

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, October 8, 2018 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 October 8, 2018. The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Mayor A. Knutson; Alderpersons-W. Cartrette, T. Wheeler, J. Anderson, P. Syverson, C. Ekern, Clerk/Treasurer S. Frederixson, Attorney A. Robertson, Blair Press and Trempealeau County Times. Alderperson M. Lisowski was absent.

Public Comment: Tim Robertson clarification if residents allowed to speak for agenda item # 16, Mayor Yes.

Present minutes for approval: Regular Council Meeting 9/10/2018. **Motion W. Cartrette to approve minutes as presented, 2nd C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Honey Hole Saloon, owner, Tracey Solberg spoke about a Chamber of Commerce 1st Annual Blair Mini-Golf Tournament & Norwegian Day event set for 11/3/2018. Hoping to set aside Ordinance Chapter 41 on Public Consumption so participants can travel from business to business with beverages if they wish. Organizers will clean up any mess from the event, similar to Cheese Festival. **Motion P. Syverson to relax Chapter 41 as requested on 11/3/2018 from Pearl Street to Dover Street and Center to Broadway, until bar closing time, 2nd W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

S.E.H. City Zoning Administrator report on Source Energy mine compliance issues: Michael Nied of S.E.H. sent a report for a follow up inspection completed on 10/3/2018. Conditions noted: Washout areas on overburden fill pad have been repaired & offsite sediment in farmer's field removed. Stormwater best management practices are in place along with overburden fill pad. Contractor hired to remove offsite sediment in wetland with coordination with WDNR. S.E.H. recommended sediment removal in Ponds 1 and 2 so stormwater holding capacity of ponds is not compromised. Source Energy said they are waiting for final approval from Gas Company to construct the stormwater pond between the overburden fill pad and plant. Additional stormwater ponds 3 and 15 are scheduled to be constructed soon. It is S.E.H.'s opinion Source Energy continues to make progress, though additional changes should be made. We recommend continued monthly inspections to observe ongoing progress. Nathan Stobb/Source Energy, was at meeting also to answer questions. **Motion J. Anderson to continue monthly inspections to improve compliance issues, with another inspection to take place prior to the November 12, 2018 meeting & inspection report to be given at that meeting, 2nd P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Source Energy underground slurry status: N. Stobbs reported, line is operational. At this point it is only able to move about 75% of the capacity produced. Will still need some trucking until line can handle full capacity. Source Energy is working on boosting the slurry capacity and very soon, expect only waste sand to be trucked. Working on optimizing all parts of the slurry so this can happen. We continue to monitor and sweep the roadways also. Wet plant expects to shut down end of November and reopen in February/March 2019. Will be running during that shut down.

DNR Forestry Grant update: Clerk/Treasurer Frederixson reported grant application was due 10/1/18. S.E.H., Deputy Clerk/Treasurer and City Clerk/Treasurer worked together and the application was submitted 9 days early. DNR Timeline: November 15 approximately applicants will be notified/subject to change for # of applicants. December 2018 successful applicants will receive grant agreements no later than 12/31/18. Cross fingers...we think we have a strong application.

Trempealeau Co. District Attorney Candidate, Rick Niemeier introduced himself. Gave the Council information on his experience related to the position, dedication to Trempealeau County and asked for our support on November 6, 2018.

Park Committee Meeting held on 9/12/18 report: Chairperson W. Cartrette reported:

Lake Project update: Waiting to hear back from DNR on Wetland Delineation submission.

