

MINUTES  
CITY OF THORP REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2010 AT 7:00PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. In attendance were Mayor Wnek; Alderpersons Blume, Skibbie, Abramczak, Stroinski, and Teclaw; DPW McCredden; Police chief Verges; and City Administrator Reeg.

2. Comments and suggestions from pre-registered citizens

Bob Hmielak (406 E. School St., Thorp) spoke against the proposed biking and walking trail—stating it shouldn't even be considered with so many people out of jobs and suggesting that Tourism funds should be used to offset operating expenses of the pool, or contributed towards the library. No action taken.

3. Consent Agenda—The City Council, with a single vote and without debate, may act upon the following items. Any council member wishing to debate an individual item may request that it be considered separately

- a. Approval of minutes from January 11, 2010 Regular City Council meeting
- b. Approval of Operator's License — Susan M. Fitzl (Mesquite Grille & Pub)
- c. Approval of Operator's License — Stephanie M. Niedzwiecki (Mesquite Grille & Pub)
- d. Approval of Operator's License — Jennifer L. Ramatowski (Express Mart)

Alderperson Blume requested that item a) be considered separately.

M/M/S (Teclaw, Blume) to approve items b-d. Carried unanimously.

Alderperson Blume did not agree with the last sentence in section 8(c) of the minutes from 1-11-10. She did not feel that it was the general consensus of the council to get proposals for lawn-mowing services. M/M/S (Blume, Skibbie) to strike the last sentence from section 8(c). Carried unanimously. M/M/S (Blume, Skibbie) to approve the minutes as amended. Carried unanimously.

4. Discussion and possible action relating to monthly reports:

- a. (Police Department) Monthly activity summary  
Chief Verges mentioned the idea of purchasing an extended warranty for the primary squad. Due to it not being on the agenda, the subject would be addressed at a later time. M/M/S (Teclaw, Blume) to approve the monthly activity summary. Carried unanimously.
- b. (Public Works/Utilities) Monthly activity summary  
McCredden mentioned that the skating rink had been closed for a few days due to warm weather. M/M/S (Abramczak, Stroinski) to approve the monthly activity summary. Carried unanimously.
- c. (Administration) Administrator's Report, Financial Report, Vouchers, Payroll Register & Journal Entries  
M/M/S (Skibbie, Blume) to approve. Carried unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

5. Discussion and possible action relating to changes to UDC building inspections (Bob Christensen of CSC Building Inspections and Roger Koski of Bowmar Appraisals invited to attend)

Reeg noted that Bob Christensen was scheduled to be in attendance, but did not appear to make it. Roger Koski of Bowmar Appraisals was in attendance and he spoke briefly on the subject of missing major interior renovations while minor exterior improvements were triggering reassessments. He indicated that this was possibly distributing assessments inequitably. Pending a possible future appearance by Christensen, it was agreed by general consensus to table this subject. No action taken.

6. Discussion and possible action relating to proposal for new security system to prevent vandalism in parks

Chris Lokken from Tru-Lock was on hand to discuss the proposal previously submitted for the security camera system. He had brought a flash drive with footage from the type of camera being proposed, but the data was inaccessible and could not be viewed. There was discussion about whether or not the system could catch all the "hot-spots" in Yellowstone Trail Park. M/M/S (Blume, Stroinski) to approve the purchase of the system for \$5529 as long as it could cover the entrance to the bathrooms as well as the other areas in the park. Carried unanimously.

7. Discussion and possible action relating to Thorp Public Library renovation and expansion including:

- a. Acceptance of Dept. of Commerce CDBG-PF grant for up to \$130,000  
M/M/S (Blume, Skibbie) to accept the grant. Carried unanimously.

