

AMERY CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
September 6th, 2023

The Amery City Council met on September 6th, 2023 at the Amery City Center. Acting Mayor, Eric Elkin called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

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

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

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

Others present: John Shilts – Police Consultant; April Ziemer – Amery Free Press; and Members of the Public.

Public Comment – Public comments were heard from numerous individuals about the Stower Trail. Comments supporting both motorized and non-motorized uses were heard from several people.

Consent Agenda Items:

Minutes – City Council (August 2nd, 2023); Special Council (August 16th, 2023), Committee of the Whole (August 16th, 2023), Plan Commission (August 24th, 2023), and Recycling Committee (August 16th, 2023).

Motion by Alderperson, Thompson; seconded by Alderperson, Marks; to approve the minutes as written.

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

New Business

1. **Stower Trail Discussion with the Friends of the Stower Trail** – Brook Waalen from the Friends of the Stower was present to represent them and their interests in the recent decision on the usage of the trail. He gave a brief overview of the history of the use of the trail. The Friends are seeking support and recognition from the City on this issue to continue the non-motorized use of the trail. Acting Mayor, Elkin clarified that the City cannot decide what happens with the trail and its usage but is open to having discussions on the usage with all interested parties including the Friends, Snowmobile Club, and Equestrian clubs.
2. **Ordinance 04-2023: Amendments to Ethics Board Ordinance** – The ordinance was approved through Committee of the Whole with one revision to the ability of the Council to approve contracts for outside counsel for the committee.

Motion by Alderperson, Van Blaricom; seconded by Alderperson, Flanum; to approve Ordinance 04-2023 as written.

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

- 3. 5 Star Marketing Advertisement Proposal** – This item came through committee as well. Alderperson, Flanum requested that item be added to the budget permanently moving forward.

Motion by Alderperson, Thompson; seconded by Alderperson, Manor; to approve the proposal as written.

- 4. Police Officer Recruitment Options** – Administrator Bjorklund placed this on the agenda as the City is struggling to recruit new police officers. Currently, the City is offering a sign-on bonus for officers willing to sign a 2 year commitment with the City. The Council was instructed to think of ideas for recruitment and the need to be creative was stressed as the City does have to abide by the current union contract.
- 5. 2024 Budget Discussion** – This was the first opportunity that the Council had to look at the proposed 2024 Budget. A lot of the revenues are not yet known as the state has not released several estimates. The idea of a budget amendment for this current year to capture some of the police department savings in salaries was floated. No use was proposed for the funds yet.
- 6. Motion by Alderperson, Manor; seconded by Alderperson, Thompson; to go into Closed Session at 5:55 P.M. – Wis. Stat. §19.85(1)(c) – Police Chief Position.** 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, Elkin, Manor, Flanum.

Nays – None.

Motion Carried.

Motion by Alderperson, Manor; seconded by Alderperson, Thompson; to reconvene into Open Session at 6:51 P.M.

Roll Call Vote

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

Nays – None.

Motion Carried.

The City will be moving forward with interviews of the top 2 candidates for the Chief Position.

- 7. Appointment of Mayor** – Since the resignation of Mayor Leonard, the City has had a vacancy in the Mayor’s seat. Council President, Elkin; has taken over the role in the interim as acting mayor, but the City needs to formally appoint one. Acting Mayor, Elkin; opened the discussion by nominating Alderperson, Van Blaricom; to serve as the City’s next mayor, which he accepted. Alderperson, Flanum then moved to close nominations.

Motion by Alderperson, Manor; seconded by Alderperson, Marks, to appoint Alderman Rick Van Blaricom as the next Mayor for the City of Amery.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes – Marks, Thompson, Manor, Elkin, Flanum.

Nays – None

Abstain – Van Blaricom

Motion Carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Jansen then swore in the new Mayor.

Motion by Council President, Elkin; seconded by Alderperson, Fl anum; to adjourn at 6:59 P.M.

Ayes – 5

Nays – 0

Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Jansen
City Clerk-Treasurer
September 11th, 2023