

CITY OF ST. ANTHONY  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
July 9, 2015, 7:00 p.m.

420 NORTH BRIDGE, SUITE A, ST. ANTHONY, ID, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

**PRESENT:** Mayor Neils Thueson, Council Members Suzanne Bagley, Tom Erickson, Rick Hill, Russ Rubert and Rod Willmore.

**ABSENT:** Council Member Lisa Haeberle.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Clerk/Treasurer Patty Parkinson, Attorney Bill Forsberg (arrived at 7:03 pm), Public Works Superintendent Scott Butigan, Police Officer John Hunter and one other in the audience.

Mayor Thueson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**PRAYER** was offered by Councilmember Rubert. (This is a non-denominational offering and anyone who would like to offer prayer may do so by request.)

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE** was led by Officer Hunter.

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**St. Anthony Hydro Plant Request for Property Tax Relief** – Mayor Thueson said the St. Anthony Hydro Plant has asked for some property tax relief. The owner, Ted Sorensen, contacted the Mayor and asked if the city would consider doing this. Sorensen is new to town and starting up a new business. Sorensen said he would get all the information together and provide it. Thueson said he did receive a voice mail from Sorensen saying he wasn't able to get anything put together for tonight's meeting. Thueson said he has discussed this with the county commissioners. Usually, tax relief is given to a new business to come into town, which may be able to employ 10 to 15 or more people. The hydro plant employs one person. Thueson asked what makes this business any different than any other business? Thueson asked what council thinks about something like this. Councilmember Rubert asked who the power is being sold to. Thueson said Rocky Mountain Power purchases the power. Rubert asked what benefits come back to the city from St. Anthony Hydro Power Plant. Rubert said it's normally jobs and there won't be many jobs created. Thueson said it will actually cost the city money because we'll have a new lift station which the city will have to pay the power for and maintain. Rubert said no one else is getting tax relief. Thueson said doing something like this sets a precedent. Rubert said there isn't enough information to say yes. Thueson said the city will receive around \$4200 in tax revenue per year. Rubert wanted to know what the annual expenses would be for the lift station. PWS Butigan said there would be electric bills each month and to have a problem with the motor can run from \$3,000 to \$4,000. Attorney Forsberg said, speaking as a citizen, the guy already owns a business and is running it in town. Forsberg said he sees no difference in giving him a break in his taxes and every other business in town. Why

would you give him preference over any other business in town? There is also more than direct costs; he gets the same police protection, the same use of the roads and infrastructure in town as all other citizens. This is why we pay our taxes, to get these benefits. Councilmember Bagley said Thueson said it best, once a precedence is set, then others will want tax breaks as well. Our practice has been not to do anything like this. Councilmember Erickson asked if he is in financial trouble and needs this break to stay in business. The council members agreed he isn't in financial trouble. Councilmember Hill thought we always have received the \$4200 in taxes from the previous owner. This isn't anything we haven't been getting before. This isn't new. Erickson said Sorensen has worked pretty well to get things done and we appreciate it. Thueson said he would speak with him about this and council deciding not to give him a tax break.

**Amendment to Chamber of Commerce for Lease for Extension** – Councilmember Rubert said the Chamber of Commerce has requested to renew the lease for the space they have in the city building. Their plan is to utilize the space more and to clean it up. Rubert read the amendment in full out loud. A motion to accept this First Amendment to the Lease Agreement with the Greater St. Anthony Chamber of Commerce was made by Councilmember Willmore and seconded by Councilmember Rubert. Councilmember Hill asked what the term of this amendment is. Attorney Forsberg said it is a month to month amendment and at a month's notice either party may decide to terminate. Councilmember Erickson asked if the library is still interested in wanting this space. Mayor Thueson said they are. All council members present were in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

