Mayor Brad Schumacher called the meeting to order. Council members present were Jack Edmonds, Jenny Gerold, Jules Zimmer and Jeff Reynolds. Staff present, Administrator Robert Barbian, Finance Director Steve Jackson, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Todd Frederick, Community Development Specialist Stephanie Hillesheim, Clerk Shawna Jenkins, Wastewater Plant Manager Chris Klinghagen, Liquor Store Manager Nancy Campbell and Fire Chief Ron Lawrence.

**Mille Lacs County Historical Society Assessments**

Barry Schreiber from the Historical Society thanked the Council for the opportunity to appear at the April 4th Study Session, and again tonight.

Schreiber reported that the Depot was built in 1902 by the railroad, and is a 6000 square foot Queen Ann and Jacobean style brick and stone structure which went into City ownership when the railroad abandoned the branch line that passed through Princeton in the late 1970's. After serving several functions for the city, including Police station, Public Library, city offices and after school teen center, the building was given to the MLCHS about 1983. The Depot has been on the National Register of Historic Plans since 1977.

The MLCHS has always been an all-volunteer non-profit organization, and is an IRS 501(c)(3) approved non-profit. The MLCHS also is Minnesota Tax Exempt, and the Depot Parcel is also property tax exempt.

A Special Assessment was levied on the Depot property in 2008. The MLCHS has kept current with its assessment payments for more than a decade, despite this tax taking a considerable portion of the MLCHS annual income, and thereby limiting projects and programs the museum could have made during this time. As currently amortized, the MLCHS will pay more than $58,000 on this special assessment over the 15 years life of the tax.

The MLCHS has appreciated the City buydown of the amount due on this assessment in 2013, and the contributions the City recently has made annually toward the payment of this assessment. As we approach the end of the payment schedule, the MLCHS is requesting the City to buy down the remained of this assessment. We have the volunteers in place right now to do some impressive things for the Depot building, the museum and the City of Princeton. They can do more without having to service his tax.

Barbian asked how much income they get from renting out the Amdahl Room. Schreiber stated the rent is $179 and the MLCHS beings in about $4000-5000 annually. Schumacher questioned if there is also a cleaning fee. Schreiber responded that they ask for a $200 deposit and if the room is returned reasonably cleaned and the key returned, the deposit check is returned.

Barbian asked what percentage of those using it are City Residents. Schreiber estimated it to be about 60%.

Barbian asked if they have used their Small Cities Block Grant funds yet. Schreiber said they have not used it yet. They are planning to use about $10,000 for insulation and the rest for the ADA accessible bathroom project.

Barbian asked Jackson how much the city has paid towards the assessment. Jackson replied it has been $2,759 per year. If the Council agrees to cancel the balance, that is $23,600.
Barbian asked if the City Residents should get a discount since the City has been making some of these payments, and if the City should be able to use the building so many times a year.

Edmonds stated that the funds that the City has been using to pay the $2759 per year has been coming out of a railroad TIF fund. He is suggesting additional funds come from the Liquor fund. He has volunteered at the Depot on weekends and is amazed at home many people visit.

J Gerold said they have donated to the depot, and feels the city has been very generous in donating what they have. She asked what some of the other cities have donated. Schreiber responded that Milaca has their own historical society, as does Isle. They have made a pitch to the County, who has donated $3000 to MLCHS, Milaca and Isle’s Mille Lacs Lake Historical Society. They have also received donations from Princeton and Greenbush Townships.

Schumacher stated he understands repairs are likely more expensive to repair due to the historical aspect of the building.

Barbian commented that if the Council chooses to cancel these assessments, they should consider a reversionary clause so if the organization ceased to exist, the building would go back to the City. Schreiber stated the Dept is 117 years old, and is the oldest public building in the city. With the new trail coming through, they would like to see it has a welcome center type destination.

Schumacher agreed and would like to see some type of a first right of refusal agreement in place. He does see the Depot as a benefit to the community.

Edmonds stated that when the Council agreed to pay those payments yearly, it was established that it would not be taxpayer dollars. He supports getting these assessments off their backs, and being done with them today. He stated that there would be about $2,000 in interest saved if it were paid off now. Jackson says being it the city’s assessment, the bond payment just needs to be paid.

Reynolds stated that when you consider the size of budgets, Greenbush and Princeton Township donates more to the MLCHS then the City does.

EDMONDS MENTIONED FOR THE CITY TO CANCEL THE BALANCE OF THE ASSESSMENT DUE USING ALREADY DEDICATED FUNDS AND LIQUOR STORE FUNDS, WITH THE CITY BEING ALLOWED TO USE THE AMDAHL ROOM FOR ELECTIONS AS LONG AS THE CITY WISHES, AND THAT THE CITY HAVE FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL IF THE BUILDING IS SOLD OR THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY CESES TO EXIST. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. VOTE 3:1 EDMONDS, REYNOLDS AND SCHUMACHER IN FAVOR, J GEROLD OPPOSED. THE MOTION CARRIED

Schreiber stated he would be happy to write up a first right of refusal.

Social Media Policy

Schumacher stated he had some questions, and wished Attorney Toven was here.
Barbian stated if the policy was violated, it would be up to the other Council members to discipline that Councilor. J Gerold said the last paragraph talks about violations by employees, and those by Council, or Board/Commission members. Schumacher states he feels the Council is policed by the residents, as they are the ones who elected them to office, and can chose not to reelect.

Schumacher asked if there is a social media policy in place for the employees. Barbian responded that there is a section in the personnel policy that covers it. Frederick added that a draft Personnel Policy was reviewed by the department heads a few months ago, and Barbian is to review.

Reynolds stated he thinks everyone should just use their best judgement. He wants an open discussion, with public input. The employees will be covered in the personnel policy. He does not see a reason to restrict the Council and Board/Commission members. J Gerold responded that it protects the City.

J Gerold commented that someone could post a lot of information that shouldn’t be public, things that could cause lawsuits. They could be voted out in the next election, but she could cause a lot of damage in that time frame. Schumacher responded that he doesn’t believe the Council or Board/Commission members would do or post things that would negatively impact the community.

J Gerold would like to run things by Toven. Edmonds agreed.

J GEROLD MOTIONED TO TABLE THE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

American Legion and Rotary Fireworks donation

Jackson advised that we received the yearly letter from the American Legion and Rotary that requests a contribution to the July 4th Fireworks. We contributed $1000 last year, and have done $1500 in the past as well.

J GEROLD MOTIONED TO DONATE $1,500 FROM THE LIQUOR FUND FOR THE JULY 4TH FIREWORKS. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Adjournment

REYNOLDS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE STUDY SESSION AT 5:26 PM. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully Submitted,

________________________
Shawna Jenkins Tadych
City Clerk

ATTEST:

________________________
Brad Schumacher, Mayor