The Round Lake City Council met in regular session on Thursday, December 14th, 2023 at 5:46pm at City Hall. Employee reviews were performed in closed session, prior to the open meeting starting at 6:30pm. Councilmembers in attendance were Walon Habben, Randy Rowe, Paul Cunningham, James Adams, and Mayor Timothy Kennedy. Others in attendance were Keith Stubbe, Derek Nelson, Joshua Heidebrink and Clerk Elaine Walker. A Nobles County Deputy was not in attendance.

Closed meeting was opened at 6:19pm.

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Kennedy summarized the closed meeting with a motion by Habben, second by Rowe to give Derek the title of Utility and Public Works Supervisor with a wage increase to $40/hour, Joshua reports to Derek. Elaine will get a wage increase to $30/hour, to get her in a competitive bracket and Josh will get a wage increase to $28/hour. We have a cohesive team that will work to improve the efficiency of how the City of Round Lake operates and the goal is to encourage our employees to remain loyal and to retain them as many neighboring cities are actively seeking employees at this time. Daily performance of duties has been excellent across the board. All ayes: Carried.

There were no additions to the agenda.

Motion by Habben, second by Adams to approve the agenda. All ayes: Carried.

Motion by Cunningham, second by Rowe to approve the minutes from the November 8th, 2023 regular meeting. All ayes: Carried.

Motion by Rowe, second by Adams to approve the bills and receipts as presented, including Checks #23844, 23848-23885, claims totaling $60,517.98 and online payments made since the last meeting, totaling $22,564.53. November receipts totaling $115,725.93 and November Disbursements totaling $114,833.36. All ayes: Carried.

The Fire Department Officers for 2024 are needing Council approval. Civil Defense Director is usually one person, but the department would like to have 2 share the position so that we are covered day or night, in an emergency. Motion by Habben, second by Rowe to approve the Officers as listed and pay 2 people the shared amount of $150/year for the Civil Defense Director at $75 each. All ayes: Carried.

Motion by Habben, second by Cunningham to approve the Fire Contracts with the townships for 2024 with a 3% increase, our fee for 2024 will be $243.68/section. All ayes: Carried.

Owner of Midwest Allies would like to discuss renting the space out and the possibility of making one side into living space. Since the business is located on Main Street in the business district, there is no possibility of making it into living space, as it is on the ground level of the business district. Apartments in this district are on the second floor, not on the ground level. Clerk Elaine will inform Maria of this part of the ordinance.

Keith Stubbe, owner of Sport Shots Tavern inquired about the refund of part of the liquor license, in the event he decides to sell the bar in 2024. Per state statute, refunds can be given for liquor licenses on a quarterly basis. i.e. If he closes in July, he would get one quarter of the fee refunded, as Councilmember Habben pointed out. Clerk Elaine will contact the state A.G.E. to see if he can sell beer only after the liquor store is closed. He has been asked by patrons on occasion to sell a 6-pack here and there. Motion by Rowe, second by Adams to approve this addition to his liquor license if it is approved by the state. All ayes: Carried.

Motion to pay final bills as presented to City Hall by Rowe, second by Cunningham. All ayes: Carried.

Resolution No. 2023-12-14 – Re-establishing a polling location for the City of Round Lake, Nobles County, Minnesota. (This is needed each year in case of an emergency election.) Motion by Habben, second by Rowe to re-establish City Hall as the polling location for the City of Round Lake, Nobles County, Minnesota. All ayes: Carried.

Resolution No. 2023-12-13(2) – Resolution adopting Employee Sick and Safe Time Policy. Motion by Adams, second by Cunningham to adopt the Employee Sick and Safe Time Policy effective January 1st, 2024. All ayes: Carried.

Motion by Habben, second by Adams, to approve the City does NOT waive the Monetary Limits on Municipal Tort Liability established by MN Statute 466.04. (Required annually for the insurance company.) All ayes: Carried.

Motion by Habben, second by Cunningham to add back in 3 checks that were lost in transit to vendors, total amount for the three checks is $110.66. An affidavit of lost check replacement will be on file, once the vendors return them signed. All ayes: Carried.

Motion by Habben, second by Cunningham to approve the 2024 budget without changes. All ayes: Carried.

Motion by Adams, second by Rowe to approve the Pond 3 Discharge outlet valve quote from Minnesota Pump Works, for $10,493.75. Derek will get the valve ordered. All ayes: Carried.

Motion by Adams, second by Cunningham to approve the control panel for the lift station pumps quote from Minnesota Pump Works, for $24,631.75. Derek will get the control panel ordered and setup time for the install. All ayes: Carried.

Research shows that the sewer rates in Round Lake are very low compared to surrounding towns and the need to repair sewer related machinery means that sewer rates need to increase to aid the city in paying for these repairs. Motion by Habben, second by Adams to increase the base rates for sewer by $10, create an industrial rate for AGCO and to start the usage rate on the first gallon of water that goes through the sewer rather than after 4,000 gallons. These changes will benefit the sewer fund and create the resources needed to maintain the equipment now and in the future. All ayes: Carried.

Federated Rural Electric has had 2 price increases since the City of Round Lake changed our rates. They have announced another increase coming in 2024. The deficiency this has caused averages out to about $38,000/year. By adjusting the per kwh and the base rates for the electric utility, we can get back to the revenue that we need to maintain our utility infrastructure and stop losing money. Motion by Cunningham, second by Rowe to increase the base rates and per kwh to be more in line with Federated Rural Electric pricing for the city moving forward. All ayes: Carried.

We have the opportunity through Nobles County to receive funding to help with infrastructure projects and the amount the county has designated for the City of Round Lake is $90,909.00. We have informed the county that we have projects we will use the funds for, including the two quotes approved in this meeting. The total for the 4 projects relating to our sewer utility will be approximately $91,220.00 and the funds from the county will greatly help offset those expenditures. Once the invoices are paid, Clerk Elaine will submit them to Nobles County for reimbursement up to that $90,909.00 amount. This is a huge benefit to our city!

City Hall will be closed on Monday, December 25th for Christmas.

City Hall will be closed on Monday, January 1st, 2024 for New Year’s Day.

January council meeting will be held on January 10th, 2024 at 6:30pm at City Hall.

Motion by Habben, second by Cunningham to adjourn. All ayes: Carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:28pm.