

June 17, 2024

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Harold E. Getty Council Chambers
4:00 p.m.

Roll Call.

Members present: Mayor Pro Tem Ray Feuss in the Chair. Mr. Boesen, Mr. Nichols, Ms. Creighton-Smith, Mr. Chiles, Mr. Simon, Ms. Wilder and Mr. Feuss.

Agenda, as proposed or amended.

Boesen/Chiles

that the agenda, as proposed, be approved. Voice vote-Ayes: Six. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of June 3, 2024, Council Work Session, as proposed or amended.

Boesen/Chiles

that the minutes of June 3, 2024, Council Work Session, as proposed, be approved. Voice vote-Ayes: Six. Motion carried.

Discussion of an ordinance amending sewer fees.

Bridgett Wood, Finance Director, explained the purpose of the amendment and discussed the proposed change with council members.

Nichols/Chiles

to recess at 4:04 p.m. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Nichols/Chiles

to adjourn from recess at 4:22 p.m. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Update from Waterloo Fiber.

Andrew Van Fleet, Board Chair for Waterloo Fiber, provided a background from coming on board with Waterloo Fiber in July 2019 when he was approached by Randy Pilkinton and handed a file of all the historical perspectives from 2005 onward. The file contained information on the Telecom Board from its beginning, including the things they tried to accomplish that didn't go anywhere and ultimately sitting dormant for 15 years for various reasons. On the current board are Mike Young, Amy Wienands, Ritch Kurtenbach and Ted Batemon. Rob Nichols serves as the council liaison, replacing Sharon Juon. He shared that he personally has about 2000 volunteer hours on the project, and it is because he believes in the betterment of Waterloo. The entire board, Randy Pilkington, Sharon Juon, etc. have all worked really hard to get the utility to where it is now. The first big step was to put out a survey to the citizens of Waterloo to see if they still wanted this. The result was overwhelmingly yes. They then looked to find a consultant and settled on Magellan Advisors, which is now Entrust. What was impressive about them was their CEO and COO took the call and had done lots of similar projects around the nation, and the board felt most comfortable with them. They have now been our partners for about five years. Courtney Violette is their COO, and he has been

involved with the project since day one. He shared that the first thing that came into play was this going to be a public entity by itself, or should this be a private entity. Ultimately, we decided it would be best to be a public entity with no private partnership. There was interest from private companies who flew here to talk about partnering, which validated that this is an incredible opportunity and helped us make the decision to move forward as a public utility. He stated that in those first discussions, Sharon Juon pointed out that as a public utility, all the profit (surplus) stays in Waterloo and can be used for other initiatives. He spoke of the hours and hours of dialogue with Magellan, the legal team and financing, and then Covid hit. The slowdown turned out to be a blessing since they were able to focus on identifying funding for this \$120 million dollar project and were ultimately able to secure \$30 million dollars of grant funding. He commented that this is world-class fiber broadband internet coming to Waterloo which will no doubt attract remote workers and businesses alike and will be an economic development tool. He shared a few conversations he had with various individuals that spoke of the value this was going to bring to Waterloo.

Eric Lage, General Manager of Telecommunications for Waterloo Fiber, provided an overview of the history and accomplishments. He shared that Waterloo Fiber will be the largest municipal telecommunications utility in the state of Iowa, and reviewed the funding sources for the project.

Council members discussed Waterloo Fiber with Eric Lage.

ADJOURNMENT

Feuss/Chiles

that the council adjourn at 4:59 p.m. Voice vote-Ayes: Seven. Motion carried.

Kelley Felchle
City Clerk