

AMERY CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
July 5th, 2023

The Amery City Council met on July 5th, 2023 at the Amery City Center. Mayor, Chad Leonard called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Roll Call: City Clerk-Treasurer, Ben Jansen conducted Roll Call.

Present: Mayor, Chad Leonard; Council President, Eric Elkin; and Alderpersons; Sharon Marks; Rick Van Blaricom; Mykaela Thompson; Mike Manor, and Sarah Flanum.

Staff Present: City Administrator, Patty Bjorklund; City Clerk-Treasurer, Ben Jansen; Deputy Clerk., Taylor Larson; Library Director, Heather Wiarda, and Public Works Director, Jeff Mahoney.

Others present: Brian Roemer – Ehlers; April Ziemer – Amery Free Press; and Members of the Public.

Consent Agenda Items:

Minutes – City Council (June 7th, 2023); Special City Council (June 1st, 2023 & June 21st, 2023), Committee of the Whole (June 21st, 2023), Airport Commission (June 15th, 2023).

Motion by Alderperson, Manor; seconded by Alderperson, Van Blaricom; to approve the minutes as written.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

New Business

1. **Public Comment** – No public comment was heard at this time.
2. **Wastewater Treatment Plant Zoning Code Proposal from S.E.H.** – This proposal was approved at the Committee of the Whole meeting. It engages S.E.H. to write and help with all the necessary regulatory needs for a new zoning ordinance that would restrict development within a 500-foot boundary around the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Motion by Council President, Elkin; seconded by Alderperson, Manor, to approve the proposal as written.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

3. **Resolution 07-2023: Adopting a Capital Asset Policy** – This resolution was also passed by the Committee of the Whole. It does feature 2 changes, one a grammar error, and the other was to change the definition of a capital asset from something that is \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Motion by Alderperson, Flanum; seconded by Alderperson, Marks; to approve the Resolution as presented.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

4. **Ordinance 02-2023: All Terrain and Utility Terrain Vehicles** – This ordinance was discussed at committee and council. The notable change is that it removes all banned roads besides 46.

Motion by Alderperson, Van Blaricom; seconded by Alderperson, Manor; to approve the resolution as written.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

5. **Ehlers Presentation for Water Rates** – Brian Roemer from Ehlers gave a presentation about potential water rate increases for the City. Preliminarily the City is looking at an 18.5% increase, or about \$4.50 a month. The Council noted that they were uncomfortable with this large of an increase on top of the sewer rate increases that will already be taking place. It is possible that the City may be eligible for a simplified rate increase next spring. That increase would likely be between 5-8%. If the City is unable to pursue a simplified increase it is unknown how much the increase would be next year.

Motion by Council President, Elkin; seconded by Alderperson, Van Blaricom; to table the discussion of water rates until the PSC releases the estimated simplified increase in February 2024.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

6. **Discussion of City of Amery Human Resources and inter- and intra-departmental relations** – The City has experienced a lot of chaos recently and tension between its departments. Council President, Elkin stated that he would like to see some action taken by the Council to amend these issues. One of the main issues discussed was possibly bringing back the personnel committee to assist Administrator Bjorklund as right now everything falls onto her shoulders.
7. **Mediation Services for the City** – It was discussed that perhaps it is too early to bring in a mediator because it is not clear what needs to be mediated. Rather, it was felt that the City needs an external partner to identify its issues and to give advice on what can be done before any mediation could take place.
8. **Discussion of City Committee Needs** – The need for a personnel committee was discussed at length as it was felt that there needs to be some sort of buffer between employees and the City Council. It was also discussed that a smaller committee might be more advantageous for sensitive issues like personnel matters.
9. **Ordinance 03-2023: Ch. 14 Boards, Committees, and Commissions** – It was discussed that perhaps it would be best to wait before establishing a personnel committee.

Motion by Alderperson, Fl anum; seconded by Alderperson, Manor; to table the discussion of Ord. 03-2023 until the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

10. Motion by Council President, Elkin; seconded by Alderperson, Van Blaricom; to go into closed session at 6:17 P.M. under Wis. Stat. §19.85(1)(b) – Mayor. Considering dismissal, demotion, licensing or discipline of any public employee or person licensed by a board or commission or the investigation of charges against such person, or considering the grant or denial of tenure for a university faculty member, and the taking of formal action on any such matter; provided that the faculty member or other public employee or person licensed is given actual notice of any evidentiary hearing which may be held prior to final action being taken and of any meeting at which final action may be taken. The notice shall contain a statement that the person has the right to demand that the evidentiary hearing or meeting be held in open session. **Wis. Stat. §19.85(1)(c) – Police Chief.** Considering employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes – Marks, Van Blaricom, Thompson, Leonard, Elkin, Manor, Flanum.

Nays – None

Motion Carried.

Motion by Alderperson, Van Blaricom; seconded by Council President, Elkin; to reconvene into Open Session at 7:28 P.M.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes – Marks, Van Blaricom, Thompson, Leonard, Elkin, Manor, Flanum.

Nays – None

Motion Carried.

Motion by Alderperson, Van Blaricom; seconded by Alderperson, Manor; to bring the hiring process for a new Police Chief.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

Motion by Alderperson, Flanum; seconded by Alderperson, Van Blaricom; to adjourn at 7:31 P.M.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Jansen, MPA
City Clerk-Treasurer
July 6th, 2023.