

**CITY OF AMERY
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PROCEEDINGS
August 16th, 2023**

The Committee of the Whole of the City of Amery met on Wednesday – August 16, 2023, at City Hall. Council President/Acting Mayor, Eric Elkin called the meeting to order at 5:09 P.M.

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

Absent: None

Staff Present: City Administrator, Patty Bjorklund, Clerk-Treasurer, Ben Jansen, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer, Taylor Larson; Fire Chief, Chuck Frohn; and Library Director, Heather Wiarda.

Others Present: Members of the public

Department Head Reports – Reports were heard from City Administrator, Bjorklund; Clerk-Treasurer, Jansen Fire Chief, Frohn; Library Director, Wiarda; and Deputy Clerk-Treasurer, Larson. Administrator, Bjorklund also gave Public Works Director, Mahoney’s report.

Proposed RFP for Auditing Services for the City – City staff is seeking permission to seek proposals from auditing firms because of issues with the current auditor.

Motion by Van Blaricom, seconded by Manor, to allow staff to seek proposals for auditing.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

Hotel Feasibility Study Proposal from Core Distinction Group – The City has been approached by a developer seeking to place a hotel within the City. They are asking the City to conduct a feasibility study for the hotel to see if such a project would even succeed and be profitable. Specifically they are asking the City to use their preferred partner, Core Distinction Group. The City has previously had a study done by this group in 2013 which was paid for by the AEDC. The AEDC was not overly impressed with the detail in that study as does not recommend moving forward with this group. Acting Mayor, Elkin has solicited a quote from a different group that he feels would have more detail and could possibly be a better fit for the City.

Motion by Elkin, seconded by Thompson, to table the discussion of the feasibility study until the next committee meeting.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

Ordinance 04-2023: Amendments to Ethics Board Ordinance – This ordinance was rewritten by the City attorneys and was presented and tabled at the last Committee of the Whole meeting. Alderperson, Van Blaricom noted that he would like one of the sections revised, specifically about the ability for the Ethics Board to retain outside Counsel. The passage stated that any contract for services for an outside counsel would have to be approved by the City Attorney. He would like that changed to being approved by the City Council.

Motion by Van Blaricom; seconded by Manor; to forward Ordinance 04-2023 to the Council with the noted changes.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

City Committee Needs Discussion – Clerk-Treasurer Jansen put this item on the agenda to discuss what the Council would like to see for the proposed Emergency Management Committee. It was determined that this question would likely be clarified after staff attends the Emergency Management training scheduled in September.

City Hall Hours of Operation – Administrator Bjorklund and Clerk-Treasurer Jansen led the discussion to explain how many of the municipalities surrounding Amery have modified their hours to be open either earlier/later and then have limited hours on Fridays when there is generally not a lot of foot traffic. The Council was generally in favor of this and left the decision up to Administrator Bjorklund with the provision that the hours would revert if there were persistent problems.

5 Star Marketing Tourism Proposal – This proposal is the same that the City has approved the last 4 years. It is a cost of \$1,990 for a full 2 page spread at the centerfold of the Polk County Tourism Guide.

Motion by Van Blaricom; seconded by Thompson; to forward the 5 Star Proposal to Council.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

Public Comment – Fran Duncanson was present and spoke about the recent St. Croix County Court decision regarding the Stower Trail. The Polk County Board voted to appeal the decision to not allow snowmobiles and horses on the trail.

Motion by Manor; seconded by Thompson; to adjourn at 5:57 P.M.

Ayes – 6

Nays – 0

Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,

Ben Jansen
Clerk-Treasurer
August 17th, 2023