

LAUDERDALE CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Lauderdale City Hall
1891 Walnut Street
Lauderdale, MN 55113

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September 12, 2023

Call to Order

Mayor Gaasch called the Regular City Council meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Roll Call

Councilors present: Jeff Dains, Duane Pulford, Sharon Kelly, Evan Sayre, and Mayor Mary Gaasch.

Councilors absent: None.

Staff present: Heather Butkowski, City Administrator; Jim Bownik, Assistant to the City Administrator; and Miles Cline, Deputy City Clerk.

Approvals

Mayor Gaasch asked if there were any additions to the meeting agenda. Administrator Butkowski said staff would like to add the John Deere mower proposal to the agenda. There being nothing else, Councilor Kelly moved and seconded by Councilor Dains to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Gaasch asked if there were corrections to the minutes of the August 22, 2023 city council meeting. There being none, Councilor Pulford moved and seconded by Councilor Kelly to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2023 city council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Gaasch asked if there were any questions on the claims. There being none, Councilor Pulford moved and seconded by Councilor Sayre to approve the claims totaling \$125,255.85. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent

Councilor Dains moved and seconded by Councilor Sayre to approve the Consent Agenda approving the agreement between Ramsey County and the City of Lauderdale for election services and the proposal by Goodmanson Construction for minor street and alley repairs.

Informational Presentations/Reports

A. City Council Updates

Mayor Gaasch shared that there is an upcoming League of Minnesota Cities board retreat where school resource officers will be a topic of discussion.

Public Hearings

A. Front Yard Setback Variance Request for 1743 Malvern Street

Tim Helin, the applicant, requested a variance to construct a new house 12.16 feet from the front property line at 1743 Malvern Street. Zoning requires a 13.09-foot front yard setback. Thus, the applicant requested an 11.16-inch variance to the front yard setback requirements.

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Tim Helin approached the dais to explain the mistake made by the surveyor on the initial site plan. The surveyor identified the property to the north as 11.16 feet from the front property line. Zoning and building permit approval were granted as the proposed 12.16 distance from the front property line for the new home conformed with code. After the foundation was poured and the first story walls constructed, staff realized the new home was in front of the adjacent home, which would not be allowed by zoning regulations. This indicated that either the survey or the placement of the new house was in error. The error was in the survey, which the surveyor corrected on the revised site plan provided in the packet.

Staff explained to the applicant that they would either need to move the home or apply for a variance to request permission to keep the new house where it was being constructed. Bownik reviewed the application and requirements of city code with the City Council.

The Council discussed the request. In determining to approve the request, they noted that the 11.16-inch variance wouldn't be noticed by the general public as the new home doesn't look out of character with the rest of the block. They also determined that approving this variance would not set a new front yard setback standard as the situation was caused by the error of the surveyor, which is a rare occurrence.

After Council discussion, Councilor Sayre made a motion directing staff to prepare a resolution of approval for a front yard setback variance of 11.16 inches at 1743 Malvern Street for the next meeting. This was seconded by Councilor Kelly and carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action Item

A. Environmental Commissions and Sustainability Discussion with Staff from Roseville and Falcon Heights

Noelle Bakken, Roseville's Sustainability Specialist, and Hannah Lynch, Falcon Heights' Community Development Coordinator, presented the Council with information on the work their commissions are accomplishing. As Lauderdale looks towards starting an environmental commission, they will continue to share information about how their commissions operate and projects they are working on. The goal is for all three cities to share resources and coordinate activities in the future.

B. Proposed 2024 Budget and Levy

Butkowski said that since the last meeting, staff revised the budget and established a levy amount for Council consideration. The proposed general fund budget increase is 9.96%. In real numbers, the general fund expenses are up \$163,706. The biggest cost driver is the \$123,455 increase in policing services. The portion of the proposed budget increase being paid by Lauderdale property owners is \$78,741 resulting in a local levy increase of 8.9%. The total levy increase is 7.9%. These numbers maintain the tax rate of 28.128% year-over-year. In theory, with the flat tax rate,

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property owners' taxes would remain the same but that is not the way property tax calculations work. Lauderdale property values are increasing faster than the rest of the county and rising property values come with real dollar consequences in terms of property tax shifts.

Butkowski explained that even with the 7.9% levy increase, the budget requires a number of funding sources to make up the difference between the proposed levy and the actual 20% increase in costs. The budget factors in the increases in LGA and fiscal disparities; using \$67,169 of the \$98,329 in public safety aid; transferring \$30,000 from the enterprise funds (602 and 603); a host of small cuts throughout the budget; and eliminating the contingency fund.

After discussing, the Council directed City staff to present what an additional one to two percent levy increase would look like comparatively. The Council was concerned that too many of this year's costs were being deferred to future years.

Additional Items

A. Proposal for Purchase of a Replacement Mower and Mower Deck through Minnesota Equipment at the State Contract Price

Butkowski said that the Council authorized the purchase of a new 2023 John Deere mower in March but John Deere did not have an ordering window since then. John Deere opened the ordering window last week for 2024 models. The total cost of the equipment is \$48,354.08 or \$616.00 more than the quote received in the spring. The dealer is offering the City \$7,100 for the trade in of the old mower. To proceed, the Council needed to approve the updated quote. The equipment would arrive in spring 2024.

Councilor Kelly made a motion to direct staff to purchase the mower at the state bid price through Minnesota Equipment. This was seconded by Councilor Sayre and carried unanimously.

Set Agenda for Next Meeting

Butkowski stated that the September 26 council meeting might include an electronic funds transfer policy, the August financial report, and setting the preliminary 2024 levy and budget.

Work Session

A. Community Development Update

Butkowski stated that seal coat remnants have been swept away in the areas surrounding The Fern. Landscaping also began at The Fern. Staff are still looking for ideas on how to commemorate the Lauderdale School on the site. One idea is a bench placed in a location accessible to the community. She said staff plan to apply for a DNR grant to help get rid of the remaining ash trees.

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B. Opportunity for the Public to Address the City Council

Heather Bryan, 1778 Eustis Street, stated that construction vehicles are parking illegally on Eustis Street which is causing traffic issues.

Adjournment

Councilor Pulford moved and seconded by Councilor Dains to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Miles Cline
Deputy City Clerk