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PROCEEDINGS OF THE AFTON CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF AFTON  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

**APPROVED** City Council Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 15, 2019  
Afton City Hall  
3033 St. Croix Trail  
Afton, MN 55001  
7:00 P.M.

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1. **THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER** at 7:00 P.M. by Mayor

2. **THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – was recited.

Stan Ross was sworn in as Council Member Ward 3.

3. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Palmquist, Council Members Wroblewski, Ross, Nelson. **Quorum Present.**

**ALSO PRESENT:** Nick Guilliams (City Engineer), City Administrator Ron Moorse, City Attorney Fritz Knaak, Planning Commission Chair Kris Kopitzke, Accountant Tom Niedzwiecki

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** –

**Motion/Second Ross/Nelson to approve agenda with addition of items: 9b2 Washington County culvert replacement; 9b3 Cracks on Afton Blvd; 9c8 Flood pump potential sale; 9c9 Training for new council members; move closed session to item 9c10. Passed 4-0.**

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Minutes of December 18, 2018 Regular City Council meeting

**Motion/Second Ross/Nelson to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2018 regular City Council meeting. Passed 3-0-1 (Wroblewski abstain).**

B. Minutes of December 10, 2018 Special City Council meeting

**Motion/Second Palmquist/Ross to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2018 special City Council meeting. Passed 3-0-1 (Wroblewski abstain).**

C. Minutes of December 10, 2018 Council Work Session

**Motion/Second Ross/Nelson to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2018 City Council work session. Passed 3-0-1 (Wroblewski abstain).**

6. **PUBLIC INPUT** –

none

7. **REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS** -

A. Sheriff's Monthly Report

No report

B. Tom Niedzwiecki, Budget Report (taken out of order)

Tom provided an overview of the December budget. Still waiting for a few invoices to close out the year.

Discussion was held on the best place to put the carry-over funds, with Tom recommending funding the shortfall in the election and the city council contingency fund first, then to the temporary bond surplus fund.

**Motion/Second Ross/Wroblewski To distribute surplus into funds as recommended by the City Accountant. Passed 4-0.**

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**C. Lower St. Croix Fire District Report**

Council member Nelson reported that the budget was discussed and also that former Mayor Bend reported he would stay on the committee.

**8. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Just and Correct Claims**

**B. 4M Fund Transfer – December – Resolution 2019-06**

**C. Renew 4M Fund Joint Powers agreement – Resolution 2019-07**

**D. 2019 Regular Meeting Schedule – Resolution 2019-08**

**Motion/Second Ross/Nelson to approve the consent agenda including Resolution 2019-06, Resolution 2019-07, and Resolution 2019-08. Roll call vote: All Aye, Passed 4-0.**

**9. CITY COUNCIL BUISINESS**

**A. Planning Commission Report – (PC report & Draft PC minutes)**

1. Comments regarding the City of Woodbury Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Chair Kopitzke summarized the comments of the Planning Commission on the City of Woodbury’s comprehensive plan.

Mayor Palmquist recommended rearranging the order of several of the comments and focusing on cooperative planning along the border.

Council member Nelson stated that now is the time to have a strong opinion and to be on record stating that a surface water source should be used

Council member Wroblewski recommended including the language regarding 40<sup>th</sup> and Manning traffic.

**Motion/Second Ross/Nelson To direct staff to create a document that combines the Council and Planning Commission recommendations as per discussion. Passed 4-0.**

2. Comments regarding the City of Cottage Grove Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan

**Motion/Second Wroblewski/Nelson To request staff to send comments of the Planning Commission to the City of Cottage Grove. Passed 4-0.**

Chair Kopitzke stated that the Planning Commission would like to have a dinner or planning session with the Council members.

A joint work session will be planned in April

**B. Engineering Report – (Engineer Staff Report & Council Update)**

1. 2019 Fee Schedule for Engineering Services

**Motion/Second Ross/Palmquist To approve 2.3% average increase in pay rate for WSB.**

Discussion

Council member Nelson asked when the last increase occurred (last year)

Council member Wroblewski stated she had concerns about power lines that were not buried and River Road sewer lines and would like more information before approving a rate increase.

Council member Nelson agreed there are items with potential long term expenses that are not finished yet and would like to wait and work through issues first.

Mayor Palmquist stated that the city needs an engineer and this is a small increase.

**Motion withdrawn**

**Item Tabled until work session with WSB**

2. WA County culvert replacement project

Nick Guilliams, City Engineer reported that the county will replace a culvert on 15<sup>th</sup> near Belwin which will require a 30 day road closure; tentative schedule to be done in July after the 4<sup>th</sup>.