Park & Recreation Program discussions: Request for baseball and softball bases be replaced with 'break-away type bases, questions if Blair Taylor School District has an agreement to assist with upgrades for baseball field – no agreement that Clerk knows of. Directors believe both fields need to be re-surfaced for safety reasons and current program directors were working to get a quote on costs. Suggest placing safety fencing in front of dug out area on the in-field side, request to consider small old shed near ball field to be taken down as it is in disrepair – Wanda C. will take a look at and report back. Current Directors of this program announced last year that they would be needing to end as directors of the recreation programing after the 2019 season. They are helping with transition to new director/directors, but no plan is in place yet. Current directors have put together a calendar of items done for this program, which is really all year round, that will help new directors. Park Committee will be working on this issue. Rec. program costs for 2018 were \$3,642.00 so far with approximately \$600.00 in league fee invoices to still come in. Peacock donation was discussed and decided we will not be able to accept this kind donation at this time due to modifications needed to pen, insurance and noise for campers. Many thanks to Carol Ekern for offer. Deer in park –Jill A. has a new lead on possible deer acquisition and is still working to secure deer, but nothing solid to report at this time. Campsite expansion- only in beginning stages of discussion at this point, but on our agenda for future consideration. Consideration was discussed for upgrades to basketball and tennis courts, but until the Lake dredge plan is set, we can't work on that, as we may have to move solids over those areas. Thoughts also of converting the tennis courts to other purposes, and would like ideas from Community. Clerk shared the idea from a community member to consider 'pickle ball' on those courts. Pool pay application # 10 from Wapasha Construction Company, Inc. for work done up to 8/31/18 for \$220, 571.00, which has been reviewed and approved as valid for payment by Burbach Aquatics, Inc. Wanda is monitoring the mortar color and pool line quality issues and expects it to be fixed. Things are looking good. **Motion C. Ekern to approve Wapasha pay request # 10 as presented for \$220,571.00, 2nd J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved. Motion J. Anderson to approve the Park & Rec. Program payment of \$3,642.00 + the \$600+ league fees when they come in, 2nd W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Public Property & Buildings Committee Meeting on 10/4/2018 – Chairperson T. Wheeler reported they met with Countryside Coop C.E.O., Frank Brenner about 2 parcels on Gilbert Street. It was decided that Mr. Brenner would talk with his legal staff for more information and bring back to us.

Annual D.O.R. TID reporting Joint Review Board Meeting is scheduled for 10/10/18; Clerk/Treasurer Frederixon reported there will be representatives from the Blair Taylor School District, Trempealeau County Board, City and a 'member at large' from the City, Western Technical College, Brian Reilly of Ehlers' & Associates (City Financial advisor) and Clerk Treasurer Frederixon at this meeting. This meeting is required by the WI Department of Revenue to give the City an opportunity to review the current TID's with the taxing districts.

Application for Class B Liquor license for Blair Preston Fire Department event: BPFDF Beer & Wine tasting Rib cook off on 10/27/2018 at the Community Center/Fire Department location. **Motion C. Ekern to approve as presented, 2nd J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Community Center 2017 Flood repair update: Work has been completed except the flooring. Simmons construction invoice for general flood damage repair work in building including the ceiling. Balance remaining for the City, after insurance \$ for this work is \$16,922.72. **Motion J. Anderson to pay using \$5,534.00 from unneeded ambulance CIP fund, \$1,494.00 from the Community Center building maintenance fund and the balance due out of the ‘Contingency fund of the CIP budget, 2nd P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

New Community Center Chairs & Tables: Killian Floor recently finished installing new flooring in Community Center, his recommendation is that the old chairs and tables do not have protected legs and will immediately damage the new flooring. Also the heavy metal rack that is used to store the chairs is already sinking into the new floor, they have put a temporary barrier under but that needs to go, if moved at all by renters it will scratch the new flooring. Coincidentally, Friday, Lions Club representative Carl Axness stopped in the City office and spoke with Mayor Knutson and Clerk/Treasurer Frederixon and stated the Lions Club is considering donating part or all of the money toward new chairs, they have a meeting tonight. Requested the City to research, which Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Fremstad did and found 96 chairs and 12 tables, made of the same type of material as the tables currently used, pricing from \$3,100-\$4800 depending on how they are purchased. Hoping for a motion from the Council to approve purchase of the chairs & tables, with hope much of cost will be re-cooped through Lion’s Club and possibly Cheese Festival Committee, which also mentioned interest in helping. Town of Preston has this on their agenda also tonight. **Motion C. Ekern to accept this plan as presented with City staff assisting as needed with delivery, 2nd W. Cartrette. Discussion-None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Clerk Report: Due to very favorable claims data, we are expecting an approximate 3.9 % increase for 2019 Health Insurance, many years recently there has been 10% or higher. Savings comparison between 3.9 and 10% which equals about \$10,849.00 savings for 2019. Clean up days event went ok, approximately 20 customers dropped items off. In an effort to keep the City tidy, Clerk Frederixon drove the City and made calls or talked with over 20 residents, to let them know we had the dumpsters for another week and if they needed to get rid of items cluttering their yard our prices are VERY reasonable. Most took me up on the offer and even thanked me. Mr. Russel Hurst stopped in the office to say, in his loudest ‘outside’ voice his items were antiques and none of my or the City’s business and to NEVER call him again for ANYTHING! So there is always 2 sides to every story, no insult was intended and only trying to help with Ordinance enforcement and comfort of neighbors.

