

September 3, 2019

The regular meeting of the Decorah City Council was called to order by Mayor Borowski at 5:45 p.m.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present: Randy Schissel, Andy Carlson, Emily Neal, Steve Luse, Ross Hadley, Johanna Bergan. Absent: Kirk Johnson

Motion by Bergan, second by Carlson, to approve the agenda as presented. Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Melissa Koch, Decorah Human Rights Commission, reviewed the work of the commission over the past year.

Consideration of the consent agenda was opened. Councilperson Luse requested Item C a Special Event Application celebrating Constitution Day, Friday, September 20, 2019 be removed from the consent agenda.

Motion by Carlson, second by Schissel, to approve the remaining items as presented:

- a. Minutes of the August 19, 2019 and August 26, 2019 meeting
- b. Claims
- c. Special event application celebrating Constitution Day, *Friday, September 20, 2019 – 2:00pm – 4:00pm - Removed*
- d. Consider payment of wrap up expenses for the Main St. Program application process - \$136.37
- e. Renewal Class E Liquor License for Walmart including Class B Wine, Class C Beer and Sunday Sales privileges
- f. PPE #1 – Oneota Drive Bridge replacement project - \$117,223.77
- g. Resolution 2998, accepting as complete the RCB, Dry Run Box Culvert Project

Roll call vote. All voting aye. Motion carried.

Items C Special Event Application celebrating Constitution Day was opened for discussion. Jacob Voight, Decorah High School student, stated we should take pride in our constitution and in educating our youth. The Betsy Ross Flag represents the 13 original colonies and the Gadsden Flag was the flag of the Continental Fleet and is the first flag of our Navy and Marine Corp.

Councilperson Neal feels these flags are controversial in our country. They have been used as symbols of white supremacy. They have a different context today than originally designed for and are associated with white nationalism.

Mayor Pro-Tem/Councilperson Schissel stated maybe schools have lost the ability to teach children our history.

Councilperson Carlson stated the Betsy Ross Flag was at a time that promoted slavery. Mayor Pro-Tem/Councilperson Schissel and Tom Hanson both pointed out that Betsy Ross was an abolitionist. Hanson further stated people should quit taking things out of context. Barack Obama used 2 Betsy Ross flags behind the stage during his inauguration.

He feels the best way to keep people from taking the meaning of these flags out of context is to educate them on what these flags mean, how our constitution came about and get rid of all the misinformation around them. That is why we are having these events.

Hansen and Voight stated this event is to be used to teach people the true meaning of these flags with Voight stressing this event was meant to be as bi-partisan as possible. He invited the Decorah Democrat Party to participate in the event.

Councilperson Hadley wondered if it would make sense to have this in conjunction with the high school event celebrating Constitution Day, September 17 as an educational outreach program. Hansen and Voight were agreeable to this change. (It should be noted the weekend of September 20 is Luther Family Day which is a specific weekend the flag policy approves the Luther flag to be flown.)

Councilperson Bergan feels display of the US Flag, should be good enough. Hanson questioned Bergan saying if you want to promote what Decorah is all about what better way to do it than by promoting our constitution and the ideals which formed the constitution and that this nation was founded on equality and justice. Bergan agreed but feels the best way to do that is to fly the American Flag.

Councilperson Carlson, while not speaking for the school, felt the event on this day would be fine. He further stated the means to get rid of perception is by educating people.

Motion by Schissel, second by Carlson, to amend the application to reflect September 17 and to approve the application as amended.

Roll call vote. Voting aye: Schissel, Carlson, Hadley. Voting nay: Bergan, Luse, Neal. Motion failed.

Motion by Hadley, second by Carlson, to approve Resolution 2997 accepting bids and awarding contracts for the 2019 Library Improvement Project. All voting aye. Motion carried.

City Manager Bird reviewed the proposed amendment to City Code Chapter 16, Subdivisions. Referred to Economic Betterment for further review.

Meeting adjourned on motion.



Wanda Hemesath, MMC
City Clerk, Tr.