105 **Motion/Second Palmquist/Nelson to authorize the city engineer to sign agreement with the county**  
106 **for construction to be done after July 4 and after checking the size of the culvert. Passed 4-0**  
107

108 3. Afton Blvd  
109 Road condition and cracks are due to due to frost and will diminish in spring. Nick will talk with county.  
110

111 **C. Administration –**

112 1. Appointment to fill the vacant Ward 1 Council Seat – Resolution 2019-09

113 Two candidates were nominated to fill the Ward 1 Council Seat – Leo Yurek and Annie Perkins.

114 **Motion/Second Wroblewski/Ross To adopt Resolution 2018-09 appointing Annie Perkins to fill the**  
115 **Vacant Ward I Council Seat. Roll call: All aye, passed 4-0.**  
116

117 2. Annual Appointments – Resolution 2019-10

118 Council member Ross suggested removing several committees from the list that are inactive - Branding and  
119 Tech/Internet committee

120 Public Works - Ross & Nelson

121 PC liaison - Wroblewski

122 Mayor pro-tem - Ross

123 HPC – Perkins

124 Emergency - Palmquist /Ross

125 Finance (was set up for project) could eliminate

126 Parks - Ross / Wroblewski

127 Personnel – Palmquist/Perkins

128 NRGCC - Palmquist

129 Weed inspector - Palmquist

130 Branding – eliminate

131 Cable rep - Nelson/Palmquist

132 St Croix Valley alliance - Palmquist

133 LSVFD - Bend / Nelson

134 Lower St Croix partnership - Palmquist

135 Wa co Ground Water - Palmquist

136 Water Consortium - Wroblewski

137 Great Rivers - Palmquist

138 **Motion/Second Palmquist/Ross to approve annual appointments as listed Resolution 2019-10. Roll**  
139 **Call: All aye, passed 4-0.**  
140

141 3. Amend Afton Creek Preserve Development Agreement

142 Administrator Moose provided the following information: Albert W. (Will) Carlson, owner of the Afton  
143 Creek Preserve PLCD subdivision property, has requested that the Development Agreement for the  
144 subdivision be amended to eliminate J.P. Bush Homes as the developer and insert Afton Creek Preserve  
145 Development LLC as the developer.

146 **Motion/Second Nelson/Ross to approve Resolution 2019-11 approving an amendment to the Afton**  
147 **Creek Preserve Development Agreement to remove J.P. Bush Homes as the developer and to insert**  
148 **Afton Creek Preserve Development LLC as the developer. Roll call vote: All Aye, Passed 4-0.**  
149

150 4. Sewer User Fee for River Road properties connected to the municipal sanitary sewer system

151 Administrator Moose stated that a work session will be held to discuss long term plan. Proposed discounted  
152 rate is \$40/month.

153 Mayor Palmquist recommended \$35/month.

154 **Motion/Second Nelson/Ross establishing the sewer fee for the River Road properties that are**  
155 **connected to the municipal sanitary sewer system at \$35 per month. Passed 4-0.**

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5. Application to serve on the Planning Commission

**Motion/Second Nelson/Ross To appoint Laurel Ross Ward 3; Ray Pruban Ward 1; Kuchen Hale Ward**

Discussion:

Wroblewski proposed discussing each candidate individually.

**Motion Withdrawn**

Council member Wroblewski discussed nominating Christian Dawson for Ward 2 as he could bring a valuable perspective to the commission. (See attached remarks from Council member Wroblewski)

Mayor Palmquist stated that he would like to appoint Hale and Dawson as it would provide balance of perspectives.

Chair Kopitzke stated that Dawson has attended many meetings and was very involved in the Carlson PLCD. Mayor Palmquist acknowledged there was often tension at many of those meetings.

Council member Ross stated that Laurel is very interested in the position and would do a great job but she should not get any preferential treatment. He felt Dawson had misunderstanding over what the council could do on the PLCD. Did not like the accusations that Dawson made and is still feeling sensitive to it.

Council member Nelson stated that Hale has been a long time resident, served on the council, has experience. Dawson is only a 5 year resident. He will not support Dawson being appointed.

**Motion/Second Nelson/Ross To appoint Laurel Ross, Ray Pruban, Kuchen Hale.**

Discussion:

Mayor Palmquist stated he won't vote for that slate, he would like to have a member from the neighborhood group (against the Carlson PLCD) to represent Ward 2 along with Hale.

Wroblewski stated she reviewed the videos from many of those meetings and understands the sensitivity that Dawson may trigger. She saw nothing that lacked civility. Hale has not been an active volunteer in recent years, whereas Dawson has been active.

Discussion was held on was held on the merits of appointing one representative from each ward in effort to balance between the wards.

**Vote 2-2 motion failed.**

**Motion/Second Palmquist/Wroblewski to appoint Kuchen Hale, Laurel Ross & Christian Dawson.**

Discussion:

Mayor Palmquist stated that 2 can serve immediately, Laurel effective in March when Nelson's term expires.

