

CITY OF MILLER
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 22, 2022

The City of Miller is an equal opportunity employer.

The City Council met in special session at city hall at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 22, 2022.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Aldermen: Mike Wetz, Jim Odegaard, Jeff Swartz, Joe Zeller, and Alderwomen Susan Hargens, Tammy Lichty. Absent: Mayor Ron Blachford.

CALL TO ORDER: President Swartz called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance was said by all present.

AGENDA: Motion by Alderman Odegaard, seconded by Alderman Zeller to approve the agenda as amended. All members voted aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT

Patricia Ames, wife of Officer Ames, expressed her concerns with the on-call policy and the 3-officer department. She feels that the city council is catering to those who want to defund the police rather than providing adequate service in our community and making sure that the current officers are treated properly in the workplace. The on-call schedule would flip flop work and sleep schedules providing them with only 3½ to 5½ hours of sleep a night. Not hiring a 4th officer does not help their burnout. As a taxpayer, she would like to know how much would be saved by choosing countywide law enforcement and how the remaining funds would be used. Please do what is right for the citizens of Miller and the city officers.

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING

The City Council held a public hearing at 7:10 (scheduled for 7:05 but public input ran long) regarding a liquor license transfer. Motion by Alderwoman Lichty, seconded by Alderman Zeller to approve the on-sale liquor license transfer from Turtle Creek Steakhouse, LLC to Turtle Creek Saloon, LLC. Turtle Creek Saloon, LLC also applied for an on-off sale malt beverage and SD Farm Wine license. All members voted aye. Motion carried.

Police On-Call Policy: Mary Jo Gortmaker wanted clarification that there will not be an officer on duty from Midnight until 6:00 a.m. Sunday to Thursday and 2:00 a.m. until 6:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday. Tony Rangel asked why the council is looking at on-call as a way to save money instead of hiring a police chief. Is this a prelude to countywide law enforcement? Chris Henrickson went through each line of the policy and stated that it is setting the officers up for failure. The council just informed everyone when there will not be an officer on duty. No one talked to the officers to ask their opinion on the policy. The current officers were okay with the overtime, they just asked that the council hire a 4th officer as soon as possible. Tony Rangel reminded the council that they signed up to do what is best for the citizens of Miller. Gale Auch asked why they have not interviewed for a police chief yet and, instead, have spent time on the on-call and countywide issues instead. Why try to fix something that was not broken. Our officers have been here long term while the county has had a revolving door of deputies. Jim Odegaard stated that they are just trying to do what is best for the city. Tammy Lichty mentioned that some applicants are asking for wages similar to Sioux Falls. Bob Steers said that if the reason for on-call is to save money then the council needs to make the decision to decrease the police hours by 8 hours/day and take the responsibility of not having 24-hour coverage and not put that responsibility on the employees. Chris Henrickson stated that the on-call policy with 3 officers will require multiple shift flips from day to night. This is very hard on the health of the officers by continuously disrupting their sleep cycles. They are accustomed to a few weeks on night shift. Patricia Ames stated that only having 3 officers affects their family. Wayne had to miss the baptism of his grandson due being short staffed. The last time they had on call, Wayne took his time at the office as he did not want to wake up his family. Joe Zeller stated that they did this backwards again. They did not consult the employees that are affected by this policy. Motion by Alderman Zeller, seconded by Alderwoman Hargens to drop the policy. Roll call vote: Alderman Zeller – aye, Alderman Odegaard – nay, Alderman Swartz – nay, Alderman Wetz –

nay, Alderwoman Lichty – nay, Alderwoman Hargens – aye. Motion failed. Alderwoman Lichty suggested that it go back to the committee for review. No formal action was taken.

Ball Association – Scoreboards: Joe Beranek, Cory Flor, and Mike Werdel were present to ask the council for permission to order 2 scoreboards from Daktronics for the small ball fields. They have fundraised to cover the cost and will donate that to the city. The city will add the scoreboards to the 2023 budget and insurance. Motion by Alderwoman Lichty, seconded by Alderman Odegaard to have the ball association order the scoreboards for the city. All members voted aye. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion by Alderman Zeller, seconded by Alderman Odegaard to go into executive session for personnel matters pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2(1) at 8:02 p.m. All members voted aye. Motion carried. President Swartz returned the meeting to common council after conducting interviews for the utility floater position.

Utility Floater Position: Motion by Alderwoman Lichty, seconded by Alderwoman Hargens made a motion to offer the position to one of the interviewees. All members voted aye. Motion carried. Details will be discussed at the next meeting.

Motion by Alderman Zeller, seconded by Alderman Wetz to adjourn the meeting. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:09 p.m. All members voted aye. Motion carried.

Jeff Swartz, President

Sheila Coss, Finance Officer

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