

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, May 6, 2019 at 7:00 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 May 6, 2019. Mayor A. Knutson was absent so Council President Paul Syverson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Alderpersons P. Syverson, W. Cartrette, T. Wheeler, J. Anderson, M. Lisowski and C. Ekern; Clerk/Treasurer S. Frederixon, Attorney A. Robertson and Trempealeau County Times

Open Meeting Law compliance was verified

Present minutes for approval: Regular Council Meeting 4/8/19 & Re-organizational Meeting 4/16/19. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve as presented both sets of minutes, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

New Business in Blair: Welcome to Desert Rose Thrift Store, located @ 113 W. Broadway. Owners Karyn (Michele) Bart and Ron Randall, took over the store from Katie Lien on approximately the first of 2019. Per Ron they are a 'thrift store' much like before, but not an antique store and prices reflect that type of merchandise. They also have incense and hand crocheted items for sale. Ron says they have re-organized the store and it is set up for an easy shopping experience. Store hours are Monday – Saturday, 10 am – 7 pm. They say they are thrilled to be a part of the business community here in Blair and have found the town to be most welcoming.

2 New Businesses in Downtown B-1 District checking if considered a 'permitted' use in this zoning district:

Mike and Jamie Ressel, owners @ 231 Gilbert Street plans for retail automobile sales at that location and Penny Paulson & Kailee Jahr, owners @ 202 W. Broadway are planning to provide professional services via a new 'Adult Day Services' Center. Clerk Treasurer Frederixon reported both types of businesses are listed as 'permitted uses' in our Ordinances. Attorney A. Robertson agreed. No action taken.

Public Comment: **Fred Stendahl**, City resident, commented that he strongly believed there is no need to fill the vacant 3rd Police officer position in this City. He appreciated the drug related arrests being done, but still feels our City is small enough and not really growing a lot and has no need to fill the 3rd officer position. **Trempealeau County District Attorney John Sacia**, commented that through his office, he sees a definite need to fill that 3rd officer position. He shared numbers that showed the City of Blair has for months, double and triple the amount of serious cases, mostly 'meth amphetamine' cases than the surrounding Cities & Villages. That is proof there is a need in Blair for law enforcement. He also said he knows there is concern of officers 'targeting' tavern customers, but he said the numbers show that is not the type of law enforcement that is going on in Blair. Very few alcohol related arrests, mostly drug related cases. As a resident of this County and District Attorney he has great concern if that were to go unchecked in the future. We should applaud the Blair Officers who are willing to make the effort to improve the City by working to keep this type of activity in check. The only way we can begin to lessen the frequent illegal activity in this area, including drug related activity is to have law enforcement contacts. Get the offenders into the legal system, get involved in their lives, we can get them in contact with treatment resources and hopefully headed on a path to being 'productive' members of the area. He understands there is a cost to 3 officers, but there is also a very high cost if Blair develops a 'meth amphetamine' culture. For the reasons stated, he urged the City Council to fill the 3rd officer position. County Coroner Bonnie Kindschy commented, she agrees with District Attorney Sacia and also, sees the high drug related activity in Blair, while doing her Coroner duties. She also has need for officer assistance at all of her calls. Officers are of great help to her during her interactions with families and on scenes related to her position. She also urged the City Council to continue with 3 full time officers as budgeted for.

Present annual Liquor Licenses Application renewals for Publication: **Class B** – KTS Properties (Honey Hole Saloon); Steve Swenson (Swenson's Bar) and Jeremy Tranberg (Blair Haus Sports Bar & Grill)...**Class A** – Dolgencorp, LLC (Dollar General # 11052); J & S. Sales (Express Mart) and Kwik Trip Inc. (Kwik Trip #328). **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve as presented, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

