

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, November 4, 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 November 4, 2019. 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, M. Lisowski, Clerk/Treasurer S. Frederixon, Attorney A. Robertson, Trempealeau County Times.

Public Comment: **Allyn Johnson** wanted to follow up with his ‘Clean up of the City’ concerns from the October meeting. He has seen a few things improved on but not much. Johnson said he is retired now and will continue to urge the City on this topic. Johnson also had concerns about the Police department issue and stated he feels the Council has been too easy on the Police department and needs to be sure they know who is in charge, so nothing like the ‘letter to Ettrick’ happens again. Randy Obieglo had concerns about the Police issue and also had a complaint about the new ‘Broadway Bar’ already had what he felt was a ‘disturbance’ this past weekend.

Present minutes for approval: Regular Council Meeting 10/7/2019 & Special Meeting on 10/22/2019. **Motion J. Anderson to approve 10/7/19 minutes as presented, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Motion by W. Cartrette to open 2020 budget hearing with discussion to take place further down in the report section of the agenda, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Motion by W. Anderson to open the Public Liquor License Hearing for Broadway Bar, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Clerk/Treasurer reported Broadway Bar needed to pass a building inspection in order for the Council to consider approval of the liquor license. They had an initial inspection done on 9/26/19 by Fire Inspection Services, Inc., the official service used by the Blair Preston Fire department. There were 9 violations noted as needing to be done in order to become compliant. They had their follow up inspection on 11/1/2019 where 4 small items were still noted; they were fixed while the inspector waited. The Broadway Bar management worked hard and have gotten an approved building inspection. Mayor asked for public comment on this application. Randy Obieglo, Blair resident and neighbor of the Broadway Bar, commented he had concerns as there was already an altercation, raised voices, arguing, etc. coming from there and they aren’t even open yet. Concerned that it might become like another ‘Heine’s’ Bar. Council directed Clerk/Treasurer to let management know of this comment and know the Council will not tolerate this type of behavior. **Motion by J. Anderson to close the Public Liquor License Hearing, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved. Motion by J. Anderson to approve Broadway Bar liquor license, with note of Mr. Obieglo’s comment; 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Blair Chamber request, previously approved by City Council, to **change Norwegian Day event date from 11/2/2019 to 11/9/2019** and to have Ordinance Chapter 41 on Public Consumption set aside for their Norwegian Day event. **Motion by C. Ekern to set aside the motion made on 10/7/19 to approve event on 11/2/19 and allow change of event date to 11/9/2019 as requested, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

S.E.H. Reports: Per David Schofield-**2019 Street/Utility project:** Pay request # 2 from Gerke, for work completed through 10/24/2019. We are holding approximately \$65,500 in retainage to be sure the final punch list items (which are minimal & may even be done already) are completed and the GVCC apartment damage related to a waste water pipe being damaged during construction is taken care of. This request is for \$135,742.34 and is recommended for payment. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve this application as presented, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

CDBG 2019 Street & Utility Project Fair Housing Resolution # 11-4-2019: Clerk/Treasurer Frederixon explained this is a requirement of this grant in order to show we are using the \$500,000 grant funds in areas that will practice 'fair housing rules' and the City desires to give equal rights to all citizens and groups in the community in relation to housing, employment and public accommodation. **Motion by C. Ekern to approve resolution # 11-4-2019 as presented, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: Attorney Robertson reported the City already has a Fair Housing Ordinance/Resolution, Frederixon explained this is required for each grant. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

2019-2020 Snow Hauling Bids Opened and Awarded: Mayor opened 2 bids for trucking of snow: Hegg Contractors, Inc. \$95.00 per hour and Nelson Diesel & Dozing, LLC \$94.00. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve low bid of \$94 from Nelson for this snow season, with request to go to Hegg if for some reason Nelson is unable to cover a snow event, 2nd C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Clerk Frederixon reported: Sand Products WI tells us the underground slurry is working great and they expect it to continue. Also, wanted to mention they did a very nice job of repairing the Schaunsberg road rail crossing near their entrance recently and many compliments have been received at the City office on the improvement. Good they used a local contractor, Hegg Contractors, Inc. to do the work.

Nomination papers were distributed to Alderpersons up for re-election in February and April 2020, Jill Anderson/Ward 2, Mike Lisowski/Ward 3 and Wanda Cartrette/Ward 1. Nomination papers may not be circulated prior to 12/1/2019 and need to be turned in to City Clerk by 5 pm, 1/7/2020. Blair is a Class 4 City and Alderpersons need 20-40 signatures to be placed on the ballot.

Eagle Scout structure update: Request from Blair Sportsman Club to have the Eagle Scout structure. It would be very useful on their shooting range. Discussion centered on this being a good idea, as the club is a non-profit organization with very good projects for the benefit of the entire area. The structure was a great benefit to the previous pool, but due to the landscaping near the new pool it is no longer able to be used there and it has been cost prohibitive to place it anywhere else in the Park. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve if Eagle Scout Witcraft is ok with the arrangement, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Building Permit: Lora Lebakken @ 834 E. Broadway Lot 24 for move in request. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve contingent on year of mobile home compliant with Ordinance requirements, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Clerk report: Office is preparing for 2019 Tax Season, expecting tax bills from County Treasurer soon; 2019-10 year Dam inspection report was summarized. Inspection was done on 8/14/19 by a WDNR approved engineering firm. Our Dam consists of 10 gates, each controlled by electronic motor and a control panel. City is working to inspect each gate lift system and are repairing/replacing as necessary. The Emergency Action Plan and Inspection, Operation and Maintenance plan were reviewed with dam operator (Randy Ekern) and contact information was updated. No recommendations made for IOM. During inspection, seepage was observed behind downstream left wingwall and the right sidewall coming from under the old mill building and upstream left abutment is showing signs of spalling (spalling concrete refers to concrete that has become pitted, flaked, or broken up). Inspection report recommends repair within the next year.

