

Regular Meeting

**Echo City Council  
Tuesday December 5th, 2023**

The regular city council meeting of the City of Echo Minnesota was called to order by Mayor James Busack at 7:00 pm at the Community Center.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**Present:** Mayor James Busack, Councilman Mark Schettler, Councilman Darren Gjerset, Councilman Reid Hanson, Councilman Dan Larsen, Clerk Brian Pitzl, Public Work Supervisor Bryan Nielsen, First Responders Chief Chastity Kuehn.

**Citizens/Guests:** Mike Trosen, Darren Abel: Meadowland Farmers Coop

**Open Forum:** Mike Trosen from Meadowland Farmers Coop addressed the council regarding the plans the Coop has for the future of the facility in town. Meadowland intends to build a new fertilizer plant to the West of Hwy 67 near the gas pumps. New office, warehouse chemical storage, seed shed and shop. Add rail track to handle 30 cars. The new plant will be able to be run from the tower of the coop and will be more efficient. All buildings currently in town will stay and transition to storage. The coop is hoping to break ground this spring with completion in year. Their goal is to hook up to Rural Water and build a drainage field for sludge. Informed the council of possible changes to the rail lines to potentially haul fertilizer. No C-store will be added.

**Approval of Minutes & Resolutions:**

Motion to approve, November 14th, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes, was made by Councilman Larsen, seconded by Councilman Schettler. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve Resolution 2023-15 Designating Polling Place was made by Councilman Larsen, seconded by Councilman Gjerset. Motion carried unanimously.

**Reports:**

Matt Dunphy- Fire Chief:

Chastity Kuehn, First Responders: Would like to order supplies for the 1<sup>st</sup> Responders rig. The total of supplies needed is around \$874. Motion made by councilman Schettler, seconded by Councilman Larsen to approve the ordering of the supplies needed. Updated the council on what schooling hours were needed for certain 1<sup>st</sup> Responders. 1<sup>st</sup> responders need to have a card in order to report to a call. Need to work on a few issues with the squad that will be worked on at next meeting.

Maintenance Supervisor Bryan Nielsen—Informed the council that the snow blower delivery will be delayed a couple weeks due to a recall on the gear box. Looking at options for a fuel transfer tank for the city shop. The new payloader has a smaller fuel tank and Bryan was concerned that if there was a bad winter event, that there wouldn't be enough fuel to finish the job. Council instructed Bryan to just use the cardtroll if needed. Has doctors' appointment on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Informed the council that he will be taking the payloader to his place to load dirt for some low spots along the boulevard.

Mayor Busack- Brought up the condition of a property in town. The city has previously sent letters to the resident regarding the condition of the property. The council instructed the clerk to send a letter to the individual asking them to appear at the next council meeting to discuss the condition of the property.

Councilman Schettler –

Councilman Gjerset –

Councilman Hanson –

Councilman Larsen – Has a conflict with the January date for city Council meeting. Meeting was moved to January 16<sup>th</sup>.

Clerk Pitzl – Updated the council about the process to change the water billings from per 1000 gallons to per 100 gallons. There would be no need to have any updates to the meter reading device and there would just need to be changes to the receiving and billing end of the process. The council decided to move forward with the change in billing effective the January billing cycle. Informed the council of a new Minnesota law regarding Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST). This is a new law going into effect January 1, 2024, which states that employers must provide a minimum of 48 hours of ESST per year and there are 3 options for crediting this time. Motion made by Councilman Gjerset, seconded by Councilman Larsen to approve the 3<sup>rd</sup> option which would give fulltime employees 80 hours of ESST at the beginning of the year with no payout for unused hours at the end of the year, and parttime and seasonal employees will receive 1 hour of ESST for every 30 hours worked. Motion carried unanimously. Lincoln Pipestone rural water will be raising the water rate in July by .25 per 100 gallons. The council opted to change the time of the January meeting to 6:00 pm. Women's Rural Advocacy Program sent a letter to the city seeking a donation from a grant the city will be receiving from the state that is to be used for public safety issues. The council saw no benefit to the city with a donation. Gave the council information as to what the city is paying the Railroad for lines water and sewer lines running under the tracks. There has been an increase of about 3% on average per year.

### **Old Business:**

The council discussed the 2024 budget. The preliminary budget had been set at \$175,000, about a 6% increase from 2023. Once the preliminary budget is set, it cannot be raised, only lowered. After some discussion, the council felt that there should be no increase in the budget.

Motion made by Councilman Gjerset, seconded by Councilman Larsen to set the 2024 Tax Levy at \$165,000. Motion carried unanimously.

**New Business:**

Motion made by Councilman Schettler, seconded by Councilman Gjerset to pay out unused comp time for Maintenance Supervisor. Motion carried. Noted change from salaried positions to hourly for city workers. The council took time for the yearly employee evaluations. The council was satisfied with the performance of each position. Motion made by Councilman Hanson, seconded by Councilman Gjerset to approve an \$1 per hour wage increase for both full time employees. Motion carried unanimously. The city will have a couple council members attend the Echo Township meeting to discuss the property located across from Hwy 67.

**Consent Agenda:**

Motion made by Councilman Larsen, seconded by Councilman Hanson to approve the consent agenda consisting of Bills, Payroll, and Bank Information. Motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment:** Motion was made by Councilman Larsen, and second by Councilman Schettler to adjourn regular meeting at 8:30 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

---

Mayor James Busack

---

City Clerk- Brian Pitzl