CDBG Street & Utility Grant project update: per S.E.H. engineering, the preconstruction meeting was on 4-23-19. Permit approvals, except WDNR sanitary sewer extension permit have all been received. Next steps: Gerke expects to install dewatering equipment on Main Street later this week or next week and start watermain near the intersection of Main Street and 4th Street after dewatering has drawn down the groundwater levels. Gerke is requesting permission to work an 8 hour shift on Saturday's from 7 am to 3:30 pm if needed to keep project on timeline. This is in anticipation of weather delays, etc. **Motion by M. Lisowski to approve, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approve.**

Police & Ordinance Committee 4/9/19 Meeting report, per Chairperson C. Ekern: Advertisements have been placed to recruit for our vacant police officer position. City Police Chief continues to improve the hiring process, which is very detailed and modern, by adding some psychological testing this time. Pay range recommended to be same as 2 years ago, which is \$18-\$19 per hour dependent on experience. This Committee recommends 2019 Speed humps be placed in the Park with the Park Committee deciding on placement. Discussion related to 3rd officer need, M. Lisowski shared numbers of police activities with Committee, possibly identifying sections of time when coverage might be limited in the future. Chief Wheeler shared there have been protesters in the City weekly at a local health clinic, and still looking for ways to improve false rumors, causing negative perceptions about the Blair policing. Also at the meeting a Human Service's representative shared the County has added a 3rd K-9 unit, due to increased and modern policing needs in our area.

WI Retirement consideration for current part time officer during interim of new hire. Currently the City has 120 police hours set per week, with only 2 officers or 80 non-overtime hours between them. That leaves shifts to be filled in order to maintain the current coverage schedule. Since we ended our part time officer coverage, we have very few available to us. Trempealeau County Sheriff department officer, Randy Jenson has been good to fill shifts often, he is a Blair graduate and familiar with the City and has long term police experience. He is really the only P.T. officer offering to help Blair continue coverage during this time. He is at the point of WRS eligibility, which is 10.72 % or an approximate \$112.87 per month cost to the City if we add him to the WRS. This is only paid on hours worked so, when he does not work, example if shifts are filled by new officer, no retirement is paid for him. Currently, shifts are being filled with overtime hours which is at a much higher hourly wage (more than double) than part time police wage, the City also is paying the 10.72 % for hour officers overtime wages. Question: Consider approval of having Officer Jenson added to our WRS plan for hours worked in part time capacity. Part time Officer Chad Halverson is currently approved for Blair WRS, but due to availability is unable to assist with part time in our City. Officer Jenson, currently is on the WRS program with Trempealeau County Sheriff's and Strum Police departments. Council President Syverson stated he believes WRS rules state once someone is on the plan they are always on and all hours are added together from all employers, so he probably should have automatically, already been on our plan. Clerk Frederixon did not understand the WI Retirement rules to be that way, but rather each employer is independent and uses either a 600/1200 hour rolling calendar to determine eligibility, but said she would research and report back. Clerk Frederixon asked for action on the topic contingent on information, but none was taken. Discussion was to reduce coverage, and also a reluctance to lower coverage with reports from public comments on need to keep coverage. Verbal Council agreement to wait until WRS information is verified.

