

# New Strawn City Council

Regular Monthly Meeting  
Thursday, August 8, 2024

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Rhonda Taylor, Council members: Jeanne Haas, David Christiansen, Stephanie Baker and Butch Gilkison

Absent: Johnny Hernandez

Staff: Maintenance Operator Steven Dwight, Zoning Administrator Cody Collins, Code Enforcement Ray Wards, City Attorney Philip Wright and City Clerk Lana Johnson

Absent:

Others: Robert Skipper, Wayde Thomsen, Ryan Nelson, Gary Haehn, Janet Harkrader, Robert Harkrader, Wanda Chaffain, John Terry, Mark Petterson and Kimberly Skillman-Robrahn

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**FLAG SALUTE:** The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2025 BUDGET HEARING:**

*Haas moved, seconded by Gilkison to enter into a budget hearing for the 2025 proposed budget. Motion carried 4-0.*

**Mayor Taylor:** This is an open public hearing. The proposed budget for 2025, if approved, will raise \$151,298 from property taxes at a tax rate of 33.089 mills. Are there any public comments regarding the 2025 proposed budget only? No comments.

*Haas moved, seconded by Baker to close the budget hearing for the 2025 proposed budget.*

**Motion carried 4-0.**

**AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES:**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

*Baker moved, seconded by Christiansen, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 4-0.*

**CONSENT AGENDA ADDITIONS:**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Consent Agenda Items**

**MINUTES:** Move to approve meeting minutes of July 11, 2024.

Move to approve the special meeting minutes of July 11, 2024.

**WARRANTS:** Move to approve the Warrants dated July 9, 2024, through August 5, 2024, in the amount of \$146,219.48.

**PAYROLL:** Move to approve the July 2024 Payroll in the amount of \$9,604.40.

**LICENSES:**

**OTHER:**

*Haas moved, seconded by Baker to approve the consent agenda as proposed. Motion carried 4-0.*

**APPOINTMENTS:**

- a. John Terry – Kwikom

John Terry thanked the city for writing the letter to support the Jacobs Creek Project. It was awarded and the folks in Jacobs Creek and the surrounding rural area will be getting fiberoptic internet. He also presented a plan from Kwikom to provide fiber to New Strawn. Most of the build will be on 4Rivers poles but the north end of town won't be on poles. They will need to use the existing infrastructure and utility easements. They wanted the city to be aware of the plan and make sure it was ok.

- b. Wanda Chaffain – Hometown Pie

Wanda handed out a packet introducing her company and proposed plans and gave a brief introduction and plan. She has reached capacity with her current building and plans to add on to the existing building. She started in New Strawn in 2018 and made around 12,000 pies. Hometown Pie made 34,197 in 2023 and is targeted to make 37,000 plus this year. She asked that the city issue an industrial revenue bond. The expansion will be costly, and the revenue bond would help her afford the expansion.

City Attorney Wright explained that he is not bond council and can not give advice on bonds. If the city would decide to move forward, they will need to retain bond counsel.

Wanda explained that all she was looking for was to have a 10-year abatement on the property taxes on the addition. It would also allow for the building materials to be tax exempt.

Robert Skipper explained that an industrial revenue bond in this case would not be issuing a debt (bond) but a tax abatement and construction sales tax exemption. The city would need to have bond counsel and customarily the developer would pay those fees.

The council said they will consider, and Attorney Wright will look into bond counsel. The two bond counsels will work together for a plan.

