

Special Council Meeting minutes, December 8, 2022

Mayor John Rawson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Council attending: J. Tranberg, J. Anderson, P. Syverson, C. Ekern, D. Stephenson, J. Rawson.
Others attending: Clerk/Treasurer-Debra Fremstad, Trempealeau County Times-Andrew Dannehy, Dave Quarne, Dwight Quarne, Mike & Jaime Ressel, Dawn Burns, Trooper Steve Wojcik, Attorney Mark Radcliffe.

No public comment.

Police Chief Kent Johnson expressed concerns over the increased presence of the WI State Patrol in the City. He considers all the stops by Trooper Steve Wojcik to be overbearing and stated it has harmed business within the City and citizens are feeling harassed. Tom Hanson was pulled over for a seat belt violation by Trooper Wojcik. Tommy immediately became very irate and yelled profanities at the Trooper, because of this behavior the Trooper decided to stay in Blair and patrol the City and not County Road S. Since this incident, the citizens of Blair have not handled the situation well. The in-person and social media ridicule have been unacceptable. The Blair Police Department will not tolerate this conduct and will issue citations for disorderly conduct at the very least and may find themselves going to jail for criminal charges. Trooper Wojcik typically treats people with respect and fairly. The State Patrol has the right to be anywhere in the state. There are a lot of rumors going around and I don't believe these rumors to be true at all. The Eau Claire post could put a bubble around Blair and never respond to anything here no matter what or they could do exactly what they are doing and patrol heavily. Chief Johnson considers this overbearing and is recommending that the City make an open record's request for the number of stops since October 1, 2022 that are expressly related to Trooper Wojcik. This will show if there is a high saturation of stops in the City of Blair. Councilperson Stephenson also spoke about receiving several complaints. Dennis had gotten numbers from Trooper Wojcik. Since April of 2022, probably related to the Highway 53 closure, there were 690 stops in Trempealeau County, 27 of which were from the City of Blair. This situation seems to have been blown out of proportion. Let's look at this as an educational tool-be polite if stopped by the police, stay off social media, wear your seat belt, drive the speed limit, make sure your vehicle is in working order. Our energy should be focused on making Blair a better place to live-clean up our properties and let law enforcement know about drugs in this community. The Mayor agreed 100%. The Attorney suggested a phone call to the head of the Eau Claire Post – an open records request is a little too much and can be seen as harassing in and of itself. Attorney Radcliffe would be willing to talk to Trooper Wojcik.

Mayor J. Rawson is recommending Jeanine Kikilas to the Plan Commission. **Motion by J. Anderson to accept Jeanine Kikilas to the Plan Commission, 2nd by J. Tranberg. Discussion-is she a resident of the City of Blair, yes. Vote: Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.**

Motion by C. Ekern to approve the Q-Rail lease with the City of Blair regarding the salt/sand shed contingent on Quarne's approval, 2nd by D. Stephenson. Discussion-none. Roll call vote: D. Stephenson-yes, C. Ekern-yes, P. Syverson-yes, J. Anderson-yes, J. Tranberg-yes. Motion carried.

Motion by C. Ekern to approve the Blair Sportsmen's Club Class B liquor license for the Ice Fishing Contest on January 7, 2023, 2nd by J. Tranberg. Discussion-none. Vote: Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.

Motion by C. Ekern to adjourn at 7:38 pm, 2nd by D. Stephenson. Discussion: none. Vote: Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.

Next Common Council meeting on Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 6:30pm.

Debra Fremstad, Clerk/Treasurer