

MILROY CITY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

January 27, 2025

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL

Mayor Sik called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Council Members Present: Sik, Christensen, Haken, Miller and Olson.

Staff in attendance: Clerk/Treasurer Snyder, Public Works Director Duscher and Fire Chief Krueger.

Guests: City Attorney Matthew Gross, Matt Novak, Novak Law Office, Jeff and Sharri VanDeWiele and Tom Marks.

APPROVE AGENDA

Christensen/Haken unanimous to approve the agenda as presented.

CONSENT AGENDA

Christensen/Miller unanimous to approve the consent agenda as presented.

a. December 23, 2024, Regular Council minutes and January 13, 2025, Special Meeting minutes.

b. Claims Payable (check #12715 - #12735) for \$43,445.24, and electronic payments for \$16,317.46

c. Resolution #1-2025 – EFT/Automated Payments

d. Resolution #2.2025 – Council Code of Conduct

e. Resolution #3.2025 – Donations

f. Resolution #4.2025 – Delegating responsibility for cannabis retailers to Redwood County

REPORTS

FIRE – The FEMA grant for gear will be applied for once again. Talks are being held with local townships who are requesting to add sections. There are a few concerns about the distance from the fire hall and this will be discussed with township officials before any changes. Fire/Accident calls not getting paid and buying a camera for the department to use as opposed to their personal cell phone. Haken will do some research on a camera.

Christensen/Haken unanimous to approve Derek Blankenhagen as a new member to the fire department, with no training needed as he already has that from a previous department. With this addition it brings the department roster to twenty-two members.

PUBLIC WORKS – Working on the annual DNR water report, finding a company who can crack fill the streets and sewer jetting.

Miller/Christensen unanimous to approve Public Works Director Duscher to attend the MN Rural Water Conference March 4-6, 2025. If it snows while he is gone Kent Miller will fill in to remove snow. The city attorney was asked if this would be a conflict. He stated not as long as he was not being paid and signed a volunteer waiver, he would still be covered by the city insurance if something were to happen. Public Works Director Duscher will be out for a few days this week. Mayor Sik would like a PTO slip that can be used by employees and attached to their timesheet.

COUNCIL – Mayor Sik brought up the residents are complaining about employees parking in front of City Hall. Public Works Director Duscher said no handicap spot is designated and if there was one it should be logical to be on the side street not on highway 68.

Christensen/Haken unanimous for Clerk/Treasurer Snyder to no longer park in front of city hall. She also asked about council emails. They are each assigned one an email with the laptop, these laptops are used to receive city items and monthly packets.

Councilmember Haken is going through the current council laptops and will give a recommendation for batteries and fire camera for the February meeting.

Councilmember Miller asked about fire hydrant and paint on curbs. Painting these can be done this spring/summer.

CLERK/TREASURER – **Miller/Haken unanimous to approve Clerk/Treasurer Snyder to attend the MN Clerks and Finance Officers Conference March 18-21, 2025.** Her lodging is paid for by MCFOA as she is the organization's Administrative Assistant.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Olson/Christensen unanimous to give back the December WSG billing late fees with interest.

Haken/Olson unanimous to allow the Clerk/Treasurer to have the authority to remove any mistaken late fees moving forward.

The Pay Equity report was filed on 2/14/2025 and the compliance report was received that same day.

The PTO hours for payout were discussed. Mayor Sik has again been checking with surrounding communities and Milroy gives a lot of time off. She said the Clerk Treasurer could take up to two months off with the time she earns. Councilmember Miller says he does not believe we should take items away from employees. Attorney Gross mentioned sunset options. Mayor Sik would like a special meeting to discuss these matters.

The health insurance memo from the SWWC service coop was in the packet and gone over. Due to the change in what the city covers for family the employees could possibly switch to single. If an employee wants to change their coverage, they have until January 29, 2025, to make those changes. The clarification to the health insurance contribution. This stands as voted on at the January special meeting. The city will pay the employees single policy and up to \$1,150.00, therefore if you choose family, you will receive 319.34 toward the family on top of the 830.66 single.

VEBA accounts were also discussed. Mayor Sik would like to amend the prior motion to no longer put contribute to the employees' VEBA account. It says in the personnel policy now that the city contributes the deductible. Other cities comparable to Milroy will be contacted by the mayor.

Christensen/Miller to set a special meeting for Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the following items: Policy handbook, VEBA contributions, EDA apartment tour, keys and passwords. Mayor Sik would like an audit of the PTO hours. Clerk/Treasurer Snyder stated these hours are audited each year by the City Auditor.

