MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

JANUARY 10, 2022

Mayor Shawn Reinke called the Zoom City Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Council members present were Jean Soine, Paul Thielen, Megan Brick and Neil Herzberg. Others present were Tariq Al-Rifai, City Administrator; Jennifer Welling, Administrative Assistant/Zoning Administrator; Ron Mergen, Public Works Director; Eric Glenz, Spooner & Glenz; Chuck DeWolf, Bolton & Menk, Inc.; Kristin Leither, Social Media Specialist; Paul Wegner, Police Chief; Andy Soine, Fire Chief; Anne Haakenson, Avon Plastics; Brandon Pietsch, CentraCare; Bill Ludwig, Liquor Store Manager; Dr. Mark Matthias, CentraCare; and other persons present via Zoom that did not actively participate in the meeting, but rather watched and/or listened.

Council members gave verbal activity reports.

Wegner gave a department report and highlighted the following:

- Saw an increase in publicity regarding the sabbatical program
- A number of other agencies have inquired about the details of the program
- Positive comments have been received from retired police officers and the general public
- Continuing the hiring process
- Planning on visiting colleges to attract individuals even before they have graduated
- Still minimally staffed due to COVID and one officer is out on parental leave

Mergen gave a department report and highlighted the following:

- The cold weather has initiated a number of calls on possible freeze-ups
- Residents should monitor their water and if it hits 38 degrees, start running water and notify City Hall
- Residents were reminded to clear sidewalks and fire hydrants after a snow event
- Outdoor skating rink is open
- Indoor skating is open to the public on weekends; see the Press for schedules
- Trail connection to the Glacial Lakes Trail – Phase 1 grant will be submitted in January
- The City tree and lights will be taken down this week; however, the banners will remain up

Al-Rifai mentioned the following:

- Attended the Public Works and Police & Fire Advisory Board meetings
- He and Megan visited the Recovery Center
- Met with legislators at the school as well as Council and staff regarding the MPCA lawsuit

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

No one was in attendance to address the Council.

CONSENT AGENDA

No meeting minutes available for approval at this time.

Motion to approve the following vouchers:

12/30/2021	Payroll Checks	104034-104038	$ 5,284.74
12/30/2021	Payroll Direct Deposit		$ 35,288.85
12/30/2021	Payroll Taxes	104039-104040	$ 1,901.35
12/30/2021	Payroll - Fed		$ 10,606.57
12/30/2021	Payroll - State		$ 1,940.05
12/30/2021	Payroll - TASC		$ 126.29
12/30/2021	Payroll - PERA		$ 8,214.27
1/10/2022	Vouchers	104041-104106	$ 111,695.34
		Total	$ 175,057.46

Motion was made by Soine to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Herzberg and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

COVID-19

CentraCare (CC) requested a city-wide mask mandate policy. Reaching a goal of 80% masked would equal 1,100 lives saved. Dr. Matthias highlighted the following:

- Encouraged vaccination
- Masking indoors
- Does not want to see a shut down
- Asking all communities to help
- MN has very high numbers
- CC has 880 staff out
- CC is out of beds
- There are 101 patients in St. Cloud with COVID-19
- ICU's are full
- Effective 1-12-22 no visitors will be allowed in any CC hospitals
- All CC meetings have gone virtual
- Cases are even higher than one year ago

Matthias gave a slide show presentation. Looking at a peek in cases at the end of January, early February.

Pietsch highlighted the following:

- Agreed with Dr. Matthias
- Paynesville numbers are high
- 2 COVID patients in Paynesville
- 6 others patients are recovering from COVID
- Staff has been impacted
- Needs to be a community effort to get through the next few weeks
- Vaccination is the best source of protection

Reinke questioned rationing of care. Pietsch explained that there are challenges. CC has had to become innovative. Facilities are not able to transfer as quickly as pre COVID. Transports have been to the metro, Fargo and Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Reinke asked if the bed shortages are due to a decrease in staff versus the number of cases. There are a number of staff that are out including a number that have retired; leaving a shortage of staffed beds. Emergency room volumes have increased. Matthias stated that Paynesville has great medical staff and leadership and have done an amazing job.