Combination Park & Public Property & Building Committee meeting 4/11/19: Lake Committee Chairperson Kevin Lisowski reported, have been meeting over a year, a very good and valuable participation from this Park Committee, Hi Crush, Badger Mining, Kevin Edison/Independence Lake Improvement Committee, S.E.H., Fred Stendahl and other residents/community members. Our goal has always been to be good stewards of City needs and finances. Basically, DNR is having us request the permits for the dredge to be bid for being done 'hydraulically', with alternate bids to be collected for it to be done 'mechanically'. WDNR reasoning is related to their perception of timing & regulations with Corp of Engineers and 'wetland' disturbances being less with a hydraulic plan. WDNR said if bids show 'hydraulic' (using pipes to suck the sediment from bottom of Lake and pipe to whey ponds, hard for us to see exactly what is being collected/done) being more cost prohibitive they would then consider permits for 'mechanical' plan (draw the Lake down and have equipment dig the sediment out, place in trucks and ship to whey pond area, much easier to see what is being done) much better quality control for City. S.E.H. will be done by end of this month with the design portion of this project, we will be ready to send out to bid. We need to work on how we plan on funding for this project. S.E.H. costs estimates depending on how project is done range from \$1.8 to \$2.1 million. Committee meets on 5/16 and goal is to figure out how to fund project. Question to City on assisting with funding project in some form, possibly forming a 'Lake District', which is incorporated in the real estate tax process we think. Independence/Galesville and many other Cities use this process to manage their Lake. Request for Clerk to research and check with Independence/Galesville on how Lake District works to see if it might work for us. Clerk reported City already has Lake District and it does encompass the entire boundaries of the City. Clerk will check how to make it active. Council would consider a referendum for resident support, prior to any change with Lake District. Many locations were looked at and the previous dredge spoils location is not an option. **Park Committee Chairperson W. Cartrette reported:** There was an Aquatic Center inspection meeting with Wapasha to identify quite a few items left to be completed prior to State and County inspections. They are expected to be completed prior to inspection dates. Cleaning system updates – found out the previous system was damaged in the shed collapse so there will be some insurance recovery on that. After researching systems used by Arcadia and Black River Falls Lunda Aquatic Centers, a Carrico Aquatic robot system comes highly recommended by both. The warranty is 3-7 years compared to 1 year on the other suggested models. The Carrico has replaceable parts so if one item needs replacement the entire system does not need to be replaced, which seems to be the case with the other models. The Carrico model comes from Jefferson, WI and comes with on site and excellent customer service as needed. The other models were from Kentucky, Maine and Florida. The Carrico model is \$10,000 the other models are approximately \$2,500 - \$5,000. Cartrette explained, the Council had approved \$6,000 for a cleaning system, with the expected insurance money and any additional covered by an excess from the Wanek donation, she would recommend and request the approval to purchase the Carrico pool cleaning system. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve purchase of Carrico pool system and use approved \$, insurance \$ and Wanek sign donation excess as needed to cover purchase of system, 2nd C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.** 2019 Qualified Aquatic Center Lifeguard & Swim Lesson Staff applicants were recommended by Park Committee for hire: 16 presented – A. Beam, J. Beam, I. Berg, C. Herber, N. Margan, I. Margan, T. McAdams, M. Nehring, Mc. Nehring, Morgan Nehring, A. Olson, M. Quarne, L. Kidd, B. Johnson, V. Paulson, H. Everson. Estimate of 5 lifeguards on site daily. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve as presented, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approve.** Discussion about making sure landscaping being taken care of by contractor or not? Waiting for more information, but are watching it. It was announced that Mara Peterson from Blair, was hired and has accepted the Blair and Taylor Park and Recreation Director Position. She is formally hired by the Village of Taylor and Blair supports the position with 50% of the wage, etc. Eagle Scout project structure is planning to be set up near the camping area. Would need to have concrete poured and structure set in concrete. **Motion by C. Ekern to allow Clerk to have this project completed within an \$800**

budget with placement to be determined by Park Committee, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: Needs to be reinforced somehow for safety. C. Ekern has given authorization to decide on placement for Park Committee. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Rental of Concession stand to continue as past, where Park and Recreation group is required to move things from the refrigerator, counters and general area purchased by them to the cabinets or totes, in order to allow for renters to have access to concession stand for their event. Verbal agreement by entire Council. Discussion: anything that brings people in to town we should support. W. Cartrette reminded that when the large shelter concrete work is being done to remind contractor of the slope to the building that is causing water to pool and design upgrades to eliminate that. Clerk said contractor was informed of this.

