

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, January 4, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

A meeting of the Common Council of the City of Blair, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, was duly called, noticed, held and conducted in the manner required by the Common Council and the pertinent Wisconsin Statutes on January 4, 2021. The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The following members were present: Mayor A. Knutson; Alderpersons-T. Wheeler, J. Anderson, P. Syverson, W. Cartrette, M. Lisowski & C. Ekern, Clerk S. Frederixon, Trempealeau County Times

Public Comment: None

Present minutes for approval: Regular 12/7/2020. **Motion by P. Syverson to approve 12/7/2020 Regular Meeting minutes as presented, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Hen License renewal from Scott Rogstad @ 322 W. Center Street & Dawn Wozney @ 121 S. Dover Street: **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve both renewal licenses as presented, 2nd T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Community Development Authority Meeting 12/9/2021. Dennis Stephenson reported, Committee met to review CDA application from Ressel Properties, LLC for project at 107 N. Gilbert Street, where building was significantly improved to allow for a new business at that location. As required by CDA, any loan request over \$10,000.00 needs approval from the full Council. This application is for \$26,253.98, per CDA guidelines \$2,500.00 of that amount will be a 'grant' and \$23,753.98 will be a loan at 2% interest rate and a 20 year amortization schedule. Monthly payments will be \$120.00. This application was approved as a onetime exception to the CDA policy guidelines, of application needs to be approved before work is begun, due to a letter from the City requesting consideration. The CDA Committee reviewed and is recommending this application for approval to the full Council. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve CDA application from Ressel Properties, LLC as presented, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Reports: Police Department report: Chief Johnson reported, Officer Connor Kokott was given his first ever 'Oath of Office' for Police Officer, at City Hall today, family & friends, Clerk Frederixon, Officer Potts attended, it was a very important special event which Connor took seriously. He will be doing a lot of training in the immediate future, fire arms, watching court proceedings, dispatch, also working with Randy Jensen and myself on patrol. Police department renovations coming along well, only construction work left is sliding window in Chief office, planned for Wednesday. Wi-Fi being installed soon in P.D. for improved communications and information sharing with State, County, etc. Will be getting copy of policies to Police/Ordinance Committee members soon.

Park Superintendent report: Clerk read report from B. Jahr- things are going well in Park, Ice Skating Rink seems to be a hit, lot of people using it. I have been re-surfacing it once a week, added another bench, not sure if warming shed can be moved over, but will try. Did first snowplowing last week and didn't break anything☺. Been training with Bob as time allows, seem to learn something almost every day. For year end, checked remaining budget and was able to purchase items for 2021, paint for picnic tables & garbage cans, paint for shelter bathroom updates, couple of new replacement doors for Large Shelter. Most approved budget items are in or completed, new lawn mower delivered last month, garage door openers were installed, air compressor and hardware have been purchased, I will be installing next week. Still waiting on tree guy to take down some targeted tree's this winter. Wanda Cartrette, shared since the information has been out on the skating rink, she has gotten information that some families could use help getting skates for their kids. Wanda has started a 'skate drive'. People that have skates that don't fit or they don't need might 'gift' them to someone who could use them. If they have skates, they can leave them with Wanda C. and she will get them to the people that can use them. Going forward Police Chief will assist with this program, people can check at City Hall for more information.

Public Property & Buildings Committee Meeting on 12/10/2020. M. Lisowski, Chairperson reported: Considered offer from Town of Preston for first chance to purchase half of (co-ownership with township), prior Town Hall/101 W. Broadway Street, after discussion with fire department, they didn't think it ideal to have items in 2 separate locations, attempted to discuss with Cheese festival Committee also, but unable to do so. After discussions and township is still dealing with insurance issues related to fire next door, didn't seem to be a lot of interest at this time from those that attended meeting. Committee tabled topic. With the retirement of the Trempealeau Co. Building Inspector, this Committee considered hiring General Engineering Company as City building inspector for all building inspection needs, Commercial, Residential, etc., **Committee recommends Council hire G.E.C., Ordinance Committee will have a report on this also.** Fire department representatives in attendance asked Committee/Council to be reminded of need for new fire department building in future, with new codes/laws & requirements for larger, more equipment, etc. they are out growing the current building. Just early conversation on the topic.