Reinke questioned the safety of the vaccines. Once you receive the vaccination it takes a bit to build up immunity. The majority of patients on ventilators in the ICU have not been vaccinated.

Thielen commented that Paynesville being on one end of the County we feel like we are on an island. One issue is the temperature could rise here if masks are mandated and how would it be enforced.

Matthias stated it is a challenge. There is a divided stance on the issue of masks; however, there is a responsibility to keep people safe.

There was some discussion on the Pfizer oral pill availability and effectiveness.

Mayor Reinke recessed the Regular City Council meeting at 6:33 p.m. and opened the DEED Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF) Program – Avon Plastics Public Hearing.

DEED MINNESOTA INVESTMENT FUND (MIF) PROGRAM – AVON PLASTICS PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Reinke read aloud a statement he received through social media from Angie Arends at 28527 Business 23 E (across the street from Avon Plastics). Arends was opposed to any expansion of Avon Plastics due to the noise at all hours of the day. The noise is deafening and she is unable to have her windows open or enjoy her deck or grilling areas outside.

Haakenson explained the project including the expansion being entirely an interior expansion of the wash line and nothing outside. This would make the line more efficient and will double the output of product.

Al-Rifai reported on DEED's Minnesota Investment Fund Program. Avon Plastics hopes to start construction by October, 2022.

Herzberg asked what the zoning was for the Arends property. Welling stated that the Arends property is in the Township.

There being no further comments or questions, Mayor Reinke closed the public hearing at 6:38 p.m. and re-opened the Regular City Council meeting.

DEED MINNESOTA INVESTMENT FUND (MIF) PROGRAM – AVON PLASTICS

Motion was made by Herzberg to approve Local Government Resolution 2022-06 Minnesota Investment Program. Seconded by Brick and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

COVID-19 CONTINUED

Wegner commented on the enforcement of a mask mandate. If the State would impose a mask mandate officers would refer businesses to the MN Department of Health. Paynesville officers are not enforcing a mask mandate and we are not the mask police. The goal is to avoid a confrontation with an officer over a mask.

Reinke questioned rationing of antibodies. Matthias stated that in the past CC has been give about 200 doses a week now CC is allotted 80 doses per week and only administered on a scoring system (like those who are pregnant or have cancer).

Reinke asked Matthias to describe how masks work. Matthias stated:

- Protects those around you as COVID is an airborne virus
- You are not breathing in other contaminated particles
- Most contamination occurs during eating (breakrooms)
- Medical grade or N95 masks are recommended; however, any mask is better than nothing
- Omicron virus is more infectious than the other viruses

Reinke asked if masks build up carbon dioxide. Matthias said no and people don't trust the medical society any more.

Brick stated that she works in retail and refusing service for those not masking is never fun.

Matthias agreed this is a challenging time. Encourage people because the medical society is reaching a dire situation and the surge is on now. City government can take action to help keep citizens safe.

Motion was made by Mayor Reinke to require all people entering City owned or leased properties be masked. City Hall, DMV, and liquor Store will refuse service and persons can use the curbside, drop box, etc. and to buy $400 in Chamber Bucks to give out to random persons wearing a mask indoors as an incentive.

Brick noted she will be abstaining from the vote.

The motion died due to lack of a second.

Thielen commented that he understood the aspect, but as far as the monetary incentive, it takes away from the medical reasoning.

Thielen made the motion to mandate masks in the City indoors and give the right to refuse service. Seconded by Herzberg for the period of 2-3 weeks or until the positive COVID case number decrease.

Reinke suggested the mandate be in effect until CC is no longer rationing care and the positive rate has decreased.

Matthias reported when the positive percentage reaches 20% this is considered high. We are now at 30%. 10% is a sign of effectiveness or 10-15%. The percentages should be from CC. Pietsch volunteered to obtain the Paynesville percentages for the City.

Herzberg amended his motion to be in effect until the positive rate drops below 12% and to revisit this at 12% or below. Thielen accepted the amendment.

Ludwig expressed his concern with refusing service to those not wearing masks. Thielen stated employees can't make exceptions on refusing service.