- b. Hiring of SEH for project engineering/grant management with architectural services subcontracted to Architectural Design Group LLC  
Reeg noted that the exact agreement in hand also included services for the public works garage, so due to that portion not being on the agenda, this specific agreement could not be approved tonight. He suggested that instead the council could make a motion declaring their intent to hire SEH and ADG. M/M/S (Skibbie, Teclaw) to declare intent to hire SEH and ADG. Carried unanimously.
- c. Possible additional debt issuance/debt service  
Reeg noted that the grant awarded was not the full amount applied for, which could potentially leave a project shortfall of approximately \$36,000 if the project came in at the full estimated price of \$425,500. Additionally, the \$130,000 grant award was a maximum amount, but that it would only cover 30.5% of the project. Therefore the shortfall could only be overcome without additional funding if the costs were cut by a little over \$52,000. Most likely the shortfall would come in somewhere in between. Members of the Library Board were on hand and pledged to use some of their funds on hand, currently around \$12,000, to offset the shortfall. Library Director Beloungy was also on hand and noted that a "Friends of the Library" group was being formed, and the group felt confident in being able to raise funds to cover a good portion if not all of the shortfall. Reeg noted that pending these fundraising efforts and the final budget numbers coming in, the exact action needed by the council was uncertain so he again suggested a motion of support. M/M/S (Stroinski, Blume) expressing council support to help in filling up to a \$36,000 budget shortfall for the full library project. Carried by a 4-1 vote with Alderpersons Blume, Skibbie, Stroinski, and Teclaw voting aye and Alderperson Abramczak voting no.

8. Resolution 2010-02-1 "Resolution Establishing a Fee for Vehicle Lockout Services"

Discussion was held on the merit of this type of fee, or if it should be considered a service we provide to our citizens. Alderperson Teclaw made a motion to table. Reeg noted that while this was a valid motion, if the council really was opposed to the idea they should take action deny the resolution rather than tabling which implies they want to consider it in the future. Alderperson Stroinski seconded the motion so it could be voted upon. The motion to table was defeated on a 1-4 vote with Alderperson Teclaw voting aye, and Alderpersons Blume, Skibbie, Abramczak, and Stroinski voting no. M/M/S (Blume, Stroinski) to deny Resolution 2010-02-1. Carried unanimously.

*Item #21 was taken out of order at this time, but its record will be kept in numerical order below for record-keeping purposes.*

9. Discussion and possible action related to hiring of full-time police officer

Verges reported that all required pre-employment screenings for Ty Schneider had come back with favorable results. M/M/S (Teclaw, Skibbie) to hire Ty Schneider for the full-time officer position. Carried on a 4-1 vote with Alderpersons Blume, Skibbie, Stroinski, and Teclaw voting aye and Alderperson Abramczak voting no.

10. Resolution 2010-02-2 "Resolution Approving Final Pay Application from Haas Sons Inc. for Sanitary Sewer Interceptor Improvements and Approving Negotiated Work Guarantees"

M/M/S (Stroinski, Abramczak) to adopt the resolution. Carried unanimously.

*Item #15 was taken out of order at this time, but its record will be kept in numerical order below for record-keeping purposes.*

11. Discussion and possible action authorizing allocation of funds for repairs to Well 12

McCredden presented a quote for needed repairs to Well 12. He noted that the repairs had not yet been mandated by the DNR, but likely would be after the next inspection. M/M/S (Stroinski, Blume) to approve the quoted repairs in the amount of \$4366.86. Carried unanimously.

12. Discussion and possible action relating to enforcement of sign ordinances in relation to political yard signs

Reeg noted that with the pending election season, he wanted to remind elected officials about city sign ordinances that prohibit the placing of political signs on public property and specifically in the street right-of-way. He noted that previously staff had been discouraged from enforcing this ordinance, but that because it was an ordinance it must be enforced. He noted that city staff would not be out specifically policing for signs, but if they were reported or spotted during the course of regular duties, they would be removed. He noted that first time the intent would be to return the signs to the owners if possible, but the second time they would be confiscated. No action taken.

