward with cooperating with Gooding County and Region VI in the Gooding County Broadband Project. **Councilman Spencer** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-Aye, Councilman Spencer** Aye and **Councilman Gonzales-** Aye; motion passed.

Presentation of Services by SimplicIT

Pedro Baptista, representing SimplicIT, provided the Mayor and Council with a detailed presentation. Councilwoman Marshall asked a number of prepared questions regarding services and Pedro was able to give comprehensive answers to all questions asked. No motion needed.

Road Grader- Repairs Needed and Cost

Public Works Director Steve Devereaux presented to the council the issues, repairs and parts needed as well as an approximate cost to get the 1970 Cat Road Grader back up and running. After discussion, **Councilman Gnesa** made a motion to approve repairs to the 1970 Road grader not to exceed $15,000. Councilman Gonzales seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-** Aye, **Councilman Spencer-Aye, Councilman Gonzales-** Aye and **Councilman Gnesa-** Aye; motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (discussion/action items)

Consideration of Quotes for IT Provider

After discussion of the 4 quotes from IT providers, Councilwoman Marshall made a motion to accept the quote from SimplicIT Technical Solutions contingent on review by City Attorney Tim Stover. **Councilman Gnesa** seconded the motion. Roll call vote taken; **Councilwoman Marshall-** Aye, **Councilman Spencer-Aye, Councilman Gonzales-** Aye and **Councilman Gnesa-** Aye; motion passed.

Park Concept Design Presentation

Mayor Vipperman gave a detailed presentation on 2 different design concepts for the new park. In the near future, public input will be asked for and any responses are greatly appreciated.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

(Public Works/Clerk-Treasurer/Fire/Police/Library/Ordinance)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kelly Rost was present to ask about semi-trucks parking near Point S and blocking the view of vehicles needing to turn at the intersection. It was recommended to Kelly that contacting law enforcement would be a good option since semis are not allowed to park there. He also asked if the area could be turned into a 4-way stop and offered to donate signs if it would help.

COUNCIL

Councilman Gnesa asked Public Works Director, Stephen Devereaux, about painting the crosswalks at the school. He stated that every 3rd Saturday the Senior Center has a pancake breakfast. He also stated that this Saturday, November 19th there would be a Craft Fair at the Grade School Gym.

Councilman Spencer stated that he would bring a new Flag Plaza design soon. He also stated that there would be Christmas Caroling and Cookies at the High School Auditorium. Bring your favorite cookies!

MAYOR

Mayor Vipperman stated that she had not completed the Mayor's Walking Challenge but still received a $3,000 grant for the city. She stated that the University of Idaho Extension Community Mental Health Project is offering sessions. Living Waters Presbyterian Church offered space for sessions. There will be more information at a later date. She praised the city staff for their hard work in spite of an employee's medical emergency and a water main break. She thanked all staff for working together and getting it done in spite of the challenges. She also thanked Chief Bailey for his spontaneous support during the repairs to the water main break even though he was on vacation. The level of cooperation and commitment by all city staff is amazing and sincerely appreciated.

Adjourn

Councilman Gonzales made a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Wendell City Council at 9:33 PM. **Councilman Spencer** seconded the motion. Motion passed

Rebecca Vipperman

Rebecca Vipperman, Mayor

Karri A. French

Karri French, City Clerk/Treasurer