

**MINUTES**  
**Lake Crystal City Council**  
**Monday, September 18, 2023, 7:30 pm**  
**City Council Chambers**  
**100 E. Robinson St.**

Mayor Todd Wiens called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. Members present: Councilors Brett Hanson, Gina Cooper, Michael Turgeon, and Michael Windsperger.

Staff members present: City Administrator Angela Grafstrom; Megan Hutchens, Administrative Assistant; and Christopher Kennedy, City Attorney; Police Chief Joe Flavin; Dean Tibbetts, Street and Parks Department; and Jeff Becker, Fire Chief

Others present: Grace Kranz, Lake Crystal Tribune; Julie Reed, Jennifer Wiens, Amy Gasswint, Ann Lange, Jackie Graham, Cody Rachuy, MoonLighting Landscape and Design.

**Update from Peter Engelmeyer-MnDOT**

Peter Engelmeyer was not in attendance at the Council Meeting and a written update was not provided. The update will be moved to the October 2<sup>nd</sup> City Council Meeting.

**Staff Reports**

Ambulance Service Update

No report.

Fire Department Update

Farm Safety Camp will be held September 19<sup>th</sup> in Garden City. The department has begun preparing for Fire Safety Month in October.

Police Department Update

Chief Joe Flavin spoke about the decision to suspend the police liaison agreement with the school due to changes with Minnesota law regarding the contract. The police department will still be able to provide a service to the school when called. City Attorney Chris Kennedy agrees with the contract termination. He stated that due to Lake Crystal having a smaller police force, they can serve throughout the city and can go to the school when needed.

Street & Parks Department Update

The street department ordered new lawnmowers this last spring and they have arrived. The department has continued street patching throughout the city.

City Administrator Update

Written report provided in the packet.

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**Consent Agenda** *(The following agenda items are considered to be non-controversial and routine innature. They will be handled with one motion of the City Council. Councilors may request that specific items be removed from the Consent Agenda and be acted upon separately)*

1. Minutes August 21, 2023, Regular Meeting of the City Council
2. Payment of bills totaling \$216,926.92
  - Payments reviewed by Councilor Cooper and Councilor Hanson prior to the meeting.
3. GM Contracting Payment Request No. 1 of \$651,045.72 for Crystal Gardens Subdivision #7
4. Ambulance Write-Offs totaling \$1,641.06 as barred by State Statute for collection.
5. Approve Lake Crystal Cemetery Deed for Ronald Tiegen of \$1,225.00 to Blue Earth County and State of MN for Burial Lot No. 124, Section B, Spaces 1 & 2
6. Approve American Legion 294 Liquor License
7. Holy Family Catholic Church Women's Group Gambling Permit for November 18, 2023, approved for the annual Holiday Fair
8. Police Liaison Contract Termination

***Motion made by Councilor Cooper to approve consent items one through eight***, motion seconded by Councilor Windsperger and carried unanimously.

**Action Items**

Approve PEIP as Insurance Vendor

The City Council reviewed the insurance vendor prior to the Council Meeting at the budget meeting held on Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. No additional discussion from Council.

***Motion made by Councilor Windsperger to approve PEIP as Insurance vendor***, motion seconded by Councilor Turgeon and carried unanimously.

Approve HSA and Value Health Plans with Dental for Employees

The City Council reviewed the HAS and Value Health Plans with dental prior to the Council Meeting at the budget meeting held on Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. No additional discussion from Council.

***Motion made by Councilor Turgeon to approve HSA and Value Health Plans with dental for employees***, motion seconded by Councilor Hanson and carried unanimously.

Resolution 2320 Approving the 2024 Preliminary Tax Levy & General Fund Budget

The City Council reviewed the preliminary budget options at the budget meeting held on

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Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. Councilor Turgeon originally disagreed with the option of a 1.01% increase of taxes. Mayor Wiens stated to Turgeon that the tax increase could potentially be lowered from the 1.01% increase and cannot go any higher. The City Council came to the decision approve Resolution 2320 with a 1.01% increase of taxes for the preliminary tax levy and general fund budget.

***Motion made by Councilor Hanson to approve Resolution 2320 approving the preliminary general fund budget and a 1.01% increase to the 2024 preliminary tax levy,*** motion seconded by Councilor Windsperger and carried unanimously.

Set Truth in Taxation for December 4, 2023 (Truth in Taxation)

City Administrator Angela Grafstrom and the City Council agree to set the date for the Truth in Taxation meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup> starting at 7:30 PM prior to the regular meeting of City Council.

***Motion made by Councilor Hanson to approve the Truth in Taxation meeting date for December 4, 2023, at 7:30 PM prior to the regular City Council Meeting,*** motion seconded by Councilor Cooper and carried unanimously.