Ross stated that leaves only one representative in Ward 1.

Nelson agreed that is unbalanced with more in Ward 2.

**Vote – 2-2, motion failed.**

**Motion/Second Ross/Palmquist To appoint Pruban, Dawson & Hale.**

**Motion Withdrawn**

Item will be tabled until February when new council member Perkins will be present.

6. Jim Cox conference funding request

Administrator Moore provided the following information: The two items for which Mr. Cox is requesting to be reimbursed or compensated are four hours of travel time at \$25.20/hr., for a total cost of \$100.80 and 20 hours of time at the conference activities for a total cost of \$504.00 to attend the annual State Historic Preservation Conference.

**Motion/Second Nelson/Palmquist To deny Jim Cox's request for reimbursement of his time to attend the State Historic Preservation Conference. Passed 4-0.**

7. City Attorney request for monthly retainer increase

**Motion/Second Nelson/Ross to approved the request from Fritz Knaak, City Attorney, for an increase in the monthly legal services retainer from \$4,000 to \$4,500. Passed 4-0.**

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8. Potential sale of flood pumps  
**Motion/Second Ross/Nelson To have staff investigate selling items and look into price and procedure.  
Passed 4-0.**

9. LMC training for new officials  
Council member Wroblewski will be attending. Mayor Palmquist is considering.

**D. Committee Reports (out of order)**

1. Public Works – no report
2. Personnel – no report
3. Parks – no report
4. Heritage Preservation Commission / Design Review – vacant properties
5. Natural Resources and Groundwater – no report

**10. COUNCIL, CONSULTANT, AND STAFF REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND UPDATES**

- A. Ward 1 (Vacant) –
- B. Ward 2 Council Member Wroblewski – no report
- C. Ward 3 Council Member Ross – no report
- D. Ward 4 Council Member Nelson – no report
- E. Mayor Palmquist – no report
- F. City Attorney Knaak –no report
- G. City Administrator Moorse – no report

**9C10.** Closed session regarding the Afton Marina Petition for Writ of Mandamus (taken out of order)  
Closed Session began at 9:52 PM

**Motion Second Ross/Palmquist to end closed session. Passed 4-0.**  
Closed Session ended at 10:30 PM.

**11. ADJOURN**

**Motion/Second Nelson/Ross To adjourn. Passed 4-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:31PM

Respectfully submitted by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Yoho, City Clerk

Approved by Council March 19, 2019 as (check one): Presented: \_\_\_\_\_ Amended: \_\_\_\_\_

Mayor Bill Palmquist \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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267 Date: Submitted February 19, 2019 Presented on January 15, 2019

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269 Subject: Wroblewski's prepared remarks at the 1-15-19 CC meeting regarding the nomination of Mr  
270 Christian Dawson for the Ward 2 Planning Commission vacancy.

271

272 As the Ward 2 representative on the council, I move to nominate Christian Dawson to fill the Ward 2  
273 Planning Commission vacancy I created after being elected this fall as the Ward 2 CC representative.  
274 Christian filed his application for the PC a year ago. He and his wife have been raising a young family  
275 in Ward 2 and they have owned their home in Afton for some five years. He applied after Mayor Bend  
276 called on residents to get involved on these important volunteer commissions and committees and  
277 Christian answered the call.

278

279 Over the past couple of years Mr Dawson has attended many city council and planning commission  
280 meetings and has on his own become very knowledgeable about our Comprehensive Plan and our  
281 Land Use Ordinances. All of this while working full time, being a member of his kids' school board,  
282 coaching kids' soccer, and cultivating a family/home life that includes bee keeping and maple syrup  
283 harvesting on their own Afton parcel. He has shown himself to be a committed volunteer and to have  
284 a sense of civic duty.

285

286 Christian took the time not only to gain knowledge and insight into our Comp Plan and Ordinances  
287 and to attend many meetings and hearings but he also voiced his concerns with specifics. It is no  
288 secret that he was one voice in a larger chorus of voices of organized and concerned Ward 2 residents  
289 who were steadfast in their passion and concern and dedication to their area of Afton.

