

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
OF THE  
CITY OF KEWAUNEE COMMON COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2015**

Present: Mayor Blaha, Aldermen Christman, Gilbertson, Griffith, Jirtle, D. Kickbusch, Kunkel, Vollenweider

Absent: Alderman Dworak, Council Youth Representative JJ Vollenweider

Others: Administrator Ellefson, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Jackson, Fire Chief Greg Hlinak, Police Chief Frank Salentine, Matt Murphy, Assistant City Attorney Mehn, Sylvia Winebrenner, Ronald French, Bill Brose

Mayor Blaha called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. whereas the Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by prayer and meditation.

Mayor Blaha read a letter from Davis-Kuelthau Attorneys at Law in regards to the Kewaunee School District agriculture building construction process. Mayor Blaha responded to the letter with the following statement:

“On at least five occasions since June, we have met with various members of the Kewaunee School District including Superintendent Karen Trembl, School Board President Brian Vogeltanz, School Board Member John Pagel, Ag Instructor Randy Charles, and representatives from the architectural firm designing the project. In no meeting has it ever been conveyed that the City was “unwilling” or “would not work” with the school district regarding their newly proposed Ag Education building. The city recognizes the advancement of the agricultural industry and encourages growth in that field. However, the City is bound by the ordinances we pass and it is our obligation to abide by those laws.

The school district’s statement that they have “attempted” to discuss details with city officials concerning this project is inaccurate. City representatives met with School District representatives on June 24<sup>th</sup>, August 12<sup>th</sup>, August 17<sup>th</sup>, August 28<sup>th</sup>, and August 31<sup>st</sup>. Each time we have provided information to help the District understand the City Ordinance, and the process of obtaining conditional use and building permits. However, our outreach has not resulted in a written proposal by the School District as to the specific number of animals kept in the facility, the length of internment or the definite species of animals housed there. We have not seen a written proposal for the new site detailing how the District will address noise, odor, animal waste, construction appearance, future expansion of animals, future plans for expansion of the farm program, or anything else for that matter. What we have received were versions of “verbal” assurances and ideas that are somewhat confusing.

As to the City’s rejection of a group meeting, it was my decision not to honor that request. It is my belief that the citizens are the ones deserving openness and transparency on these important issues, so I am not willing to violate open meetings law or subvert the approval process with private meetings to negotiate special agreements or understandings. I do not have the authority to approve conditional use permits, grant variances, or give permission to ignore a City Ordinance; nor does the City Administrator, City Attorney, or other Council

members. Meeting again to discuss the details of the project does not make sense until a formal proposal has been submitted to the Building Inspector and Planning Commission.

It is our hope that our differences can be resolved soon and the School District can move forward with its expansion plans and agricultural education. We look forward to seeing what the school district is proposing, and I can promise that we will work with the School District as fairly as we would with anyone else.”

The Council received the Finance Committee minutes of August 10, 2015.

Christman moved and Griffith seconded to approve the issuance of Operator’s Licenses as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

Christman moved and Gilbertson seconded to approve the August 2015 Accounts Payables in the amount of \$229,267.37. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

The Council received the Public Works Committee minutes of August 25, 2015.

The Council received the Personnel Committee minutes of August 11, 2015, August 24, 2015 and September 3, 2015.

With the Personnel Committee previously meeting and recommending to the Council, Kunkel moved and Vollenweider seconded to approve the hiring of Matt Murphy for the position of Public Works Director beginning as soon as possible. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried with Kickbusch, Christman, Gilbertson, Griffith, Jirtle, Kunkel, and Vollenweider voting yea with no nay votes.

Administrator Ellefson informed the Council that he plans to explore 2016 health insurance offerings outside of the state health plan in addition to considering staying with ETF.

Jirtle moved and Kunkel seconded to approve the August 10, 2015 Regular Council Meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

Vollenweider moved and Griffith seconded to introduce the second reading and adoption of ORDINANCE NO. 570-15, AN ORDINANCE REGULATING THE DEPOSIT OF SNOW IN THE CITY OF KEWAUNEE. Motion carried unanimously.

Kickbusch moved and Kunkel seconded to approve the mayoral appointment Kaye Shillin to the Zoning Board of Appeals as submitted by Mayor Blaha. Motion carried unanimously.

Bill Brose of Smithgroup JJR and Ronald French of Foth presented a proposal for additional grant funding opportunities with Foth & Smithgroup JJR for waterfront infrastructure projects in addition to the harbor assistance grant. Griffith moved and Jirtle seconded the grant proposal in the amount of \$53,500. Upon a roll call vote, motion carried with Kunkel, Jirtle, Griffith, Gilbertson, Kickbusch, and Vollenweider voting yea with Christman voting nay.

Greg Hlinak addressed the council in regards to taking the 1980 Ford Pumper out of service due to unsafe operation after an inspection by Emergency Apparatus and Equipment.

Kunkel moved and Vollenweider seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.