**Resolution Banning Dogs from Certain Parks** – Mayor Thueson said the reason this resolution was drafted was because he has received complaints about dogs leaving their "deposits" at the Sand Bar Park and people walking around in bare feet. Thueson read the resolution in full out loud. Councilmember Willmore said he understands this to be a real serious problem. Willmore wanted to know if someone is traveling and they have a dog in their car and they go to the park, leaving the dog in the car, would this be a violation? Attorney Forsberg said if the dog remains in the car it would not be a violation. Councilmember Hill asked why not other parks? Thueson said these are the two most serious because they are used so much. Hill said they had problems several years ago at the Baseball Fields. However, this isn't a problem anymore. Willmore asked if there were complaints regarding the ball fields. No complaints have been received regarding the ball fields. Councilmember Erickson said the city already has laws requiring people clean up after their dogs and there is a leash law. Most people are pretty good about it and he hates to make more laws to penalize those people who do the right thing. He thinks we just need to enforce the law we already have. Councilmember Bagley said she is not really sure about this right now. She would like to see, of course, information and warnings given out before people are cited. Councilmember Rubert said it is not the people who are obeying the law that are the problem. These are the two most high profile parks in town. Rubert said he is in favor of banning dogs from those two parks. Hill asked if this can be enforced if it is passed. Officer Hunter said it can definitely be enforced. Hunter said the Sand Bar Park, during

this time of year, is packed with people and there really isn't room for dogs, leashed or not. He said there used to be a sign that said "no dogs", but doesn't know what happened to it. The complaints he receives are the dogs knocking kids over. Maybe even a dated sign during the busy months, the end of May to the beginning of August. This would be easier to enforce than the leash law. A motion to pass Resolution #2015-01 a resolution banning dogs from the Sand Bar Park and Clyde Keefer Memorial Park was made by Rubert and seconded by Willmore. Two councilmembers were in favor, Rubert and Willmore and three were against, Bagley, Erickson and Hill. Motion failed. Officer Hunter asked if dogs are already banned from the Sand Bar. Attorney Forsberg said council may want to check the historical resolutions to see. Thueson requested Clerk Parkinson to research this and report back at the next council meeting. Thueson said no matter what the case may be, signs should be made to say leash law and to pick up after their dogs. Thueson requested PWS Butigan to order signs for both parks, the Sand Bar and Clyde Keefer Memorial Park.

**Discuss Electronic Sign Purchase to Replace City Marquee** – Mayor Thueson said he has received some proposals on what a sign might cost. Depending on what sort of sign is chosen, they range in price from \$20,069 to \$56,618. Councilmember Bagley asked is there a still need for the "Welcome to St. Anthony" rocks? All council members said yes there is. This electronic sign is very different from the rocks and serves a different purpose entirely. Councilmember Willmore said sometimes you have to go for the Cadillac. If this is something the city is going to do, they should do it right. His only concern is what the citizens might think about spending so much money on a sign. Willmore said there is one citizen here today and he would like to ask him what he thinks. The citizen said he likes the idea and is familiar with working with them when he worked out at the INL (Idaho National Laboratory). He said the cheaper ones will break and you'll spend more money trying to fix a cheap one. Willmore said he always looks at the one in Rexburg by Erickson's GMC. Thueson said this sign would also display the time and temperature. These are the things people will look up to the sign for and then will also read any additional information displayed. This would be a two sided sign remotely controlled by the front office. Bagley asked what sort of warranty does the sign have. These signs have a three year warranty. Willmore asked if someone like Fremont Communications would donate the WiFi or what it needs. Thueson said the connection will cost the city around \$200 per year. Willmore said that amount is easily saved in the amount of time it is currently taking for someone to go the sign and change it out. Thueson said this sort of sign would really get utilized. Willmore said sometimes you just need to get quality. Thueson said he just returned from Challis and they have one of the finest convention centers he's ever seen. Thueson said this is one thing which would be attractive for our town. Councilmember Hill said it's a lot of money and he's not sure it's a priority. It would be nice. If this is something the city wants to do it should be put out for bid. Attorney Forsberg said anything over \$50,000 needs to be published, specified and bid, unless there is another contract with other governmental agencies. Thueson said he understands, but just wanted to know if this is something council would like him to pursue further or not. Councilmember Rubert said there is nothing wrong with obtaining more information. Willmore said he'd like to talk to more citizens about it. The one we have is outdated and needs to be replaced. It doesn't

need to be done now or six months from now, but it should be considered. Thueson said financially the city could do this, as there is a contingency fund. Everyone agreed it would look good. Councilmember Erickson said the one at Erickson GMC has been there a few years and there is a computer on the inside of it and he believes this is a separate purchase. In addition, when a bank of lights goes out they need to replace those. When he asked about it, he was told maintenance of the sign was approximately \$800 to \$900 per year. Yesco Signs can maintain the sign for \$150 per month, but Erickson's doesn't pay for this, they just fix it when things break. He said Erickson's tie in with the company which sends a program back to update the sign and it is pretty complicated to get the graphics and fun stuff on the sign. Thueson said we should get more information from different vendors and create a specifications sheet so they can come to council and show us what they have and how it works.

