

City of Winsted
City Council Meeting
Council Chambers
Tuesday, May 21, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Steve Stotko
Council Member Jeff Albers
Council Member Jesse Cafferty
Council Member Tom Ollig

Also Present: Mr. Tim Fury

Staff Present: Mr. Neil Schlagel, City Administrator
Ms. Raquel Kirchoff, City Clerk-Treasurer
Mr. Justin Heldt, Police Chief

1) Mayor Stotko called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

a) The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

b) Years of Service Recognition – Winsted Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD)

Mayor Stotko recognized the following WVFD members for their years of service.

- Jake Hertzog, Ten (10) Years of Service
- James Koch, Forty (40) Years of Service

Mayor Stotko stated that the City Council would move the Organization Report to the second item of business due to the Winsted Baseball Association representative needing to attend another event.

2) Organization

Report

a) Winsted Baseball Association

Mr. Matt Wroge, Winsted Baseball Association, provided a report to the City Council Members regarding the Winsted Wildcats to include the following:

- The 2024 season is underway with a good number of players
- A description of the recent improvements made to the batting cage
- Expressed thanks to the businesses and individuals that helped with the project
- A summary of teams that play on Denis M. Campbell Field, in addition to the Winsted Wildcats, to include the Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted (HLWW) School District Junior Varsity (JV) and Varsity teams, some youth baseball teams, and Lester Prairie's Legion team

Mr. Neil Schlagel, City Administrator, provided a report to the City Council Members regarding the Winsted Youth Baseball Association to include the following:

- The Winsted Youth Baseball Association is no longer a separate association; the program is transitioning to be part of the HLWW Community Education program
- Summarized the teams that will play on Winsted fields to include:
 - four (4) coach pitch teams on Mondays and Wednesdays, using mostly Barrett and Southview Fields
 - two (2) t-ball teams on Tuesdays and Thursdays, using mostly Westgate Field
 - two (2) machine pitch teams, using mostly Southview Field

3) Consent Agenda

a) Approval of Minutes

Approved the minutes of the following:

- City Council Work Session – April 16, 2024
- City Council Regular Meeting – April 16, 2024

b) Well No. 5 Project – Bid Authorization

Authorized advertising for bidding for the Well No. 5 Project, contingent upon receiving approval from the Minnesota Department of Health.

c) Security Bank & Trust Company – Pledged Securities

Approved the Pledged Securities that Security Bank & Trust Company has purchased for the City of Winsted for the month of April, 2024.

d) Building Permit Report – April, 2024

Approved the Building Permit Report for the month of April, 2024.

e) Financial Report – March, 2024

Approved the financial report for the month of March, 2024.

f) Claims

Approved the claims list for May 21, 2024.

Council Member Ollig motioned to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Council Member Cafferty seconded the motion. Council Member Ollig abstained from voting on Item “c) Security Bank & Trust Company – Pledged Securities.” Motion carried 4-0.

4) No Public Hearings

5) No Old Business

6) New Business

a) City Council Appointment and Oath of Office – Mr. Tim Fury

Mr. Schlagel stated that the City Council adopted Resolution R-24-13 at a previous City Council Meeting declaring a Council Member vacancy. Since then, at a previous Work Session, the City Council discussed appointing Mr. Tim Fury to fill the vacancy.

Mr. Schlagel stated that Mr. Fury has been a member of the Park Commission for approximately fourteen (14) years, and has also been a Planning Commission Member for numerous years.

Council Member Albers motioned to appoint Mr. Tim Fury, an eligible City of Winsted resident, to fill a vacant City Council seat with a term expiring December 31, 2024, and authorized the City Clerk-Treasurer to conduct the Oath of Office for Mr. Tim Fury. Council Member Cafferty seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Ms. Raquel Kirchoff, City Clerk-Treasurer, conducted the Oath of Office for Mr. Fury.

b) Ordinance O-24-02 – Map Amendment to Rezone the Recently Annexed Areas

Mr. Schlagel stated that the areas that were recently annexed in the fall of 2023 came into City limits zoned as the Agricultural District, so the City Council now will rezone those parcels to be more conducive to their use. The Planning Commission recommended this the zoning changes at a recent meeting.