Wegner asked if masks needed to be wore in individual offices. Matthias stated that in CC masks are not worn in individual offices where there is only one person.

Reinke asked if Thielen would amend his motion to allow for no masks in separate individual offices. Thielen agreed. Herzberg agreed to the amendment.

Ludwig further expressed his concern on a mask mandate. Welling expressed her concern for the City Hall staff's safety and their protection against irate customers. Reinke stated to ask the customer to leave and the Police could escort them out.

Al-Rifai expressed that he did see the increase in hostility at the counter and would rather not refuse service, but highly recommend; educate instead of refuse service.

Soine agreed with Al-Rifai that a mandate with refusal of service may do more harm than good. Employees should encourage, but not refuse service as it could put employees in a bad situation.

Herzberg agreed and amended his motion to highly recommend masks by using signage, but to not refuse service.

Soine agreed use signage to inform customers that masks are required, but to not refuse service.

There was some discussion on the loss of business and revenue if a mandate is imposed and service is refused.

Reinke stated that masks should be required. 80% masking saves lives. The Liquor Store's loss in business is not worth saving lives.

Reinke restated the motion on the floor:

Motion is to impose a mask requirement for all City employees and all people on any City owned or leased property/business and to refuse service to those not wearing a mask. The motion failed 3:1 (Soine, no; Thielen, no; Herzberg, no; Reinke, yes; and Brick abstained).

Motion was made by Thielen to require masks in all City owned/leased properties/buildings until the threshold of positive cases of less than 12% is met with letting the customers have the option to wear a mask or not, but to not refuse service. Seconded by Herzberg and passed (Reinke, yes; Brick, abstained; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY PLAN UPDATE

Mergen presented the proposal from Bolton & Menk, Inc. in the amount of $16,500.00 to update the Paynesville Facility Plan. Phase one was completed in 2019 with the lift station, piping and head works building. The second phase will treat the bio solids separately. Doing it this way offers huge regulatory and treatment advantages. The waste will be classified as an industrial by product and not as municipal waste.

The new system will include another aeration basin, clarifiers, additional blowers and a solids handling system. The new system will handle AMPI's growth and the high strength waste that is currently being hauled off site.

Motion was made by Herzberg to authorize Bolton & Menk, Inc. to update the Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan in the amount of $16,500.00. Seconded by Soine.

Herzberg commented that the City would bond for the project for AMPI and AMPI would reimburse the City. Mergen agreed and noted that the $16,500.00 would come from the Pretreatment CIP Fund. 111 Pomeroy Ave. – City Shop Remodel.

The motion unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

111 POMEROY AVE. – CITY SHOP REMODEL

Mergen explained that they are working on the remodel plans and that this is to only address the sprinkler system at this time. To remodel the sprinkler system, it would cost approximately $12,000.00 plus the annual inspection fee of $1,500.00. An excerpt from the December 13, 2021 Public Works Board meeting:

CITY SHOP REMODEL

A City shop remodel proposal was presented that included:

- Three new overhead doors;
- Floor drains in the front and rear portions of the parking area;
- New restrooms to meet code;
- New furnace and mechanical room;
- New break room;
- Elimination of the sprinkler system, it was noted we are not required to maintain the sprinkler system and it would be an added cost of about $1,500.00 year for such.

Members discussed the sprinkler system noting the $1,500.00 would be worth the cost to have that security. It was questioned what the insurance rate difference would be. Staff will check on this and bring it back to the next meeting.

The City's insurance company has been contacted and there is no premium difference if the building is sprinkled or not.

Motion was made by Herzberg to authorize the removal of the current sprinkler system. Seconded by Soine.

Thielen questioned the $1,500.00. Mergen explained that the $1,500.00 is just the annual inspection to have the sprinkler system certified each year.