Tax, Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting on 12/15/2020. J. Anderson, Chairperson reported: Most of meeting was in 'closed session' related to City Attorney replacement after Alan Robertson's resignation. Out of 'closed session', Committee asked Susan/Clerk to publish, 'request for proposals' to allow interested firms to apply for City Attorney, with deadline, January 5, 2021. Committee is recommending Clerk request, Kulig, Michalak & Franklin Law firm to assist City in interim, until new long term firm is decided on. This firm was recommended by Attorney Robertson. **Motion by P. Syverson, to hire Kulig, Michalak & Franklin, to assist City as 'interim' Attorney, until City approves long-term City Attorney, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Police & Ordinance Committee Meeting on 12/15/2020. C. Ekern, Chairperson reported: Committee considered hire of General Engineering Company for City building inspector needs, this Committee also recommends hire of G.E.C. to do City's building inspection needs. **Motion by W. Cartrette to hire GEC as City of Blair building inspector as presented, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.** Committee discussed solar speed signs with Chief Johnson, Committee recommends moving forward with purchase of 2 signs using 2020 P.D. budget excess dollars. Committee reviewed a couple updated Ordinances with Chief Johnson, but still working on those. Complaints about some reckless driving around City, were also discussed with Chief, he thinks that has been addressed since this meeting. Some discussion about weight limits for large trucks parking on City streets, Chief has not been able to find Ordinances that prohibit that at this time. J. Anderson suggested Ordinance Committee look at a requirement related to fire inspection on commercial buildings with change of ownership/prior to any new business opening.

Park Committee with Village of Taylor Meeting on 12/21/2020. J. Anderson, Committee member reported: Interviewed gentleman for Park/Recreation Program director, seemed good and qualified. I believe they offered him position, haven't heard if accepted? Concern right now is timing on YMCA basketball league starts tomorrow. If at all possible would like our kids to be able to participate. Need to get on this to see if it can still happen...Clerk will call Taylor to inform & ask them to check on this YMCA program. Jill agrees recommend agreeing to hire this person, seemed like a good applicant.

Clerk report: We want to thank long time, City Attorney Alan Robertson for guiding our City Council's on legal matters for 51+ years. Attorney Robertson's last day as City Attorney was 12/31/2020. We thank him, respect him and give him our BEST wishes for all he does in the future. Reminder that nomination papers for Alderman positions need to be completed and returned to the City office by 5:00 pm on Tuesday, January 5, 2021...Mayor position nomination papers need to be in by 5:00 pm on Friday, January 8, 2021. Our wonderful, dedicated Mayor Ardell Knutson has decided, with some uncertainty NOT to have his name on the April 2021 ballot for re-election. He will complete his term until mid-April. Wow, what a wonderful example you have set

for our future Mayor's. Perspective Mayoral candidates can call the City Office for information and deadlines. Reminder that the sewer portion of City Water/Sewer quarterly charges will be increasing as previously presented on January 1, 2021, which will be reflected on users April 2021 billings. Questions can be directed to City Office. This increase was necessary to meet budgetary requirements of the utility, which is required to be 'self-funded' by user rates. FYI: I did send a 'Thank you' Notice from City of Blair to all that assisted Blair/Preston Fire department with the November Blair Haus fire. Will be published next week.

Mayor Ardell thanked City for the opportunity, he served 8 years as Council member and then 17 years as Mayor for total of 25 years of service. Clerk Frederixon said he stops every morning to stay updated on City happenings and see if he can assist with anything. There was a round of applause for the Mayor.

Building permits: None

Present vouchers for review/approval: **Motion by C. Ekern to approve vouchers as presented, 2nd P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Paul-Yes, Wanda-Yes, Jill-Yes, Mike-Yes, Terry-Yes, Chris-Yes. Motion approved.**

Wanda Cartrette, long time Ward 1 Council member and Chairperson of Park Committee, gave a heartfelt statement that after much thought and consideration she and her husband have decided to move from their home in the City of Blair, closer to their boys on the other side of the State, she will be resigning her Alderperson position effective today, 1/4/2021. Wanda expressed gratitude and respect for our community, thanks to residents who let her represent them, fellow council members, Mayor, Clerk/Deputy Clerk, City employees, Police department and School District. Special thanks to those that made Blair their place of business and hopes to see continued growth in the City and hope this Council continues to support businesses. "I wish you all success as you continue your work to build Blair and make it a destination of choice and the best place to call home".

Motion by W. Cartrette to move to 'closed session' per agenda language, 2nd M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Motion by W. Cartrette to come out of 'closed session', re-enter to open session, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Motion from 'closed session': **Motion by P. Syverson to hire Chad Halverson as Blair Police Department training officer @ \$26.00 per hour when performing training, part time officer hours will remain @ current part time officer wage, 2nd W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Motion by W. Cartrette to have Personnel Committee review current policy and consider a statement related to mileage paid/not paid for training related to work. Also, at this point Council agrees 0 mileage will be paid for training done from the City of Blair location, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Next Council meeting is February 1, 2021 @ 6:30 pm

Motion W. Cartrette to adjourn meeting, 2nd T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.