- c. Gary Haehn – Retaining Wall

Gary: Good evening. First of all I want to thank Steven for coming up and cleaning the cul-de-sac, it looks the best it's even been for several years, appreciate it. A couple of months ago I came in here first of all with our great ditch. I know I've been talking about filling it in for years. It comes a point with taxes coming up and all this it's unusual ground the way it is. If I'm going to pay taxes on it I'd like to use it. Before I came a couple of months ago I knew you would need a bid or we needed some idea of what it would cost. I had Mike Skillman come in. I said I wanted it so both owners of the ditch, it was level so we could both use it. I brought the bid in and it shocked the heck outa me, 15 grand. The council looked and it and just threw it to the side so then I thought they were telling me that it was up to me to do my side. I looked at the situation and the only way is to put a retaining wall to hold the dirt from going over on my neighbor. 15 grand, I don't have 15 grand. I'm retired and on social security. So started looking around for things I could do. Cleaned some ponds out. I think Skillman said he wanted 7 grand to haul dirt in. I got piles and piles of dirt from out of the pond. Had a guy said he had something that would make a good retaining wall. Looked in and it doesn't say what a retaining wall has to be made of. So, I got some thick tin and put it there

and I'm pretty sure it will last forever. So said we probably need a permit, I had a guy that said he would help me, but it was like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and this was closed. So, I went and talked to Cody and told him what I had in mind. He said I don't see a problem, so he said just come in Monday and fill out a permit. I realize on the permit I didn't detail it. What we want to do is fill the ditch with about 3 foot of dirt and put about 6 inches of topsoil on it. The we are going to move the fence to within about 6 inches of our property line. That will give us about 12 feet of more property that we can use and plant a new yard. If the council, city would to take care of it. I want to put a new tube. I've talked to several construction people. Some people say a 6 inch tube will work some say a 12 inch, 10 inch. Well we are going to put a 6. That ought to handle it. The person that is going to blade it. I'll haul the dirt myself. It will be a long time process. Now if the city would like to help, we would be glad to give you permission to help us. We won't give you an easement but will give you permission to put the tube and dirt in. That would be fine. But that is what. Now what I've got there isn't a fence it's a retaining wall because I don't think a chainlink fence will hold dirt. So you can discuss it and let me know, if you want to help be glad for your help. Basically I'm going to do the labor myself to keep the cost down. You guys discuss it and let me know. I want to fill it in cause it's hard to mow, I got stuck and had to pull the lawnmower out. It just washes and washes. That's what it is. Please let me know what you decide. We have decided since the taxes are going up we want to use our property. I thank you for your time, I appreciate it. Gary left.

**Taylor:** I would like to have further discussion on this. I don't know that he should have left. There has been notice put on his door because of the building material that was used and not having a building permit. That is just one issue. The next issue is he can't have a retaining wall, from my understanding because that is blocking a waterway. It's not just the city but a state and federal ruling that it cannot be blocked. Number 3 is that is an easement. Whether he wants to call it an easement or not for the city and we have to have access to that so a retaining wall wouldn't be feasible in that area from what I understand. **Baker:** I'm assuming if he moves his fence it would be in the easement? **Christiansen:** I think you said the right amount Rhonda. It's just a response for the record because these minutes will be published. **Taylor:** I think Bushy and Steven were the ones that delivered the notice. **Wright:** Where is the drainage easement mainly on his property? **Dwight:** Yes. **Wright:** Quite honestly what he said today isn't what he said the last time he was here. **Christiansen:** I'd like to move on.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Kimberly Skillman-Rohbran with TrustPoint Insurance presented the EMC Safety Dividend check for \$2,626.98.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

- a. Additional Warrants

*Haas moved, seconded by Christiansen to pay additional warrants of \$7,763.49. Motion carried 4-0.*

- b. 2025 Budget Approval

*Haas moved, seconded by Baker that the 2025 Budget as published be approved. Motion carried 4-0.*

**STAFF REPORTS**

- **Zoning Administrator**

- Zoning Permit 2024-Z-06, Misty Conkle for Pool/Fence located at 1010 Arrowhead Dr

- **Code Enforcement Officer**

- Nuisance Property Update

Myers went to court and received a \$200 fine. The cleanup might be 40% complete. Ray has been working with them since July of 2023 trying to get the property cleaned up.

A warning was given last week on a sign that was out of compliance, the sign is gone.

Plans are to issue 3 citations next week. One for no dog tags, a fence without a permit/out of compliance and an unsightly property.