Review Policy on City Hall Rental Regarding Deposit for Non-Profits and Government Entities

Mayor Todd Wiens stated that he would like to see no deposit charge at all for government entities and non-profits for use of the community room. City Administrator Angela Grafstrom mentioned damage from previous years of some organizations and the additional cleaning charges the city had to pay for. The City Council came to an agreement that neither government entities nor non-profit organizations will be required to supply a deposit for the rental of the community room.

***Motion made by Councilor Cooper to approve the rental policy and no deposit requirements for non-profit organizations and government entities,*** motion seconded by Councilor Windsperger and carried unanimously.

Recommendation of Matt Gangelhoff for Sergeant at Grade 5, Step 6 beginning 1/1/2024 (Budgeted)

Chief of Police Joe Flavin provided a letter of recommendation for Officer Matthew Gangelhoff to be considered for the Police Sergeant position. This is a new position for the City of Lake Crystal Police Department that has been budgeted for 2024. Councilor Turgeon requested the office staff to check the budget if Gangelhoff could start in the position immediately instead of waiting until the new year. Other councilors mentioned that due to a prior increase earlier in the year, the position and pay grade increase would have to wait until January.

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***Motion made by Councilor Hanson to approve the recommendation of Matthew Gangelhoff for the budgeted Sergeant position beginning 1/1/2024 at Grade 5, Step 6, motion seconded by Councilor Windsperger and carried unanimously.***

Approve Ambulance Service Area Coverage Agreement with Madelia

City Administrator Angela Grafstrom mentioned that the Lake Crystal Ambulance Service is struggling for steady coverage. The contract with the Madela Health Ambulance Service will aid in coverage and care for calls that Lake Crystal cannot answer to. City Attorney Chris Kennedy reviewed the agreement and agreed to it.

***Motion made by Councilor Cooper to approve Ambulance Service agreement between the Lake Crystal Area Ambulance Service and the Madelia Health Ambulance Service, motion seconded by Councilor Turgeon and carried unanimously.***

Approve Variance Request - Recommended by Planning and Zoning

A public hearing was held on Monday, September 11, 2023, regarding the variance request for the property to the east of 483 W Watonwan Street. The homeowner was requesting to reduce the side yard setbacks by 5' from 20' to 15'. Cody Rachuy of MoonLighting Landscape and Design spoke to surrounding homeowners and all agreed with the variance request.

***Motion made by Councilor Hanson to approve the side yard setback variance for parcel # R091205176017, located to the east of 483 W Watonwan Street, motion seconded by Councilor Windsperger and carried unanimously.***

Employee Benefits Donation Program Request for Officer Austin Smith (Maximum Request of 160 hours at \$27.59 totaling \$4,414.40)

Officer Austin Smith is out on leave and has requested the use of funds from the Employee Benefits Donation Program. The request is for the maximum amount of 160 hours at \$27.59 totaling \$4,414.40.

***Motion made by Mayor Wiens to approve the maximum request of 160 hours at \$27.59 totaling \$4,414.40 from the Employee Benefits Donation Program for Officer Austin Smith, motion seconded by Councilor Turgeon and carried unanimously.***

**Information/Discussion Items**

Ambulance House

The house on Blue Earth Street that the ambulance service is renting will be going up for sale. Resident Don Johnson has agreed to the temporary use of his VRBO rental to the ambulance service until a permanent housing option is found. Jackie Graham of Tru Realty is working with

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staff to locate a rental property for the ambulance to move into.

Upcoming meetings and events

- Monday, October 2, 2023, 7:30 pm Regular Council Meeting

**Council Comments and Observations**

The Lake Crystal Police Dept. asked that the city consider an ordinance to prevent the use of recreational Marijuana on city property and streets. Recreational marijuana has now been legalized by Minnesota's legislation. City Attorney Chris Kennedy stated that the Council needs to develop an ordinance to guide Lake Crystal residents on the public use of the substance. He suggested that the ordinance could follow a similar format to smoking and alcohol use in public spaces.

The Lake Crystal Chamber board members were present at the meeting and brought forward a few concerns and requests regarding funding for city events. Director Julie Reed spoke about the chamber being low on funds for seasonal events. Jackie Graham, chamber board member, requested some type of help from the city. Whether it is a financial donation, funding portable bathrooms, or funding the parade or fireworks. City Administrator Angela Grafstrom mentioned there are arts grants to apply for to help with funding. The board members all agreed that it would be great to see the city involved with community events.

**Adjournment:**

***There being no further business of the Lake Crystal City Council, Councilor Hanson motioned to adjourn the regular meeting of September 18, 2023, motion seconded by Councilor Turgeon and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M.***

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Todd Wiens, Mayor

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Angela Grafstrom, City Administrator