The motion unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

Motion was made by Brick to remodel the new shop at 111 Pomeroy Ave. Seconded by Thielen and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT – SURPLUS SHOP EQUIPMENT

There is a need to surplus three items from the 111 Pomeroy Ave. shop:

1. Rail with ladder system
2. Explosion proof exhaust fan
3. Refrigerator/freezer

Motion was made by Thielen to declare the shop items as surplus property and authorize advertisement for sealed bids. Seconded by Herzberg (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

2022 CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

In the past the Council has pre-approved the attendance (registration, mileage, usual expenses, per diem (if applicable), lodging, and staff time) of the City Administrator and any Council member to the following events for 2022:

- League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) Annual Conference – June 22-24, 2022 – Duluth
- LMC Regional Meetings
- LMC Safety & Loss Control Workshops
- Mayor's Conference
- Stearns County Municipal League Meetings
- Municipal Clerks & Finance Officers Association of Minnesota (MCFOA) Clerks Conference – March 22-25, 2022 – St. Cloud
- All other LMC Conferences & Trainings

Motion was made by Soine to approve the attendance (registration, mileage, usual expenses, and per diem (if applicable) of the City Administrator and any Council member to the following events for 2022:

- **League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) Annual Conference – June 22-24, 2022 – Duluth**
- **LMC Regional Meetings**
- **LMC Safety & Loss Control Workshops**
- **Mayor's Conference**
- **Stearns County Municipal League Meetings**
- **Municipal Clerks & Finance Officers Association of Minnesota (MCFOA) Clerks Conference – March 22-25, 2022 – St. Cloud**
- **All other LMC Conferences & Trainings**

Seconded by Herzberg and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

2022 LIQUOR STORE LEASE PAYMENT

The 2022 Liquor Store Lease monthly payment is $1,828.00 plus $10.00 for sign electricity. The lease is to be paid in monthly installments of $1,828.00 plus $10.00 per month for sign electricity; payable to Teals Management. These are the same amounts as in 2021. The current lease expires on September 30, 2022.

Motion was made by Soine to pay the 2022 Liquor Store lease in monthly installments of $1,828.00 plus $10.00 per month for sign electricity from 105 Liquor Fund; payable to Teals Management. Seconded by Thielen and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

2022 IRS MILEAGE RATE

The IRS has set the mileage rate at 58.5 cents per mile for the period January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022. The City has, in the past, used the IRS mileage rate. The 2021 rate was 56 cents.

Motion was made by Soine to approve the City mileage rate 58.5 cents per mile effective January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022. Seconded by Herzberg and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEM

Jean Soine served as the Mayor Pro Tem in 2021. The Mayor Pro Tem performs the duties of the mayor during the absence of the mayor. Soine volunteered for Mayor Pro Tem.

Motion was made by Thielen to elect Jean Soine as Mayor Pro Tem. Seconded by Brick and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

OFFICIAL DEPOSITORIES FOR CITY FUNDS

Resolution 2022-01 Designating Depositories Of Funds, Designating A Chief Financial Officer & Establishing Authority To Act was presented.

Motion was made by Soine to approve Resolution 2022-01 Designating Depositories Of Funds, Designating A Chief Financial Officer & Establishing Authority To Act. Seconded by Thielen and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

2022 COUNCIL MEMBER BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Reinke recommended the following 2022 Council member Board appointments:

Administrative Fine Hearing Board – Megan Brick & Paul Thielen
Airport Board – Paul Thielen
Budget & Finance Board – Paul Thielen & Shawn Reinke
Chamber of Commerce Representative – Jean Soine
Community Ed Representative – Megan Brick
Downtown Redevelopment Board Representatives – Megan Brick & Jean Soine
EDAP Board – Megan Brick & Jean Soine
Environmental Board – Megan Brick
Green Roof Area Center Representative – Neil Herzberg
Hwy. 23 Collation Representatives – Shawn Reinke & Neil Herzberg
Joint Planning Board – Jean Soine
Labor Negotiations Board – Shawn Reinke & Neil Herzberg
Municipal Off-Sale Liquor Retail Board – Jean Soine
Park & Tree Board – Megan Brick
Paynesville Area Joint Trails Board – Paul Thielen
Policies & Procedures Board – Shawn Reinke & Neil Herzberg
Property Negotiations Board – Neil Herzberg & Paul Thielen
Planning Board – Jean Soine
Police & Fire Advisory Board – Shawn Reinke
Public Works Board – Neil Herzberg
Weed Inspector – Shawn Reinke
Wellhead Protection Board – Paul Thielen

The only change was Herzberg and Thielen switched positions on the Budget & Finance Board and the Policies & Procedures Board.