290 During my campaign door knocking and through my many contacts with Ward 2 residents I feel that  
291 I have a good handle on what the vast majority of Ward 2 and Afton residents value about living here  
292 and value most as reflected in our Comp Plan and ordinances. Folks like Christian brought a lot of  
293 thought, concern, time, insight, and energy to City Hall during those meetings and I think there should  
294 be a voice (at least one voice in nine) for their perspective - for concerns and views and values which  
295 I know are shared by many others in Ward 2 - and which I think are generally in line with a large  
296 number of Afton's citizens in other wards as well. **These perspectives deserve a place at the table  
297 on the Planning Commission at this critical time when we are going to tackle future critical  
298 issues and planning that are having and will continue to have a huge impact on our future.**

299

300 I ask of all of us - do we want our younger citizens raising families to be an integral part of the  
301 planning process for our city's future? Or do we want solely the perspectives of those of us who have  
302 lived here for generations (which is valuable as well) or those of us who live in the historic district  
303 (which is valuable as well) or those of us who own hobby farms or large farms (again which are all  
304 valuable). I strongly believe that this vote to appoint someone who is young, who has been actively

305 involved in representing his community on his own time, and who has an interest in SERVING,  
306 GIVING OF HIMSELF, VOLUNTEERING FOR THE BETTERMENT OF AFTON **not** in making  
307 money from, getting recognition for, making a name for himself, will show our citizens and the public  
308 what kind of city government we have, what kind we want, and how much we value diversity of  
309 thought, background, and landscape in our town. I ask that the council and Mayor think very hard  
310 on this and understand what kind of message we send if we say we value citizen involvement, skills,  
311 knowledge, input, and energy and then turn someone who has shown up prepared, informed,  
312 involved, dedicated, concerned - someone who wants to volunteer - down. How in the world do we  
313 think we can ever cultivate and encourage our future leaders if we don't allow them to... if we don't  
314 give them a chance to be a part of things - to learn and to grow - and also to teach us who think we  
315 know a lot something a time or two.

316  
317 Those folks on Odell and Trading Post trail who attended all those meetings and hearings  
318 demonstrated their love of their neighborhood and Afton, but through the process they also  
319 demonstrated knowledge of our ordinances and they gained experience in the way city government  
320 operates. Those folks are Ward 2 folks and Afton residents who have a right to be at the table of  
321 Afton's planning commission and to have a voice in the way Afton will move into the future. I believe  
322 if we don't appoint someone like Christian we are saying we don't value their input, their concerns,  
323 and their place in Afton. I overheard sad and frustrated residents quietly speaking to their feeling that  
324 they just don't matter to our city leaders after one meeting. It was very disheartening to me and **I**  
325 **clung to my belief that this wasn't true** and that there will come a time when the city could show  
326 that we move on and that we do appreciate and value all they have to offer and their very existence  
327 in our town. **Well my fellow colleagues the time is now.**

328  
329 The Afton Creek Preserve PLCD will arguably and has arguably impacted Ward 2 the most - and it  
330 will impact more in Ward 2 than the immediate neighborhoods of Odell and Trading Post. The proposal  
331 was approved and the decisions have been made. And I'm not here to re-litigate the pros and cons, I'm  
332 not here to justify anything, and I'm not here to demonize anyone - especially any of my honorable  
333 colleagues up here on the platform who volunteer hours upon hours of their own time without financial  
334 compensation and out of a love for this city, but I do want to make clear what is at stake here with  
335 this seemingly minor appointment to a volunteer position and that is this - does the City of Afton  
336 value the concerns of **all** of its residents, does it value the knowledge of **all** of its citizens, does Afton  
337 **appreciate citizen input and willingness to volunteer even when final decisions are made that**  
338 **people disagree with on reasonable grounds?** Does the city of Afton value **diversity of**  
339 **perspectives, diversity of skills, diversity in thinking, and diversity in representation?**

340 Does the leadership of the city of Afton have the **character, the integrity, the strength, and the**  
341 **humility to appoint people with whom they may disagree on policy,** with people that bring  
342 **different backgrounds, careers, skill sets and ways of thinking, with people who are young and**  
343 **who offer different perspectives and maybe even different concerns, with people who want to**  
344 **learn and grow and who may some day become our future leaders?** How do we groom our future  
345 leaders and informed citizenry? Do we want relatively young and relatively newer-to-Afton residents  
346 to be involved in city government and be civically engaged?

347  
348 Do we want our cherished Afton values - the values in our Comp Plan and ordinances that were so  
349 beautifully crafted, drafted, and that have stood the tests of time thus far - to be passed on to our  
350 future residents, future citizens and future city leaders. Don't we want them to learn from all the

351 knowledgeable, wise, and experienced folks on the city council, city committees, and city  
352 commissions? Don't we want to learn from them as well? How do we encourage that  
353 learning, growth, and teamwork unless we give folks like Christian the opportunity to serve - not to  
354 make money, not to get paid, not to get a gold trophy, not for a Wild box seat or a ticket to Hamilton  
355 but to SERVE our community... to work hard on behalf of all of us! **This is why I am asking for**  
356 **your support for this motion - to show everyone that Afton values all of its citizens and that we**  
357 **value the thoughtful, sincere perspectives of all of those who are living in Afton - all those daily**  
358 **living out the values that are reflected in our Comp Plan and in our ordinances.** Thank you for  
359 your consideration.  
360