**2015/2016 Proposed/Preliminary Budget/Parkinson** – Councilmember Willmore asked about budgeting for TRPTA (Targhee Regional Public Transportation Authority). He said he hardly ever sees anyone riding the buses and he thinks the city is wasting their money on them. Willmore said he is also not in favor of six police officers. He is in favor of a sixth officer for possibly six months prior to the chief retiring. Willmore said the other day someone was hit on a bicycle and there were three county officers and one city officer at the scene. He said the county has plenty of officers and you can come into town anytime of the night and there is always a county officer or two sitting up town. Willmore continued, since we cut back the police department he hasn't noticed any changes, as far as crime. The city doesn't need to become over employed again and draw down on the budget with this expense. Willmore said he thinks the city is good the way it is. As far as police cars, the five year plan is a good one with rotating the cars out. He said he just doesn't know where the department is at with that. He said he certainly doesn't think we need six cars. Thueson asked what Willmore thought about the new loaders for the street department. Willmore said if Butigan can work the deal like he said, then he would be all for it, otherwise just keep the loaders we have. Thueson asked about the six percent salary increase. Willmore said he thinks you're dreaming and nobody in this county makes this kind of money or gets that kind of increase. He said he's talked to a lot of people in this county and \$15.00 an hour is the maximum salary for this county and that's a good wage for a lot of people that work here. He said the city employees are paid well and have an unreal benefits package worth a lot of money. Councilmember Erickson said what was agreed on was a three percent cost of living and a discretionary three percent for merit increase at the mayor's discretion. Councilmember Bagley asked how the three percent cost of living was to be given. Thueson said it's been done both ways, as a percentage and as an hourly amount shared equally. Thueson said he would do it any way council would want him to do it. Councilmember Hill said the Finance Committee recommended a one percent increase in water and sewer revenue and no increase in sanitation revenue. The police department is asking for another officer and Hill said he thinks a sixth officer is okay for now and when Harris retires then it needs to be reevaluated. Hill said he has reservations about a sixth officer. One car is coming because of the police grant, which covers one car and then this would start a rotation to keep however many cars we decide to have. Regarding the loader, as long as the sweeper can get sold and we

trade in the loaders we have and that will actually work, then go ahead and proceed. This would be the second year in a row the city would not be increasing property tax. Hill said he thought if there are senior citizens using TRPTA then it might be okay. He'd like to see TRPTA attend one of our meetings to let us know how it's being used by our citizens. Erickson said he knows TRPTA is being used daily by some residents and it's a good thing. Erickson said he is in favor of a sixth officer and he likes the idea of having one officer specialize in an area. He thinks they could be more efficient. Erickson said he realizes this will cost more, but after talking to Harris and using his expertise, he thinks it will benefit the community. Bagley said as far as TRPTA is concerned, she'd like to see someone come to council and be more engaged to sell their product to us. Bagley said when we don't have as many officers they are each given the opportunity to train. They are specialized in some things, but if they are smaller, then when one's not here, then the other has to step up. They can all be certified the same, not one more than the other. They all work together. Bagley said the department is doing an excellent job. They are active in the community and you see them around doing a great job. We are going to see more problems, but this is how things are happening around the nation. Bagley said she also appreciates the contribution towards the Mayor's Youth Council. Councilmember Rubert said the \$1,000 given to TRPTA is pretty low rent, based on what the city gets in return, and worth it. Rubert said as far as the police department, he appreciates Erickson laying the base for his opinion. Rubert is absolutely, positively in favor of a six man police force. The city has a cohesive police department and each individual has a focus or a specialty which allows for a lot of things to get done. It would be to the city's detriment if we were to go backwards. We have individuals who have excelled in different areas, drug enforcement, domestic violence, firearms and special tactics. Rubert said he has had an opportunity to ride along and our officers are extremely qualified and professional. Rubert continued by saying, as mentioned before, our world is not getting any better. The drugs will continue to escalate and if we establish a six man force and then roll back, we are in effect shooting ourselves in the foot. The police grants will cover the cost of an extra vehicle. Rubert said he doesn't understand how you can trade in two loaders and in three years get new loaders without anything additional. Butigan said it's because we purchase them so cheaply. For example the loader we paid \$103,000 for in 2011 we can now trade in for \$142,000. A brand new loader is \$144,000. Thueson said he checked with Rexburg and they do this exact thing and it works for them. Officer Hunter said having the size of department we have now makes for a very busy department. Hunter said the drugs in the schools are bad. This is where the department is faulting. The patrol side is covered, but the investigative side and proactive things on drugs is where we are missing. As a community this is where there needs to be an investment. There is a lot of meth, marijuana, cocaine was recently purchased. The department needs the resources to combat it. A motion to accept the proposed preliminary 2015/2016 budget to publish for the upcoming public hearing to be held August 13, 2015 at 7 p.m. was made by Hill and seconded by Rubert. Motion passed 3-2 with Rubert, Erickson and Hill, yes; and Bagley and Willmore, nay.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Thueson opened the floor for public comment.

