LOCAL NEWS

RANIER CITY COUNCIL

Ranier City Council reviews proposal

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

RANIER- The Ranier City Council Monday agreed to meet with the International Falls officials regarding a proposal to end a water use credit.

A letter from International Falls Administrator Ken Anderson detailed the freeze protection credit which had been provided to the city of Ranier in the past. The credit amounted to 1,000 gallons per day to continuously run a fire hydrant in the Sunset Cove area to prevent the freezing of waterlines.

According to the letter, the credit was a carry over from when International Falls owned the Sunset Cove area, which is now owned by the city of Ranier. During the winter of 2013-2014, the city of International Falls credited the city of Ranier 1,000 gallons per day for 153 days. This added up to a total credit of $1,548 for the winter.

"One way of looking at this is that the city of International Falls paid the city of Ranier $1,548.36 to keep Ranier's waterlines from freezing," the letter from Anderson states.

Anderson's proposal would discountinue the credit effective Dec. 31. Ranier Mayor Dennis Wagner said Monday he would like to meet with Anderson regarding the proposal, in order to get more information about it.

"I'm just wondering why we're having this discussion now and didn't bring it up a month and a half ago," Councilor Todd Coulombe said.

Dennis Wagner

Wagner said in addition to discussing the proposal, he'd like to look into the water rates the city of International Falls charges the city of Ranier.

"As far as I'm concerned I think the rates are a little out of hand to start with," Wagner said. "I really believe we need to have a comprehensive review of their costs."

In other business, Wagner updated the council on the railroad crossing at Spruce Street, where crossing arms and lights have been installed. The arms lower and lights flash while a train is crossing, he said, which has helped cut down on the amount of horn blowing engineers are doing.

Engineers are still blowing horns frequently, Coulombe said. Wagner said Ranier city officials will reach out to Koochiching County Engineer Joe Sutherland and Canadian National Railway spokesman Patrick Waldron about establishing a quiet zone for the area, which will cut down on the horn blowing.

Resident Thomas Hall said the city would have to reach out to the Federal Railroad Administration in order to establish a quiet zone. Having crossing arms and lights is a prerequisite for establishing a quiet zone, he said.

STAFF PHOTO

Crossing arms and signal lights are now in place at the Canadian National Railway crossing in Ranier.

In other business, the council approved the purchase of Christmas lights and accessories up to $1,000 for decorating city buildings for the season. Wagner said city Maintenence Manager Nick Sears has already identified areas where lights could be placed, and also looked into finding a Christmas hat for the Big Vic statue at the entrance of Ranier.

Wagner said he'd like Sears to complete the decorations before Thanksgiving.

Council approves annexation agreement

Multimodal document now moves to county board table

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Annexing the multimodal district into International Falls took a step forward Monday with approval of an agreement by the Falls City Council.

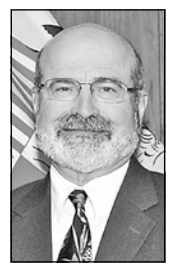
City Attorney Steve Shermoen and Mayor Bob Anderson, members of a study group on annexation, discussed the agreement which also needs approval of the Koochiching County Board.

The annexation area includes an uninhabited 51 acres located west of Second Creek along County Highway 155 and east of the existing city boundary.

The city's Economic Development Authority conducted a special meeting Tuesday to discuss land sale price and other terms for a proposed development in the district. The meeting was closed to the public, as allowed under state law.

Meanwhile, the study group, which includes county officials and residents adjacent to the district, accepted the agreement with slight reservations, Anderson said.

Those reservations involved a lack of direction on where in the district a Renewable Energy Clean Air Project could be located and protection of water quality and fish habitat in Second Creek.



Steve Shermoen

Shermoen urged the council to approve the agreement, which was developed during four meetings. He said a public hearing is not a part of the process.

Protection of Second Creek is addressed in the agreement, Shermoen said, pointing to a sentence calling for the city and county to support efforts to improve the water quality and fish habitat in Second Creek by "ensuring proper grading and drainage and that storm water management controls and standards are met" in the district as it is developed. The annexation agreement also defines a buffer zone in which no development will occur.