Public Buildings & Property Committee Meeting 4/11/2019-Committee Chairperson T. Wheeler reported- In order for the Community Center to allow having Cheese Festival Committee and Sons of Norway groups display items as done before in the Center, this Committee recommends (as coordinated with Town of Preston) the items need to have a display case made with a glass front that can be attached to the walls. Also, recommend a large clock be placed in the center of South wall of center; start the solicit bids for bathroom remodel & coordinate with Preston and to keep size of replacement park shed down to avoid need for 'state approved plans', recommend to reach out to local contractors for estimates. Committee next meeting is 5/25/19 to view site of collapsed shed to assist with decision making. Motion by J. Anderson to (contingent on Town of Preston agreement) approve encased 'shadow box' to display items for Cheese Festival, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved. Motion by J. Anderson to (contingent on Town of Preston agreement) approve encased 'shadow box' to display items for Sons of Norway-to match Cheese Fest display, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

3rd of July Fireworks Committee spoke: letting the City Council know this is their final year, there were hoping someone or some group would step up to continue the wonderful event. They have put 21 years of blood, sweat and tears in to it, shame to see it end. If someone has interest in becoming involved contact Helaine Bradley or Doug/Kay Nokken. City Council would be interested in seeing information. Fireworks Committee would help new group/groups but this is the year, needs to start learning now. Discussion, no action. **City Council unanimously gave their appreciation and thanks to this Committee for the WONDERFUL event they have created.**

Public Buildings & Property Committee Meeting 4/25/2019-Committee Chairperson M. Lisowski reported discussions related to Park shed replacements. Simple blue print for smaller shed, in an effort to avoid need for more complicated plan requirements, has been completed and is in packet. 32'x 48'x 12' tall shed, with concrete floor, this one would be insulated, and the previous shed was not. Very similar to the new NAPA shed on Spring Street. Thinking that many of the items stored in there could be eliminated for inside storage or will go to the pool. Discussions on remodeling for bathrooms at Community Center, Lisowski researched and is being told we should consider removing 1 stall in order to make a good ADA compatible restroom. **Council direction is to have Committee Chair talk with Simmons Construction to obtain an estimate for ADA complainant bathroom remodel. Motion by C. Ekern to put the replacement park shed as presented out for bids, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: Question to check if in flood plain. Question related to Lisowski business possibility to bid, Lisowski said they were too busy and understood that concept that might be a 'conflict of interest'. None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved. Mondovi Countryside Coop has given a counter offer for the land parcels on Gilbert Street near the Park entrance. Motion by W. Cartrette to send to Public Property and Building Committee for consideration during a closed session, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No. Motion approved.**

Business & Economic Development Committee Meeting 5/2/2019, C. Ekern-Chairperson reported: Fireworks event discussions –Chamber of Commerce representative, R. Hoff, explained, 2019 is the last year for current and founding group after 20 years. Group is looking for someone or some group to take over and continue the tradition. So far no luck. Chamber of Commerce and Fire Department have had discussions about this, looking to city to see if any collaboration could be discussed. Committee asked for numbers and general information to be brought to full council meeting on 5/6/19. This had not been communicated to the Fireworks Committee and they did not bring that information today. This committee did not want to see the event end, but could not find enough time commitment available from any current City group to be able to take this on. Rob Grover County Parks, Tourism & Economic Development Office spoke and shared knowledge and available resources for this new Committee. Committee reviewed the new City Comprehensive plan also for ideas and plans for improvement in Economic development in the City. Tim Wheeler reviewed what he learned and resources gained from an Economic Development Conference he attended in 2017. Goals for this Committee include: meet with building owners for possible arrangement for uses of buildings & empty lots; Stronger inspections & code enforcement of buildings maintenance; Sharing of County economic development resources; research development of a City Facebook page (possibly involving school district students) and website update; Committee recommends/request approval for Committee to research and contact property owners of buildings/empty lots/that are sitting idle or in poor condition, to discuss possible ideas/options to improve or fill them that would be beneficial to the downtown district. Committee wants to initiate stronger inspection and code enforcement of buildings in our City that are in need of repair/improvement. Request from Committee for Clerk to research if Council approved use of City's own inspector for projects that fall between County residential inspections and State approved plans. **Motion by W. Cartrette to request office gather information on vacant property's for this Committee, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.** Committee Chairperson asked if Ok to approach UBOB and other property owners on collaborations to upgrade downtown/city, **City Council verbally supported that. Very good 1st meeting. Motion by C. Ekern to have Ordinance Committee revisit the 30% downstairs business front 70% apartment in back on lower floor of building Ordinance, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No. Motion approved.**

