



City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Minutes - Final

Legislative Hearings

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Tuesday, April 20, 2021

9:00 AM

Remote Hearing

7 [SR 21-48](#)

Review Request of Gregory Rotter to Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 54 SYNDICATE STREET SOUTH (50 SYNDICATE STREET SOUTH/1276 GRAND AVENUE/1278 GRAND AVENUE) (File No. J2103B, Assessment No. 218102) adopted by Council on February 10, 2021 under File No. RLH AR 20-160.

Sponsors: Tolbert

Approve the assessment, make payable over 3 years. (CPH May 12, 2021)

Greg Rotter, owner, appeared via phone

Moermond: this was already ratified by city council February 10 and was referred back as a courtesy. This will again go before the Council.

Staff report by Supervisor Lisa Martin: This is a pending special assessment for an emergency boarding for a cost of \$280, service charge of \$162, for a total assessment of \$442. The boarding was for an opening smaller than 4x8 feet on August 20, 2020 at 2:30 in the morning for an emergency. Letter sent August 26, 2020 to Gregory Rotter at the Colfax address in Minneapolis, with no returned mail.

Moermond: why are you appealing? I did look at your materials, but in your own words.

Rotter: I'm flabbergasted at the price. It was a 5 min screw up of handi-board, which is cheap. Then your big City fee. We don't have insurance coverage below \$1,000. She's a beauty shop and hasn't paid more than one month of rent this year because of Covid, and she had a broken ankle. One of her operators died, and one retired. I'm \$30,000 short between them and the restaurant. They said it was unsafe. We saw the police shimmy through. I could have gone over and done that; I would never have dreamed you would have charged so much for it.

Moermond: did anyone explain to you the makeup of the charge? A copy of the invoice?

Rotter: yeah, I don't know why the City needs \$165. How can you hire someone so expensive? Admittedly, it may cost that much to go out that time of night, but the job is so trivial. It just happens so fast.

Moermond: in the normal course of events, not an emergency, the contract would have been a \$30 charge. However, since this was in the middle of the night so there was a

\$250 emergency call out charge. That is what most of this is. I hear you have financial difficulties related to Covid, as well as other things that impact the tenant's ability to pay rent. I'm stuck with the police department indicating they tried to reach out to the owner to talk to you about the situation.

Rotter: I was up and heard from my tenant who heard from her workers, they live nearby and they ended up being the contact person. They went over there and hung around and were there when the police came. I was getting information secondhand. No police called me.

Moermond: it does say—

Rotter: I didn't have a clue it would cost that much. I had the impulse I should run over and board it up, but they said someone was coming to do it. I'm just shocked.

Moermond: it is that emergency call out, and the police don't have discretion. If a building has been breached they can't leave it open to entry. I can make this payable over a couple years at the low interest rate, and that is the way it is shaking out. The work was done, the City did get a bill and pay that bill. I am thinking at \$422, the interest rate is around 3.5%. I can make this payable over 3 years. That would make payments small when showing up on your property taxes. The first invoice would come a couple weeks after the ratification and if you don't pay it then it goes onto the 2022 taxes. So it decreases the sting of an immediate check but still covering the City's cost of taking care of this.

Rotter: I think you need to do something about those costs. It is too much. If it was a big plate glass window damaged that insurance paid for, it would make more sense. It would be a bigger project.

Moermond: it was \$30 for the supplies and work. You are absolutely right. You are paying for the emergency call out.

Rotter: I guess that's what I object too, it is just too much. Half that may be reasonable. What does the City need \$165 for? That's a lot. You're making too much paperwork out of it.

Moermond: the cost of this hearing, the mailings, assessment roll. By doing a second hearing there is a cost. Is the service charge high? Yeah, it is, its intended to recoup all the processes of doing an assessment. There are certainly different schools of thought on who should pay for that. I hear where you are coming from. It will be in the minutes for the Councilmembers to view.

Rotter: you can't even buy low deductible insurance anymore. I'm lucky to have \$1,000. Insurance isn't cheap. I had to scramble after the riots and stuff to try and get a company that wasn't all jacked up. I was lucky to have just paid it before the last wave, they literally weren't issuing any fire policies when those riots happened. I was at a tricky point. If you can't do anything, you can't. I am just shocked and unhappy. It is not like I can't pay it, but I'm getting hit from all sides here.

Moermond: I understand, I do. I don't have a lot of flexibility in reasons I can decrease. We're looking at something everyone agrees happened. Honestly, we started the conversation that the Council could look at it differently, so you could put it back with them you are disagreeing with this recommendation.

Rotter: it would be nice if I was advised about this emergency charge, I don't know if the cops know. How do you make your decisions? That would be helpful in that situation, to give them an idea of what the charge would be. That way owners can do it themselves if they have that choice.

Received and Filed