The council agreed to allow Shermoen to work with a group in January to develop a document that better outlines protection of fish habitat and water quality in Second Creek. He said that document may include what restrictions to development should be adopted.

"I think the neighbors are satisfied that we are moving forward in good faith and they don't want to hold up the annexation process," he said.

Councilor Paul Eklund pointed out the planned development of the district will better protect Second Creek than other developments that could have occurred with less planning and resulted in yards with fertilizer run off.

Anderson agreed several items — a rock outcropping, the buffer zone and the storm water plan — addresses concerns of neighboring property owners.

RECAP is not part of the agreement, Shermoen said. Should the district be identified by county officials as a site for RECAP, the county board would propose to the city its location within the district.

In other the business, the council agreed to meet as the Budget and Finance Committee at 9:30 a.m. Thursday to discuss the 2015 budget appropriation to five agencies: the International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, the Koochiching Museums, Backus Community Center, KCCTV and Friends Against Abuse.

The council will meet at 2:30 p.m. Nov. 24 to discuss a budget presentation planned for a special meeting at 6 p.m. Dec. 1, when it will conduct a required public hearing before adopting the final budget and levy.

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Bundle up the Kids for a
HOMETOWN HOLIDAY

FRIDAY AFTERNOON FUN
PARADE DAY, NOV. 28
CUTEST HOLIDAY PET CONTEST

Centennial Park & Shannon Square (on main street)
Music ~ Treats ~ Old Fashioned Wagon Rides ~ Warming Fires

- 1:30 p.m. Cutest Holiday Pet Contest
  Lineup 1:30 p.m. Outdoor Promenade; Judging 2 p.m. Inside Shannon Square
  First & Second Place: $25 in Chamber Dollars
  Just Dress Up Your Pets and Come!
- 3:30-6:30 p.m. Mann's Old-Fashioned Wagon Rides
- 5-6:30 p.m. Visits With Santa, Supper & Kids Fun- Elks Lodge
- 7 p.m. Pat Porter- Elks

Shop 'Til 7 p.m.

Take an Old-Fashioned Wagon Ride Friday Downtown Int'l Falls 3:30-6:30 p.m.

7 P.M. 'TWAS THE LIGHTS BEFORE CHRISTMAS PARADE
(Register floats, vehicles, animals or walkers until last minute!
Forms available at the Chamber, required. 283.9400)
(Gather along Fourth AND Main streets, Route will be published.)
SHOP SPECIAL SALES FRIDAY & SATURDAY AND REGISTER FOR OVER $1500 IN GIFT CERTIFICATES PLUS GRAND PRIZE $300!

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY
International Falls Area Chamber
chamber@intlfalls.org • 283-9400

Boise Paper employees award safety funds

Pulp/bleach employees presented $3,825 in safety funds to organizations representing area food pantries and school athletic programs.

Boise Paper, A Division of Packaging Corporation of America, set aside the funds in recognition of employee safety. Employees distributed the monies to the Falls Hunger Coalition, Salvation Army, and International Falls, Littlefork/Big Falls and Indus school district fall athletic programs.

"Area organizations really count on the safety funds generated by our safety program especially at this time of year and I commend pulp/bleach employees for their leadership," says Bert Brown, International Falls mill manager. "They consistently demonstrate 100 percent participation in safety improvement efforts to ensure employees return home injury-free."

For the past several years, monies have been set aside to assist organizations in Koochiching County based on employee safety participation. Those interested in information about the program are encouraged to call 218.285.5312.

L-R: Boise employees Tim Wherley, Dennis Sapp, and Deloran Conat, Salvation Army envoy Bev Mayfield, Boise employees Bob Bahr, Dave Ginter, Steve Lindmark, Art Leseman, and Brad Larson, Falls Hunger Coalition executive director Nancy Anderson, and Boise employees Tom Hilfer and Bill Anderson.

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