NEW BUSINESS

Christensen/Haken unanimous to approve Resolution #5.2025 – Annual Designations.

The Personnel Committee will be made up of Sik and Christensen.

Councilmember Haken has taken the Board of Appeal and Equalization training.

Miller/Olson unanimous to approve the engagement letter for the annual audit from Kinner and Company Audit firm.

One of the EDA apartments will be vacant as of 2/1/2025. Who does the repairs and rent was discussed. This apartment will need some repairs, and a tour of this building will take place at the 2/11/2025 Special Meeting and discussion on the repairs will be tabled until the February meeting.

The 2025 safety meetings schedule was included in the packet.

The city is currently complying with a solid waste management tax office audit. The requested information has been sent and once completed the state will contact the city with any recommendations.

Mayor Sik then said she hasn't received keys to the city office or the computer passwords. She thinks the Mayor and Acting Mayor should have these in case something happens to the Clerk/Treasurer. Clerk/Treasurer Snyder said there is confidential items in the office that are not for the councilmembers to see and that no one should get the passwords as they should stay in the office where they currently are kept. City Attorney Gross said they should talk more about this at the special meeting as this is a council policy decision and a policy should be in place prior to giving out keys. Miller does not want a key.

Attorney Matt Novak then addressed the council regarding representing the city, as the city is responsible for prosecuting misdemeanors, selected gross misdemeanors and local ordinance violations. Redwood County has been doing this for the city at a cost. Mr. Novak's hourly rate for 2025 will be \$120.00 an hour as opposed to the County rate of \$175.00 per hour.

Christensen/Haken unanimous to adopt Resolution #6.2025 – Approving the State of Minnesota Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Milroy on behalf of its City Attorney.

At this point in the meeting an evaluation of performance was done of the City Clerk/Treasurer, Betsy Snyder due to a complaint received. Snyder requested the meeting remain open. There was a complaint regarding the December late fees that were charged and when she came in to pay her bill, she felt she was not treated properly by the Clerk/Treasurer. City Attorney Gross was then asked about what the council can do. He said the council should look at the discipline policy, investigate the complaint further or review the complaint and take disciplinary action. Attorney Gross said this complaint

does not rise to any form of termination and the city policy should be followed for any oral or written discipline. At this time, the subject of the complaint, Clerk/Treasurer Snyder, was not asked about her recollection of what happened. The council also discussed the late fees at the December meeting and no decision to return those fees was made and at that point the clerk was not able to make that determination on her own. Councilmember Christensen said that since he has been on the council all he hears is complaints and would like a written reprimand to be given. Mayor Sik said she knows this person and cannot be involved in the discussion or vote on any decision made. This conversation is on the camera and can be played at the special meeting.

Olson/Christensen unanimous to further investigate the alleged complaint and report any findings at the 2.11.2025 special meeting.

The other issue they have is regarding the answer that the Clerk/Treasurer at the January special meeting regarding VEBA contributions. Mayor Sik contacted the SWWC about this information and she feels the council voted on false information due to the response the clerk/treasurer gave. Clerk/Treasurer Snyder said maybe she didn't understand the question as there was much going on at that meeting, but she does understand the VEBA and how it works. She also questioned her working on a Friday without prior approval. Council members were asked if they knew about this situation prior to this meeting. Miller said Mayor Sik called him and talked for over 30 minutes. Christensen also said they had talked. City Attorney Gross said all personnel issues should be discussed at a meeting and all information should go through the clerk's office. Hours and ways to save time for the clerk was discussed.

PUBLIC FORUM

Sharri VanDeWiele then spoke about her disappointment with the backing of city employees, bad remarks about employees, audited PTO hours, the information on the electronic sign, donation resolution reimbursement and employee insurance, VEBA contributions, human error on billings and comments about council behavior.

Tom Marks then said he doesn't want to see his taxes go up, but that the council's pay should be raised and to pay by the meetings attended. Clerk/Treasurer explained the council can adjust pay but it legally won't go into effect until after the next general election, which is the fall of 2026.

MAYOR/COUNCIL ITEMS

- February 11 – Special City Council Meeting
- February 17 – Holiday Observed
- February 24 – City Council Meeting

ADJOURN

Miller/Christensen unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Approved on this 24th day of February 2025.

Betsy Snyder, City Clerk/Treasurer