13. Discussion and possible action relating to new permit application form and possible fee amendments

Reeg presented the new permit application form he had designed with input from McCredden and Pogodzinski. This form combined six formerly separate forms into one, and was intended to streamline the approval process. The council liked the form. Reeg asked if individual council members still wanted copies of all building permits issued in their

wards, or if they would prefer to inquire at city hall if they had specific questions. It was agreed by general consensus to keep one master file at city hall. Reeg also inquired about the possibility of establishing a fee for driveway, sidewalk, and utility service connection permits, suggesting that the fee only be charged if there were no other permit fees being assessed. Brief discussion was held on this, and it was agreed by general consensus that since there was as much work involved in these permit applications as any others that a fee could be considered in the future.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **14. Discussion and possible action relating to purchase of Neighborhood Electric Vehicle**

Reeg had acquired a new price quote and current vehicle specs as requested. The City had actually been offered the option of purchasing a demo model NEV with 1200 miles for \$13,800 – significantly less than the approximately \$19,000 quote from a year ago. However, the City had been given the right of first refusal on the demo until the day after this council meeting. After that date, the vehicle would be made available for anyone interested in purchasing it, on a first-come-first-served basis. There was again discussion on whether the vehicle would be functional—McCredden felt it would be based upon prior test-drives, references, and dealer testimonials. Alderperson Blume made a motion to purchase the demo NEV for \$13,800. The motion died due to the lack of a second. Alderperson Skibbie then inquired as to whether another vehicle would be purchased if this one would not. McCredden noted that it was time to retire the 1978 flatbed from the fleet, and a vehicle would be needed this year—per the 5-year capital plan. He had gotten some price quotes on Ford Ranger and F-150 trucks. The demo NEV would be \$1800 cheaper than a Ranger and \$3200 cheaper than an F150. Alderperson Skibbie then noted that if we need a vehicle, and this one would be cheaper to purchase and then begin to save additional money on operating costs from Day 1, then it makes more sense. M/M/S (Blume, Skibbie) to purchase the demo NEV for \$13,800. Mayor Wnek requested a roll-call vote. The motion passed 3-2 with Alderpersons Blume, Skibbie, and Teclaw voting aye and Alderpersons Abramczak and Stroinski voting no.

### **15. Discussion and possible action relating to 2010 Parks & Recreation/Tourism Biking & Walking Trail project**

McCredden presented updated cost estimates for the biking and walking trail—one at \$31,060 a 5-foot wide trail, and one at \$41,483 for an 8-foot wide trail that would be ready for future blacktopping. Reeg noted that the Tourism Commission had agreed to spend up to \$15,000 on the project if the City Council allocated the first \$35,000 of the project from the Park Reserve. Members of the Park & Recreation Board and Tourism Commission were present to express strong support for the project. There was debate over the 5-foot and 8-foot widths. Mayor Wnek inquired of the Tourism Commission members if they would consider helping to fund blacktopping in the future. They said they would. Reeg noted that the city and school district had attempted to get a “Safe Routes to Schools” grant for a portion of the trail multiple times in the past top no avail. M/M/S (Abramczak, Skibbie) to install the 8-foot wide trail and to allocate \$35,000 from the Park Reserve and for the project not to exceed \$50,000 with up to the remaining \$15,000 to come from Tourism Funds. Motion carried 3-2 with Alderpersons Skibbie, Abramczak, and Stroinski voting aye and Alderpersons Blume and Teclaw voting no.

### **16. Discussion and possible action relating to purchase of a blacktop roller for Street Dept.**

McCredden had acquired two quotes for used blacktop rollers. One from Miller Bradford Risberg for \$10,995 and one from St. Josephs Equipment for \$9500. M/M/S (Abramczak, Stroinski) to purchase the roller from St. Joseph’s Equipment for \$9500 and to allocate the funds from the Street Equipment Reserve to pay for it. Carried unanimously.

### **17. Discussion and possible action relating to park and green space mowing options including:**

#### **a. Review of proposals for park and green space mowing by independent contractors**

Reeg presented an analysis of a few of the feasible proposals received, compared to the cost keeping the mowing services internal plus debt service for a new lawnmower. This analysis showed that keeping the mowing as an internal service was the most cost effective. Additionally, Reeg and McCredden noted the other intangible benefits of having the seasonal employees on staff to help out on other projects as needed. The council agreed by general consensus to keep the mowing internal. No action taken.

