

CITY OF FOLEY, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL MEETING – September 19, 2023

The Foley City Council held their regular meeting (Preliminary Levy Adoption) on Sept. 19, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at Foley City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Jack Brosh, Councilmembers Jeff Gondeck, Deb Mathiowetz, Gary Swanson, and Brandon Voit.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Motion by Gondeck, seconded by Voit, to approve the agenda.

Motion carried, unanimous.

Motion by Voit, seconded by Gondeck, to approve the consent agenda:

- Approve payment of North Central Invoice for Police Squad

Motion carried, with Gondeck, Mathiowetz, Brosh, and Voit voting to approve. Swanson voted against.

Mayor's Communications and Open Forum

No one spoke.

Update on School Resource Officer Legislation

Chief McMillin gave an overview of steps recommended by legal counsel (SRO badge and duty logs) as the state legislature has not moved forward with a special session to clarify.

Discussion on Potential Capital Projects/Growth of the City

Sarah Brunn, City Administrator, gave an overview to the council. The city is nearing completion of the wastewater project. Housing demand is high. Brunn directed the council to the city's Land Use Plan. Property to the north of Towns Edge has potential. ROW was platted. Staff is waiting for owners to put the property up for sale. There are some city owned parcels off of 55th Street. There are utilities there available for use. Staff is looking for direction from the council. Land and infrastructure prices are high. Developers won't put in money or infrastructure. Cities and counties will need to fund programs to help match infrastructure costs. What incentives would the city like to offer? What land would the city like to purchase?

Discussion and questions followed. Brunn stressed it will be a pinch on the budget. Other funding is possible but it will take significant budget. The city needs to invest in projects to help build a tax base. There are a lot of programs coming out. Housing is being focused on at the legislature. The county may be willing to give money for housing. What amount of money would the council be comfortable to invest?

More discussion followed. Mathiowetz expressed an interest in making senior housing a priority such as allowing tiny homes. She also expressed concerns that seniors will leave with the sewer increases. Brunn stated the housing study indicated there is a high need for transition housing such as apartments. Gondeck expressed an interest in affordable single family homes. He asked Voit how things were looking from a banking perspective.

Voit stated that interest rates are high. Not as many loans going out. Homes are not as affordable. Developers are making sure they are protected. Voit said it would be a shame if the pipeline is completed and then the city doesn't do what we can to bring more people to Foley.

More discussion and questions followed regarding the 55th Street property. Other option would be the Towns Edge development.

Voit stated any new businesses coming into the business park would need housing for employees. There is vacancy downtown. Gondeck stated the city would need to be flexible with zoning.

Discussion continued regarding other development options and the pros and cons. Property owners must be interested in selling before anything can be done. Brunn stated some property is less desirable for building because of soil. The property at the south end of town is not perfect with location to equalization pond but the city does own it. More discussion followed.

Brunn stated that the demographics in town are younger. Income is up. Working class families are moving in. Seniors are moving out. Voit stated the city needs to provide for current residents and people moving in.

Gondeck asked about apartments vs. houses. Some people can afford a house. Some are happy to have a nice apartment. Discussion continued regarding rentals and tiny homes. Voit stated the council needs to be proactive or else the wastewater project was done for nothing. The city needs to invest a little more for pay back in the future.

Discussion returned to Towns Edge. Voit suggested approaching the original developer. Gondeck agreed it would be a good place to start. Brunn stated lots could be done in phases. Brosh agreed that talking to the developer of Towns Edge would be a good place to start. If no agreement can be made then, then look at 55th Street. Voit suggested asking developers if they would entertain similar townhomes as Poplar Place at 55th Street.

Discussion on Ordinance Amendments as Related to Future Development

Brunn stated the goals were to provide more flexibility for mixed use and small footprints/lots for lower cost. The council expressed support for an extension of the north side trailer park and a Glen Street re-development.

Discussion continued regarding the property east of the school. Brunn stated the school has not purchased this property. Looking at family housing something similar to Towns Edge.

Discussion shifted to re-development of downtown. Brunn gave an overview stating that many buildings are not fixable and council should consider a complete redevelopment of the downtown area. Parking is also an issue. Many buildings are unoccupied and not up to code. Staff has received many inquiries, but the buildings don't sell. Would require a lot of funds to update the buildings. No customer traffic to attract businesses. Brunn asked the council if they would like to explore the possibilities of tearing down some and putting up something new or a TIF (redevelopment district). Discussion and questions followed.

The question of overnight parking downtown was brought up. Brunn stated people understand the

reason for no overnight parking downtown in the winter, but not in the summer. We need to find more options for overnight parking. Discussion continued.

Brunn asked the council if they would like to explore the cost to get a study to renovate buildings downtown. The council agreed this should be explored further.

Industrial Park

Council approved applying for a grant to obtain 50% of infrastructure cost. Brunn said it's early in the process but council will have 50% of cost share and should be prepared for that. The city will need to invest to help growth.

ARPA Funding

Brunn stated there is \$292,000 in city ARPA funds available. Funds will need to be spent by 2026. Discussion continued over possible projects including street projects (Broadway Avenue), water quality, future housing/development and growth.

Water Treatment/Storage

Brunn gave an overview to the council. There are several priorities the council should consider, including water treatment for quality and appearance. She stated ARPA money could be used for any critical infrastructure. Discussion and questions continued.

Ordinance Amendments

Brunn gave an overview regarding code amendments for lot sizes. It could be brought to the Planning Commission for discussion. Brunn asked the council if they would be open to some changes. Smaller lots and smaller houses? Discussion continued regarding tiny homes. Twin homes would be a good use of space. Brunn agreed to take items to the Planning Commission.

2024 Budget Levy

Discussion and questions followed. Voit stated council should start budgeting now for redevelopment of downtown and the industrial park. Brunn reminded the council that they can increase the levy. Adding \$50,000 to general capital would increase the preliminary levy to 7.47%. Adding \$75,000 would increase the levy to 9.42%. The preliminary levy could be lowered again before the levy is finalized.

Motion by Swanson, seconded by Gondeck, to increase the 2024 budget for the general fund by \$75,000.

Motion carried with Gondeck, Mathiowetz, Brosh, and Swanson voting in favor. Voit opposed.

Other Business

Brunn reminded the council that Walk to School Day will be Oct. 4. Pappenfus stated that the radar feedback signs will hopefully arrive next week.

Motion by Gondeck, seconded by Voit, to adjourn.

Motion carried, unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Sarah A Brunn

Sarah A. Brunn, Administrator
(Minutes By: Sara Judson Brown, Administrative Assistant)