Steven said in April the guy at 1011 Arrowhead approached him about digging the ditch to put drain tile in. It took forever to get it done, we talked about it last month. I approached him last Friday and said you have until this Friday to get it done. He got all mad, grumpy and all that stuff. They was up there this morning and today working on it. It's too wet to do it right now but I'll talk to him tomorrow and see if he is grumpy or not. It is a work in progress. He did get the dirt away from the fire hydrant and was putting the caps back on. I can mow the yard and get that part done but for the dirt work it needs to dry out.

- **Maintenance Operator**

- Lights at Well House – Man Basket

The lights in the well house need to be replaced. Steven reached out to Gunlock and Krayton with no response. A man basket would \$142 per day and is within the maintenance operator budget. The council approved moving forward.

The culvert at 16<sup>th</sup> (Lake Rd) and Main has been replaced. Victory Excavating was the only bid submitted. The plan is to add a stainless-steel apron so the end doesn't get crushed.

The tables at the park have been painted and things are looking good.

- **City Clerk**

- Community Center Rentals

- i. August – 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> COF, 4<sup>th</sup> am Slead/Radiant Life Church, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Primary Elections, 17<sup>th</sup> Hunters Safety Class, 20<sup>th</sup> I.B.E.W.  
September – 7<sup>th</sup> OK Kids, 17<sup>th</sup> pm I.B.E.W., 21<sup>st</sup> Private Event

- City Attorney – Philip Wright

- Executive Session

Christiansen moved, seconded by Baker to enter into executive session at 7:54 pm for 7 minutes for consultation with an attorney for matters relating to potential litigation regarding drainage issue at Seneca Circle that would be deemed attorney client privileged with the City attorney, mayor, city council, and maintenance operator. **Motion carried 4-0.**

Returned to regular session at 8:02.

Christiansen moved, seconded by Baker to enter into executive session at 8:03 pm for 7 minutes for consultation with an attorney for matters relating to potential litigation regarding drainage issue at Seneca Circle that would be deemed attorney client privileged with the City attorney, mayor, city council, and maintenance operator. **Motion carried 4-0.**

No action taken.

**Mayor’s Report**

a. City Hall – Drawing Update – copies of the drawing have been handed out to both contractors and electricians and no one have sent anything back. Clerk Johnson requested to place an invitation to bid in the newspaper.

b. Speed Limit – We have been told that as long as we have a reduced speed limit in town the county can’t enforce the speed limit. Does the council want to leave it alone or consider raising the limit to 30 mph. This is to be put on the September 12, 2024 agenda for more input.

c. Ordinance No. 2024-04

Baker moved, seconded by Christiansen to approve Ordinance No. 2024-04 to reduce the Access Capacity Charge (ACC) from \$36.50 per month to \$24.00 per month. **Motion carried 4-0 by show of hands.**

d. Ordinance No. 2024-05 to Rezone Lots 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22 & 24 all in Block B from C-1 to R-2.

Haas moved, seconded by Christiansen to approve Ordinance No. 2024-05 to Rezone Lots 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22 & 24 all in Block B from C-1 to R-2. **Motion carried 4-0 by show of hands.**

**Finance & Economic Development Report – Jeanne Haas**

A new cash balance sheet will be sent out. When the lagoon funds were entered from the county it was coded to General instead of Infrastructure.

**Community Center Report – Stephanie Baker**

**Utility Report – Butch Gilkison**

a. Water Usage & Loss Report

**Street Report - Rhonda Taylor**

a. Culvert Located at 16<sup>th</sup> and Main – discussed under maintenance.

**Public Relations Report- Jeanne Haas**

**Parks & Recreation Report – Johnny Hernandez**

a. Disc Golf Signage – the original plan was to use the signpost but they ae the wrong size/shape. Steven will look into the correct post. Hernandez is currently working on the kiosk course sign.

**New Business:**

**Old Business:**

**Adjournment:**

*Christiansen moved, seconded by Baker, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Motion carried 4-0.*

APPROVED