#### **b. Review of proposals for new lawnmower from various dealers**

McCredden noted that only one bid that was submitted on time was for a mower that met the specifications required. This was a John Deere mower from Riesterer & Schnell out of Medford for \$19,383. McCredden recommended the purchase. Reeg noted that \$25,000 had been included in the capital plan for this purchase, and reminded the council that this was a piece of equipment that had originally been planned for inclusion in the capital bonding earlier in the year, but at the advise of the city’s financial advisors from Ehlers & Associates, should be funded with a local note instead. M/M/S (Stroinski, Abramczak) to approve the purchase for \$19,383 funded with a local note. Carried unanimously.

18. Resolution 2010-02-3 “Resolution Establishing Policies for Employee Use of City Credit Cards”  
M/M/S (Abramczak, Skibbie) to adopt the resolution. Carried unanimously.
19. Discussion and possible action relating to scope of and engineering contract for 2010 Street & Utility projects  
Reeg and McCredden inquired about the council’s feeling of extended the W. Main St. project slightly westward to include a few more homes and keep the individual special assessment costs lower for residents. They also inquired if the council wanted to blacktop the one block of N. Lincoln St. between W. Main St. and the railroad tracks that had not been done in 2007. They also noted that three proposals for engineering services had been received: SEH at \$23,300, Kramer Land Design Studio at \$27,490, and MSA at \$39,500. They were recommending the hiring of SEH.  
M/M/S (Abramczak, Stroinski) to extend the W Main St. project westward to include the first properties west of N. Jackson St., and to blacktop the one block of N. Lincoln St. Carried unanimously.  
M/M/S (Teclaw, Blume) to hire SEH for engineering services. Carried unanimously.
20. Resolution 2010-02-4—Final approval of plat of Old School Subdivision subsequent to DOA review  
M/M/S (Abramczak, Stroinski) to adopt the resolution. Carried unanimously.
21. Discussion and possible action relating to sex offender ordinances  
Reeg and Verges noted that many of the surrounding communities were adopting ordinances limiting residency of certain sex offenders and establishing child safety zones. They inquired on whether the council wanted to move forward with developing a similar ordinance for Thorp. M/M/S (Blume, Skibbie) to move forward with developing such an ordinance. Carried unanimously.
22. Discussion and possible action relating to W. Prospect St. street lights  
Alderson Teclaw was adamant that wooden poles should not be installed on W. Prospect St. Other council members noted that they didn’t notice streetlight poles except in downtown areas. McCredden had gotten an estimate for underground wiring at over \$10,000. It was decided by general consensus to table this item to gather more information and options. No action taken.
23. Discussion and possible action relating to components to be included in amendment to dust control ordinances  
Reeg presented a memo containing a summary of items in plain language to be included in the changes to the ordinance language based upon discussion held on this topic previously, and the desire of the council to balance the rights of individual property owners and being business friendly. Alderson Teclaw called it a “Mickey Mouse” compromise that did nothing to fix the problem. Other council members felt this was a good representation of their expectations, and something that could be enforced but was not overly punitive to business owners. It was agreed by general consensus to have City Attorney Salm draft ordinance language based off of the memo for future consideration. No action taken.
24. Discussion and possible action relating to licensing of rental properties  
Reeg noted that previously licensing of rental properties had been discussed multiple times at the Planning Commission and City Council, with a seemingly good deal of support. He wanted to reconfirm general support on the topic before he had City Attorney Salm begin drafting language. There were now some questions over the need for this. Reeg noted that the intent was to require a minimal level of maintenance and upkeep of the properties, to prevent health and safety issues from arising, and to reduce chronic delinquencies at rental property sites. The council agreed by general consensus to consider this again at a future date, but that it wasn’t a priority at this time. No action taken.
25. Reports from Department Heads, Mayor, Council, Committees, and discussion of future agenda items  
Alderson Abramczak noted that he had been contacted by an elderly constituent regarding sidewalks. She felt that they should be removed, and that they were difficult to keep shoveled. She was glad the Mayor had suspended the ordinance. No action taken.
26. Adjournment  
M/M/S (Stroinski, Abramczak) to adjourn at 11:25pm. Carried unanimously.

---

Date of Publication

---

Richard J. Wnek  
Mayor

---

Randall D. Reeg  
Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer