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Sibley City Council discusses Chamber position, receives positive fund news

By Sandra Jensen
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The Sibley City Council met in regular session on Monday, December 11th at 5:00 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Council members Jan Henningsen, Rodney Hiemstra, Tim Nobles, Larry Pedley, and Misty Spooner were in attendance, along with Mayor Jerry Johnson, City Administrator Glenn Anderson, and City Clerk Susan Sembach. They first approved the agenda, then the consent agenda items of the minutes from the previous meeting, and the bills and bills paid in vacation.

Passed unanimously was a resolution approving the 2018 golf season rates, raising a few charges by about 5% to be comparable with other golf courses in the area while still keeping costs manageable for people using the facility.

Also passed was a resolution approving the CMBA Architect contract for the bathhouse. A specific budget was given for just the bathhouse, which Anderson said should be in the \$370,000 range, and will not be exceeded. A summary sheet listing the estimated costs for each portion of the project was requested, but not all information has been received or determined yet in order to compile one.

Sibley Chamber board member Jen Greve addressed the council about the chamber director position.

Sheryl Peters' resignation will become effective at the end of December, but she has agreed to fill in month-to-month as needed. One option being considered is hiring for a full-time position in conjunction with the city, allotting about 20 hours/week for the Chamber position and 20 hours as a city employee, but the hours would need to be flexible between the 2 areas. This may encourage more interest in the position, along with simplifying communication between the city and the chamber to work together more easily. The Chamber board is willing to negotiate an agreement for benefits, and is aiming for February 1st as a start



Mayor Jerry Johnson led the swearing in ceremony for city council members Mitchell Ackerman, Misty Spooner, and Larry Pedley, who will begin their new terms on the council in January. (Photo by Sandra Jensen)

date. Anderson noted that the city budget still needs to be solidified, so no decision has been made. Suggested duties could include website management, overseeing social media accounts, running and organizing community events, and keeping the Chamber connected with businesses and the community. As a city employee, they could also attend the department head meetings and fill in at other offices if needed. Greve added that they need to start advertising for the position, but can't until they know the job description and hours.

Sara Hibma addressed the board with additional information about the proposal to hold the 2018 swimming lessons at Americinn. The rental cost would be \$100/day for 3 hours, with the pool closed to hotel guests during that time. Levels available would be Parent-Tot through Level 3, and she noted that students in Level 3 could get the main skills, but not the deep water skills due to the pool size and shallower depth. She shared a tentative schedule and expense calculation, with the rent under this plan totaling \$2,600.00. To retain lifeguards through the construction, she's considering offering incentives of paying for some of the necessary training and re-certification. Using the Osceola Communities Express bus for transportation would be negotiated. Also mentioned was offering other positions within the Rec Department for staff to gain additional hours. The city would be

covered for liability insurance without any extra cost. Private lessons would be arranged by the hotel, lifeguards, and families. The council approved accepting the rental rate, and work will continue on finalizing a schedule.

With no council concerns voiced, Anderson gave his administrator's report. The Osceola County Sheriff's Office is requesting a \$915.58 increase per month to their budgeted city contribution for a total annual increase of \$10,987.00, due to insurance and other cost increases. Sembach noted that a Trust & Agency Levy, which is based on property taxes, can be applied for when the city does budgeting to help offset any increased cost for police protection. The council approved the increase.

For council's information, Anderson and Sembach gave details about a website (shouldyoumovetosibleyia.com) that voices concerns as a deterrent to someone considering moving to Sibley based on the IDP odor issue, that while still not 100% eliminated, has improved. They think they have determined who the perpetrator is, and are working with the city attorney to attempt to remove the site. The information is outdated, but the website dating updates so that it looks current.

Sembach then shared some positive news. Treasurer's reports from September of 2017 reported a balance of (-\$59,166.13), but as of October, the general fund was \$24,779.41 in the black. For the first

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catching up on maintaining gravel roads along with getting ready for winter operations. They've also cut brush in ditches and are cleaning up right-of-ways. Other work includes driveways, district tile repair work, filling vacancies, and completing audits on 3 federal aid projects from this year. Progress continues on planning for 2 federally-funded bridge projects, and

big interest in seeing some interest in the building as well. Taylor Block's diesel business continues to get established. The county grants have been judged locally and were sent on to the Greater Des Moines Foundation. They received 37 grant applications, and the committee recommended funding 31 of them. Announcements will hopefully be made in

nel Policy Handbook updating. Representative John Wills met with the supervisors regarding the possibility of joining a Watershed Management Authority (WMA) currently forming as the Little Sioux Headwaters Coalition. The process was set up by the state legislature in 2010 as a way to encourage collaboration in