Council Member Ollig motioned to adopt Ordinance O-24-02 recommending approval of map amendments to the Official Zoning Map of the City of Winsted, as referenced in Chapter 15, Section 1, Zoning Ordinance, Section 1501.034, Letter B, or the Winsted Municipal Code. Mayor Stotko seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

c) Resolution R-24-16 – Minor Subdivision – 114 Linden Avenue East (County Road 6)

Mr. Schlagel stated that Mr. Jeff Campbell, property owner of 114 Linden Avenue East, recently requested a lot split for this property to create three (3) lots. This will allow for two (2) more buildable lots within the City.

Water and sewer utilities must be installed to the two (2) new lots. The City is working on an agreement with Mr. Campbell where Mr. Campbell will be responsible for paying the first \$50,000.00 of this expense, and the City responsible for the remaining amount.

Council Member Cafferty motioned to adopt Resolution R-24-16 recommending approval of a Minor Subdivision of property located at 114 Linden Avenue East (County Road 6), subject to conditions. Council Member Albers seconded the motion. Council Member Ollig abstained from voting. Motion carried 4-0.

d) Winsted Police Department – Joint and Cooperative Agreement (JPA)

Mr. Schlagel stated that the Herald Journal recently published information regarding the possible merger of the Winsted and Lester Prairie Police Departments. Because of this, he wants to update the City of Winsted residents on the process to this point. He provided a presentation to include information about the following:

Starting Point

- The past JPA that was stopped for a period of time, due to the lack of staffing of Police Officers, was renewed when departments were back to full staff levels.
- This led to discussion of a possible expansion of the JPA.
- The Lester Prairie Police Chief has made it known that he plans to retire in November, 2025.
- This led to a possible merger discussion where the two (2) departments would become one (1) new department. This was proposed due to the difficulty there may be in hiring a new chief and the thought that the merger might provide the best service for both communities.
- An agreement was drafted to begin discussion. Several meetings took place to discuss the topic.

Reasons for the Merge Include the Following:

- The thought is that it would provide the best safety and response for both communities.
- Scheduling – it would allow for more flexibility and a reduction in call time.
- It may attract the hiring of officers
- There would no longer be a need to pursue hiring a fifth Winsted Officer for the Winsted Police Department since the new department would have seven (7) officers.

Possible Roadblocks

- Choosing a chief could be a roadblock; however, due to the planned retirement of the Lester Prairie Chief, Mr. Justin Heldt, Winsted Police Chief would be the chief. This would eliminate this roadblock.
- Reorganization Costs
 - Standardizing Equipment
 - Who brings what to the table
- Money
 - Initial Budget
 - Cost Split

Next Steps

- Narrowing down a budget – the initial budget figure given was a high-level figure of \$1.2Million.
- Winsted staff will meet with the Lester Prairie Financial Director/City Clerk to review the budget.
- Move forward together or separately - If a merger can be agreed upon, Winsted City staff feel it will be the best thing for both communities; however, if it does not occur, the Winsted Police Department is currently in a good position with a four (4) officer, dedicated team.

Mr. Heldt stated that the ultimate goal is to provide residents with twenty-four (24) hour coverage and the merger would help to provide that for the communities.

7) Open Forum

Mr. Claude Weibel, 320 1st Street North, requested that storm drains be cleaned. He mentioned specific drains near the Winsted Post Office. Mr. Schlagel stated that he would review the request with the Public Works Department.

Mr. Weibel asked if the City could enforce its policies to stop residents from blowing grass clippings and debris onto the road. Mr. Schlager stated that the first step would be to talk to the residents to let them about the blocking caused by these materials, so they will hopefully stop blowing it onto the road.

8) City Administrator Updates and Announcements

Mr. Schlager made the following announcements.

- The Downtown Street Light project is underway. The first section will be complete very soon.
- The Winsted Police Department will host its annual Bike Rodeo at the Winsted Elementary School on May 22, 2024.

9) Adjourn

Council Member Albers motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Fury seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Steve Stotko

Steve Stotko
Mayor
City of Winsted

ATTEST:

Raquel Kirchoff

Raquel Kirchoff, CMC
City Clerk-Treasurer
City of Winsted