

CITY OF FOLEY
FOLEY, MINNESOTA
REGULAR MEETING – January 17, 2012

The Foley City Council held a regular meeting on January 17, 2012, at 5:30 P.M., at the Foley City Hall.

Members present: Mayor Gary Gruba; Councilmembers Dean Weber, Russ Hackett, Bruce Thompson and Steve Olson.

Members absent: None.

Motion by Olson seconded by Weber to approve the agenda. Motion carried, unanimous.

Motion by Hackett seconded by Thompson to approve the consent agenda which includes the following:

-Minutes of January 3, 2012.

-Retirement of Firefighter Randy DeMarias effective January 9, 2012.

Motion carried, unanimous.

Daniel Seman of Avalon Security was at the meeting to describe the services of his company and answer any questions regarding the community services and contract proposed. Gary Lambert was also present at the meeting regarding the potential to serve as a community services officer for the City of Foley. Mr. Lambert also offered to assist the City in starting a police department. The council was provided cost estimates on starting a police department.

Mayor Gruba opened the meeting up to the public to provide comment. Janita Dieger, 820 Grand Street, questioned the response time of deputies without having a contract. Nicole Bettendorf, 270 Birch Drive expressed opposition to any type of security and requested the council renegotiate with Benton County. Jerry Hovde, 265 Elm Drive, believed the cost of security was too high. Michael Pace, 211 Hill Avenue, questioned if ordinance enforcement is necessary when sacrificing law enforcement services. Gerald Bettendorf, 270 Oak Drive, explained his position with the Foley Fire Department and how the deputies assist with the incidents they respond to, and if they may not be able to respond as well without a contract. Mr. Bettendorf also expressed concern over the driving of high school students without a law enforcement presence in town. Ben Zawacki, 200 Dewey Street, expressed concern over seeing drug deals performed in store parking lots and how law enforcement is needed to protect the people. Jonathan Brenny, 631 Norman Avenue N, questioned the economic impact to the area if the city does not provide law enforcement to residents and business owners. Barb Brenny, 631 Norman Avenue N, is concerned over the media attention the public safety issue is receiving. Paul Blaszak, 61 Glen Street, elaborated on the frustration he feels regarding the recent council actions and that when he was mayor they did not advertise the hours of county coverage. Mr. Blaszak explained the presence is most important and he would be willing to pay higher taxes to cover the costs. Jason Dziuk, 405 Kathryn Lane, expressed concerns about coverage and the need to compromise. Marilyn Hovde, 265 Elm Drive, explained that it does not matter where the deputies are as long as they respond when they are needed. Larry Nadeau, 161 4th Avenue S,

stated the ideas the council has come up with may have potential but the ideas should have been brought forward in another manner. Mr. Nadeau is willing to pay extra costs for law enforcement and also feels cuts should come elsewhere. Mr. Nadeau also explained the situation is now a crisis and if there was a situation at an entity such as our school system who would respond. Mary Sabin, principal at St. John's Area School, 215 7th Avenue, detailed break-in's the school has had over the past couple years and how law enforcement is needed to assist in those situations. Joe Kaproth, 140 2nd Avenue, expressed concern over response times and was not in favor of when the city police department initially disbanded. Leslie Schumacher, 660 4th Avenue N, explained that she is not in favor of security services and is concerned about traffic issues. Ms. Schumacher also appealed to the council to not always be concerned about lowering taxes but to promote goods jobs and benefits. Lisa Weber, 710 Dewey Street, spoke to the people in attendance and asked why no one has been coming to the council meetings expressing these concerns over the past year if they were concerned. Katie Lang, 320 Fraser Drive, explained that she was one of the deputies that had been laid off and now moved to a position in the jail. Ms. Lang explained that people do not feel safe. Jean Kirshman, 631 Lanee Avenue, questioned the types of wages the security company would be paying. Daniel Semans of Avalon Security, estimated the average wages to be roughly \$13.50 per hour plus benefits. Kevin Swenson, 231 Hill Avenue, questioned Avalon Security on whether the towns they typically work in have law enforcement. Gary Lambert explained how important it is to build bridges with all law enforcement agencies. Mike Stoltenow, 409 Kathryn Lane, expressed concern over the council meeting times and that he feels they are not convenient to people. Troy Heck, 272 Balsam Drive, appealed to the council to provide licensed law enforcement to the city.

Councilmember Olson provided comments to the concerns raised. Olson explained that more cooperation was needed between the City and County and the issue should have never gotten this far. Olson continued that a 24 hour presence is important but accountability was an important issue and the reports provided were not sufficient. Councilmember Thompson explained that he wanted law enforcement the entire time and wants to make the sheriff's contract work. Mayor Gruba detailed a lack of negotiation and flexibility on hours were concerns with sheriff's contract. Councilmember Hackett explained the county board's position and that re-negotiating with the County at this point would likely not be an option.

Leslie Schumacher, 660 4th Avenue N, questioned liability and if the city would be liable for not providing a police department or contract. City Attorney Adam Ripple explained that the city has not obligation to provide additional law enforcement. Schumacher stated concern over the lack of cooperation. Michelle Hackett, 851 Grand Street, asked what it would cost to start a city police department. Larry Nadeau, 161 4th Avenue S, asked if the police board could be re-established. Janelle Stoltenow, 409 Kathryn Lane, asked if the decision could be put to a resident vote. Brian Weis, 201 Dewey Street, explained that accountability is not an option with the contract. Paul Blaszak, 61 Glen Street, explained the history of the contract with Benton County. Cindy Driver, 44 Broadway Avenue S, questioned why there is a need for five core officers. Jared Fox, 650 4th Avenue N, expressed concern that without proper police in town businesses would be deterred from entering Foley. Gary Lambert detailed a police department proposal. Todd Driver, 44 Broadway Avenue S, questioned the staffing levels of the proposals. Barb Brenny, 631 Norman Avenue N, questioned how the city can rebuild their image. Janelle

Stoltenow, 409 Kathryn Lane, questioned the actual costs of a department. Nicole Bettendorf, 270 Birch Drive, questioned insurance costs.

Mayor Gruba indicated the council may not be prepared to move forward with any decision at the meeting. There was discussion on having the committee continue reviewing options and report back to the council at the next meeting. Leslie Schumacher, 660 4th Avenue N, proposed a joint meeting with the City and County Board to further discuss a possible sheriff's contract. The council directed the City Administrator to send a letter to the County Board and request a joint meeting at a neutral location.

City Administrator Sarah Brunn suggested that the water/sewer rate discussion be postponed until next meeting.

Public Works Director Jim Moshier explained he is working on gathering proposals for an inflow and infiltration removal project. More information will be provided at upcoming meetings.

City Attorney Adam Ripple reviewed the Avalon contract and expressed some concerns that need further researching.

Janelle Stoltenow updated the council on the recent activities of the planning commission. They have recommended an amendment to the zoning ordinance regarding oil recycling centers that will be presented to the council at an upcoming meeting.

The council discussed the property at 751 Dewey Street, a house recently damaged by fire. The City Administrator has sent a letter to the property owner to start the process of clean-up. The council requested the property be secured as soon as possible.

Motion by Weber, seconded by Hackett to adjourn. Motion carried, unanimous.

Sarah A. Brunn, Administrator