

**SPECIAL MEETING  
OSAKIS CITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
JULY 10, 2009  
3:30 PM**

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Keith Emerson at 3:34 PM.  
Pledge of Allegiance was spoken

Present: Kip Emerson, Bruce Pederson, Chad Gulbranson, Jerry Olson  
Others in attendance: Angela Jacobson, Lynnette Swenstad, Newman Olson, Jim Leigh,  
Shari Klukken, Joanne Olson, George Bender

Motion by Jerry seconded by Bruce to approve the agenda as presented, all ayes.

Mayor Emerson thanked those in attendance for coming.

**Project #146 – Lodging Tax**

The special meeting was called to discuss the lodging tax being used to help fund the Visitor Center and to meet with the Lake Osakis Resort Association on their participation in the use of the lodging tax.

Mayor Emerson asked Jacobson to contact the City of Alexandria to see how they handle the lodging tax.

They handle the funds the same way the city does with collecting it and giving 95% of it to the Alexandria Hotels and Hospitality Organization. This group then decides how to spend the money. The board is made up of a total of 8 with 5 of them being owners or managers of hotels or bed and breakfast that contributes lodging tax, 2 members from the community at large that are retail or travel tourism owners, and 1 member appointed by the city council.

This group then decides what the money is to be spent on and what will get the most people into town to stay overnight in hotels and bed and breakfast establishments.

City of Alexandria only collects tax from the hotels and bed and breakfast in the City of Alexandria and the purpose is to bring people to town to stay in those hotels that pay lodging tax.

Their funds do not go towards the funding of a center, but their chamber is self sufficient. This group wanted more people in town so they told the Sertoma club to start the ice fishing challenge to get people into town so they contribute money and prizes to promote the event each year. They also contribute to other events that bring people to town to stay. They are partnering with the Human Society this year for the first time. In the past the Human Society has had an event to raise awareness and activity for dogs and cats and they see that as an opportunity to draw a lot of people to town so they are giving money to help promote the event. They also contribute to the Eagles when they have their annual event in town.

The visitor center is now closed and was open from 10-3 each day. We would like to see the center open from May to September. The city currently owns the building and pays the utilities on the building.

Jim Leigh spoke on behalf of the Resort Association. He would like to see what happened in the past stay in the past and step forward, the Resort Association is willing to help but all must help that have a stake in the building. The chamber is there the Heritage center is there it benefits the town to have it open but the Resort Association or any organization will not foot the whole bill, the VFW will be contacted to donate to keeping the center open.

Newman agrees it needs to be a joint venture; we should be able to get through summer all working together.

The Lodging tax could contribute \$1,500, the VFW \$1,500, Chamber and OEDC \$1,500, this would keep it open through summer and have funds for 2010.

These organizations all have funds to contribute without raising tax money.

George Benders stated he will donate \$500 of his money to keep the center open. Jim Leigh said he would donate because he gets business directly from the center being open.

Consensus was to have the VFW and Resort Association contribute money to keep the center open until September. Jerry will follow up with the VFW, and Jim will get a check to the city for their portion.

After Labor Day Shari can help staff the center.

Councilmember Pederson stated it was great to see everyone come together and work to keep the center open.

Kip will contact Ashley to start again on Monday.

Motion by Bruce seconded by Jerry to adjourn at 4:20pm, all ayes

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Keith E. Emerson –Mayor

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Angela A. Jacobson – City Clerk