Request from Clerk/Treasurer to change meeting dates set at the 're-organizational' meeting to consider the office billing cycle, be returned to the 1st Monday of each month. Thank you for thinking about the billing cycle, but the Council took care of the in 2016 when they allowed the office to send out general payments(example Xcel energy, We energies, etc.) prior to the council meeting to avoid late payments. We do have an Ordinance stating we have the meetings on the first of the month, and this has worked well the last couple of years. **Motion by C. Ekern to return meeting to the 1st Monday, unless holiday or prior to an election and then it would fall to the 2nd Monday of the month, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Building Permits: County Permits required: Linda Myhre @ 406 W. Broadway St. for a deck rebuild/expansion. This permit meets the setback requirements, it will need a County permit with a copy returned to the City prior to any construction and County inspection. Shirley Jensen @ 309 Tenney Avenue for a deck and fence. County permit needed for the deck. Fence ok as described on side of home on lot line. Andy & Nissa Stevens @ Granberg Hill Road for new single family home. Using a certified builder, needs county permits and inspections. Jeffrey Johnson @ 209 4th St. for new garage and slight change of driveway. Needs county permit and inspections. Using a certified builder. **Fences: Andrew Dannehy @ 318 E. Broadway St for a fence in back yard and along lot line. Clayton Lloyd @ 507 Pumphouse Road for a fence along side of house on lot line. Natural Gas line installations: We Energies @ 231 Gilbert Street for new underground gas service installation We Energies @ S. Immell St. 870 'of 2 "PE Main installed. We Energies @ 213 S. Knutson St. for installation of new natural gas service. John Anderegg @ 647 E. Taft Street for unattached accessory building with cement slab**. This does need a County permit.

Motion by J. Anderson to approve building permits with needed County permits supplied, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Fire Pits Applications: Richard Willette @ 500 W. Broadway Street; Justin Taylor @ 503 E. Center Street, Lot 20; Carol Toraason @ 412 W. @ 2nd Street; Andrew Dennehy @ 318 E. Broadway Street; Erick Anderson @ 425 S. Peterson Avenue; Cassandra Schneider @ 840 E. Broadway. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve Willette, Toraason, Dennehy and Schneider as presented, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes, No 0. Motion approved. Motion by J. Anderson, to approve Taylor and Anderson after confirmation related to distance from structure measurement and consideration for State Hwy. ‘right of way’ measurement, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved. Motion by W. Cartrette to have Police Department carry a list of permitted fire pits and do an Ordinance compliance check on a random 10% quantity, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: Checking distance from structures, type of items being burned, if they have an approved permit, etc.-W.C. yes add that to the motion. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Clerk report: Per Eric Kleven/City Assessor: Open Book & B.O.R. for City property and personal property assessment meeting was held and we are in compliance with DOR for 2018. If we fall out of compliance for 2019, which is very likely, it will be our first year out of compliance. We have a total of 6 years to get the City back into compliance by doing a revaluation. If 2019 is our first year, our final year to do a revaluation would be 2024. If our Board of Reviews over the next few years are quiet and there isn’t any unforeseen major issues with equity, I would recommend 2024 as the earliest year for our next revaluation. We will watch every year until then and let City know if any concerns arise. We are in good shape at this point. Mondovi Coop parcel counter offer was given and will be considered in closed session and acted on in public session at a later date if need be. Thank you to Village of Ettrick for offering to sell Blair Aquatic Center season passes for us.

City Real & Personal Property Assessment Maintenance 2020 & 2021 contract increase of \$100, previous contract was \$7,100 and will be \$7,200 for next 2 years. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve as presented, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Present May 2019 Vouchers for review & approval: **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve vouchers as presented, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Roll Call Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Motion by M. Lisowski to adjourn, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Next Regular Council meeting is June 3, 2019 @ 7:00 pm

Susan Frederixon-Clerk/Treasurer