

Fireworks display approved for Falls City Hot Air Balloon Festival

(KLZA)-- The Falls City Council approved by a narrow margin awarding a contract for a fireworks display in conjunction with the 2023 Hot Air Balloon Festival to be held in June when they met Tuesday evening.

The City received bids from two companies for displays that will cost \$15 thousand and \$20 thousand. The point of contention was using money from city economic development funds to pay for the display.

Second Ward Council person Kaylie Ractliffe was critical of the proposal. Ractliffe said “for a Mayor who campaigned during the election that the city spends a lot of money, asking taxpayers to spend up to 20 thousand unbudgeted dollars of economic development funds, on fireworks, that essentially no one but the Mayor is asking for, is extremely disrespectful to taxpayers.”

Mayor Mark Harkendorff said he had heard only positive feedback on the proposal.

The other Second Ward Council member, Joe Buckminster supported the proposal, noting that he has received a lot of comments from people wishing a fireworks display would be brought back to Falls City. He said while a lot of money goes up in a hurry for fireworks, it brings people together, and allows Falls City residents who can't afford to go out of town to watch displays to see the show.

The Council voted 4 - 2 with one abstention and Council member Derrick Leyden absent to contract with Jesse Kimme from Everest, Kansas for \$15 thousand to provide the fireworks display.

Casting nay votes were Council member Ractliffe and Jim Wisdom.

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