Motion was made by Herzberg to approve the 2022 Council member Board appointments as presented. Seconded by Thielen and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

2022 CITY BOARD MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

The list of City Board member appointments for 2022 was presented (see attached).

Motion was made by Thielen to approve the 2022 City Board member appointments. Seconded by Brick and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

APPOINTING DATA PRACTICES COMPLIANCE OFFICER

Resolution 2022-02 Appointing Data Practices Compliance Official as Tariq Al-Rifai, City Administrator was presented.

Motion was made by Thielen to approve Resolution 2022-02 Appointing Data Practices Compliance Official. Seconded by Soine and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

2022 CITY ASSIGNMENTS & APPOINTMENTS

Designate Official Newspaper:	Paynesville Press
Designate City Attorney:	Spooner & Glenz Law Offices, PLLC
Designate Labor Attorney:	Madden Galanter Hansen, LLP Attorneys at Law

Annual Appointments:

Building Inspectors:	Brad Mehlhop
	Jim Tews, City of Litchfield
City Treasurer:	Belinda Ludwig
City Engineer:	Bolton & Menk, Inc.
Emergency Services Director:	Shawn Reinke
Auditor:	Schlenner Wenner & Co.
Data Practices Compliance Officer:	Tariq Al-Rifai

Motion was made by Soine to approve the 2022 City Assignments and Appointments as presented. Seconded by Brick and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

2022 CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATE CHANGES

Looking ahead at the 2022 Calendar:

Monday, December 26, 2022 – Christmas Holiday is observed – City Hall is closed
Suggested reschedule date – Tuesday, December 27, 2022.

Motion was made by Herzberg to reschedule the City Council meeting for Monday, December 26, 2022 to Tuesday, December 27, 2022. Seconded by Brick and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSITS, SAVINGS & MONEY MARKET ACCOUNTS

Resolution 2022-03 Regarding Certificate of Deposits, Savings Accounts, & Money Market Accounts was presented.

Motion was made by Soine to approve Resolution 2022-03 Regarding Certificate of Deposits, Savings Accounts, & Money Market Accounts. Seconded by Herzberg and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

AUTOMATED BANK PAYMENTS & WIRES

Resolution 2022-04 Resolution Allowing Wire/Automated Bank Payments was presented. The auditors would like the City to annually and formally pass a resolution giving authorization to the City Administrator and City Treasurer to make wire/automated bank payments as needed.

Motion was made by Soine to approve Resolution 2022-04 Allowing Wire/Automated Bank Payments. Seconded by Brick and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

APPOINTMENT OF FIRE DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

The Fire Department members recommend appointing the following:

Chief – Andy Soine
Assistant Chief – Mike Stern
Secretary – Chris Price
Finance Officer – Matt Ellefson
Captain – Jon Kulzer
1st Lieutenant – Justin Bogie
Lieutenant under 10 years of service – Chris Price
Training Officer – Shane Schmidt

Motion was made by Herzberg to appoint the following Fire Department Officers:

Chief – Andy Soine
Assistant Chief – Mike Stern
Secretary – Chris Price
Finance Officer – Matt Ellefson
Captain – Jon Kulzer
1st Lieutenant – Justin Bogie
Lieutenant under 10 years of service – Chris Price
Training Officer – Shane Schmidt

Seconded by Brick and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

CHECK SIGNING AUTHORITY & PROCEDURES

Resolution 2022-05 Regarding Check Signing Authority & Procedures was presented. This outlines that two signatures are required on all checks and gives the authority to the Mayor, Acting Mayor (Mayor Pro Tem), and the City Administrator/Acting City Administrator or City Treasurer to sign checks. It also allows, in emergency situations, to use a facsimile signature, with one live signature.

Motion was made by Soine to approve Resolution 2022-05 Regarding Check Signing Authority & Procedures. Seconded by Herzberg and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

2022 FEE SCHEDULE

The proposed 2022 Fee Schedule was presented. Welling noted that all fees related to cat and dog licensing have been removed and the water/sewer rates have been adjusted.