There being no comment Mayor Thueson closed the public comment period.

**INVOICES & CLAIMS** - Payment Approval Reports were presented to Council. Following some questions which were satisfactory answered by staff, a motion to pay the invoices and claims was made by Councilmember Bagley and seconded by Councilmember Erickson. All council members present were in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

**MINUTES** - Regular Council Meeting Minutes of June 25, 2015 were presented to council. A motion to accept the Regular Council Meeting Minutes of June 25, 2015 was made by Councilmember Rubert and seconded by Councilmember Erickson. All council members present were in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Officer Hunter** – The department has a new officer which started last week, Cory Beverly. He is in the process of moving here and so was unable to attend tonight's meeting. He has been a sheriff before with good experience. He has worked here in the city and the county before as a reserve officer. He will be an asset to our community. He will have a short amount of field training and will be ready to go. He has been a sheriff in Nebraska, a deputy in Custer County and before that with probation and patrol. Mayor Thueson said he has met him and talked to him and he seems to be a good, down to earth guy.

**PWS Butigan** reported the new playground equipment is being set up. This should be done before the 24<sup>th</sup>. The tank has been painted. The stars and numbers still need to be done and placed and once that is done it should be ready to go by next week. Councilmember Erickson asked if Greg Lemmon has been in contact with Butigan for the stars and numbers. Butigan said he hasn't. Erickson said he would contact him. Butigan said he will get it done this next week and if needed will contact Harry Hawker to get the decals. He will also contact Jim Walker to get the specifications on the placement of the stars and numbers.

**Attorney Forsberg** had nothing to report.

**Clerk Parkinson** reported the Parks and Recreation Board will likely have a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new park equipment in Boyd Yancey Memorial Park. Parkinson said she would let council know when this will be happening. Parkinson also reported she will be taking a seat on the III-A (Idaho Independent Intergovernmental Authority) board as one of the city's, Chubbuck, who had a seat, left the group. Their leaving shouldn't affect any of the rates and it still looks like health insurance rates will drop by one percent.

## COUNCIL & MAYOR REPORTS

**Councilmember Rubert** had nothing to report.

**Councilmember Erickson** had nothing to report.

**Councilmember Hill** asked, if possible, during the Pioneer Days Parade, they could get some patrol help with parking issues. There will be a couple of changes to parking at the Junior High. They will not allow for parking there as they have in the past. Officer Hunter said he thought this could be arranged. Hill asked if a water spigot, shower or hose could be installed at the Sand Bar Park so people could wash the sand off before leaving. Butigan said he would check into it and see if there is something which could be installed with an automatic shut off.

**Councilmember Willmore** had nothing to report.

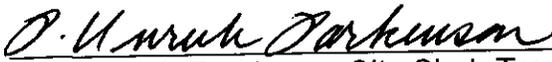
**Councilmember Bagley** said people are recognizing more and more how the Mayor's Youth Council is a service organization. There will be about eight youth who will be joining the youth council this fall. They have already worked at the food bank handing out boxes of food. They are getting utilized more and more. Councilmember Hill asked if they could be in the Pioneer Days Parade. Bagley said they will be there as student council and so she will call and see if they can incorporate this in the parade.

**Mayor Thueson** had nothing to report.

There being no further business to come before the Council the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m. by Mayor Thueson.

  
Nels Thueson, Mayor

Attest:

  
Patty Unruh Parkinson, City Clerk-Treasurer