October 2018 Building Permits: Wayne Sweno @ 407 S. Peterson Avenue for replacement of wooden landing & steps at rear of home. County permit required. Source Energy Services Preston @ N33005 Helmers Road for Plate Press Enclosure. State approved plans required. **Motion J. Anderson to approve as presented with required permits, 2nd T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Blair Law Enforcement/General public feedback: some residents and business owners stated they have concerns of a negative perception of many people saying they avoid coming to Blair because they think the City is over policed and if they talk about it to City Council they may face retribution. They commented this perception has a negative effect on their businesses and fundraising events. Police Chief Tim Wheeler and Officer Mark Spaeth both shared they have factual statistics proving the City Police department stops & tickets are actually below the County and National averages. The Police department goal is not to harass, but to protect the community and businesses and only make valid stops. When they do stop their practice is to treat all people respectfully and most times logs can verify only warnings are issued. The City Council said all are free to come to meetings and voice their concerns and there will not be any retribution, the Council appreciates when people do that. Tim Robertson, resident & prior Council alderperson, said these two issues he feels are critical issues that need to be discussed by this Council. Robertson understands it is difficult to fix these types of issues, but you do have the power of the budget. Maybe look at the budget and say we need only a Chief and 40 hours for Blair, with equipment and

benefits, etc. Then work on a new relationship so people do not feel they cannot come to Blair. Alan Johnson, Blair resident said he wanted the Council to remember, as taxpayers we already pay for City police coverage and a larger % of our tax dollars go to fund the County Police department, asked that they consider that when doing their budget. Chief Wheeler said he doesn't disagree with these comments as far as the 'perception topic'. The problem is, it isn't the Blair Police Department spreading that negative perception...many of the rumors and social media sharing is not based on facts and are being exaggerated, but none of that is being done by the Police department. There is plenty of official documentation available upon request to dispute the negative rumors on over policing and unnecessary traffic stops. The Police department did not start the downward trend for business in the City, it is happening in many cities our size. Tracey Solberg agreed there are many reasons why small towns struggle. He is fine with police at the Hwy 53/95 cul-de-sac, they are in plain sight, better than hiding behind buildings, etc. But that being said something has to change, as no one in town even on weekend evenings. Suggestion by W. Cartrette to set up a Police/Ordinance meeting where these issues can be discussed, reviewed and brainstormed for ideas and improvements and that was agreed upon by group. Mayor thanked all for time.

Present Vouchers for review and approval: Motion C. Ekern to approve the vouchers as presented, 2nd P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: P. Syverson-Yes, J. Anderson-Yes, T. Wheeler-Yes, W. Cartrette and C. Ekern-Yes. Motion approved.

Trempealeau Co. Sheriff candidate was unable to make it to the meeting.

Next Council meeting is November 12, 2018 @ 7:00 pm

Motion C. Ekern to enter into closed session 19.85(1) (f) for purpose of employee personnel & medical leave discussion, 2nd J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Motion C. Ekern to return to open session, 2nd J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Motion C. Ekern to have Attorney Cheryl Gill research and give legal opinion on State Chapter 62.13 related to employment issue, 2nd W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Motion C. Ekern to adjourn meeting, 2nd T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Susan Frederixon-Clerk/Treasurer