Motion was made by Soine to approve the 2022 Fee Schedule. Seconded by Brick and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

FIRE DEPARTMENT – PURCHASE OF CASCADE SYSTEM

Andy Soine was in attendance to discuss an upgrade to their Cascade System (increase in their PSI) to fill bottles for their SCBA's which will give them a 45 minute bottle verses a 25 minute bottle. The system has been ordered from Alex Air Apparatus in the amount of $9,420.00 to be paid from their Capital Improvement Small Equipment. The Fire Department is expecting the Fire Relief Association to reimburse the City for such.

Motion was made by Herzberg to authorize the payment of $9,420.00 to Alex Air Apparatus to be paid from their Capital Improvement Small Equipment. Seconded by Thielen and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

2022 LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL & EQUALIZATION MEETING DATE

The Stearns County Assessor has contacted the City and would like to conduct the 2022 Local Board of Appeal & Equalization meeting on Thursday, April 7, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. The City is required to have two trained Local Board of Appeal members. Currently Shawn Reinke, Neil Herzberg and Jean Soine are trained members. On-line training is available until February 1, 2022.

Motion was made by Soine to set the 2022 Local Board of Appeal & Equalization meeting on Thursday, April 7, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Herzberg and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

WAGE STUDY PROPOSAL - DDA

This was tabled from the December 27, 2021 City Council meeting. Al-Rifai presented the updated DDA Compensation Proposal outlining three groups of employees:

1. Public Works $2,500.00
2. Police Department $2,500.00
3. City Administration & Liquor Store $4,500.00

The ongoing maintenance is $4,000.00 per year plus the separate study for each department for each year. For three years this would be over $20,000.000. The past study was approximately $13,000.00.

The Council discussed the cost difference and this proposal being more and the amount not being budgeted for. Thielen commented that the current wages are protected under the union contract and to do a wage study every year seems redundant and its not in the budget. A future wage study could be done once its budgeted for.

Al-Rifai commented that he believes that DDA would do a good job. It may be useful to do a wage study at the time the union contacts are up for renewal. Soine agreed. Herzberg suggested a wage study before the next union contract.

There was no formal action taken.

COVID-19 CONTINUED

Herzberg suggested that the Special City Council Working Session be postponed until the community is out of the uptick in positive cases (about 3 weeks). It was suggested to set the Special City Council Working Session for Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. It was further suggested to explore a Council retreat and put it on a future agenda for discussion.

> **Motion was made by Herzberg to set the Special City Council Working Session for Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Soine and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, yes; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).**

Reinke commented on CentraCare's presentation and plea for the community's help. Reinke highlighted the following:

- Rationing care
- No non-emergency surgeries
- Issuing a local emergency
- Declaration of emergency
- Ability to order supplies
- Raise awareness

Soine stated that an emergency declaration could be a positive or a negative. Thielen stated that residents feel that City Hall is not transparent enough. Herzberg was not against an emergency declaration; as a City we can encourage masks in stores, business, church, and school events. We need to keep things open; maybe a mask mandate is not out of line.

Ludwig express the need for an increase in Liquor Store staffing hours due to COVID and staffing shortages. There was some discussion on the store hours of operation.

(Eric Glenz dismissed himself from the meeting.)

There was further discussion on promoting an employee to Assistant Manager to relieve some of the work load from Ludwig. Ludwig stated that there are 4 applicants that will be interviewed next week for clerk positions.

Motion was made by Soine to authorize the up to 32 hours per week Liquor Store Clerks to work up to 40 hours per week through March 31, 2022. Seconded by Herzberg and unanimously carried (Reinke, yes; Brick, abstained; Herzberg, yes; Thielen, yes; and Soine yes).

INFORMATIONAL

Mayor Reinke reviewed the following: Xcel Energy Request To Increase Rates For Electrical Service Notice, Paynesville Library Fines Free & New Hours and December Police Department Reports.

There being no further business, Mayor Reinke adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

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Tariq Al-Rifai, City Administrator