Reports: Business & Economic Development C. Ekern/Chairperson, reported Committee met on 10/10/19 had about 15 people from community attend. Brainstorming was done for ideas to improve our 'downtown' district and interest people to visit and/or live in Blair, in preparation for the 10/28/19 Chamber meeting with this Committee where WI Economic Development Regional Director spoke. 10/28/19 meeting was well attended by Community members, Chamber and City Committee members as well as WEDC representatives. Many of the suggestions WEDC representative had can be used to help us achieve some immediate short term goals to improve our downtown district.

Long term goals and ideas were also discussed. At this point this Committee is working hard to form basic guidelines and goals on how to make positive changes to our City. Interest and energy is high and there is hope we can sustain this by using many of the WEDC suggestions to help us along. Example ideas: Better signage and advertising of Wildcat housing development lots; consider building a spec home for sale; explore any funding opportunities to assist with efforts; make sure buildings for sale are presented well, with well lit signs, clean windows, etc. Binders, funded with BEDC dollars, are being put together to organize meeting information and given to members attending regularly. There is another meeting set for next week.

Tax, Finance & Personnel Committee Budget Meetings on 11/15 & 11/22/19: Chairperson J. Anderson reported, Committee, Mayor, Deputy & Clerk/Treasurer met to review 2019 budget status and prepare 2020 budget. Draft budget included 'proposed' Revenues of \$1,537,641.24 and 'proposed' Expenses of \$1,431,589.24; leaving an excess amount of \$106,052.00 for distribution in to the Capital Projects Fund categories of Pool, Law Enforcement, Fire Protection, Highway Equipment, Highway & Streets, Lake, Park and Contingency. The City General Fund portion of this proposed budget would plan to consider the change of % related to valuation amounts for City with areas shared with Town of Preston. That % decreased from 59.5% to 57% for the City for 2020. Projects recommended in this proposed budget include: Fire department budget increase request of \$2,850.00; 2 public works required explosion resistant safety cabinets; playground landscape material replacement; iPad's for electronic meeting capabilities; sidewalk upgrades, 10 year dam inspection required repairs; 2% increase for employees; 12.2 % increase on employee health insurance; Park shelter bathroom upgrades; some storm water management funds. This budget also supports the payment of debt service incurred with the Bond issue done by City to finance the 2019 Street project and refinance for savings on interest done earlier this year and of course funding of the City business throughout the 2020 calendar year. Due to what seems to be the natural progression of Revenues going down and Expenses going up this Committee felt it needed to review some areas of the City revenues funds. Points of interest related to our 2020 Revenue budget proposal and **recommended by this Committee to be effective January 1, 2020 if approved** are increases to the following City revenue categories: Camping (last increase 2009) Daily from \$20 per night with electric & water to \$30 per night, Weekly from \$120 to \$180.00 still one night free at new price, Monthly from \$460 to \$690 still one week free at new price. Building Permits (last increase 2005) \$10 to \$30. Pool Passes (reviewed after first year with new aquatic center) Single from \$50 to \$60, Family from \$100 to \$125, Daily from \$2 to \$4. **Also this Committee is recommending that swim lessons cost \$10 per child, no longer included with swim pass purchase.** Shelter rental (last increased 2010) Lower from \$20 to \$30, Upper from \$30 to \$50, Large from \$65 to \$100 and Schroeder from \$80 to \$125. This proposed budget supports the Capital Improvement Funds with a total of \$106,052.00, specifically as follows: \$9,000 to Public Safety: saving for Police squad rotation; \$15,000 to Fire Department: saving toward large equipment purchase in the future; \$15,548 Street Machinery: continued saving toward newer Street Sweeper, Lake: \$50,000 toward dredge project and also a \$16,504 left in a contingency line of the CIP budget for things that might come up. **Projects recommended by this Committee for completion in 2020 using the CIP fund budget are (amounts are estimated):** Park Fund mower rotation trade in - \$4,000, Ash Tree removal - \$28,000, Softball field lights upgraded \$5,000, Schroeder Shelter upgrades, to include bathrooms, utility doors and painting-\$9,800, new campground sign. Street Equipment Fund: **Finance purchase of new Loader with trade in of current loader combined with purchase of new Snow blower which is approximately 20 years old, total amount of \$112,400.00 to be financed at \$3,330.00 per month for CIP funds;** Public Safety Fund: rotation year for trade in of Police squad is 2020- \$26,000. Contingency fund: City hall first floor flooring repair/replacement \$5,000. Finance Committee Chairperson Jill Anderson thanked Debi and Susan and other Committee members Paul, Terry and Mayor Ardell for helping this process be efficient and organized. Due to efforts made this budget process was able to be completed in 2 meetings of approximately 2 hours each.

Finance Committee member P. Syverson commented the general property taxes for the City went down slightly. Total levy went down .26/\$1,000 of value.

Mayor asked if there were any other public comments for this Budget Public Hearing; hearing none he called for a motion to close the public hearing. **Motion by J. Anderson to close the 2020 Public Budget Hearing, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.** Mayor Knutson called for a motion to approve staff wage changes and 2020 budget as presented. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve general 2020 budget for the City of Blair and Capital Improvement Fund budgets as presented, specifically also, staff wage of a 2% increase for all current employees to include Public Works Department current full time & permanent part time if return, City office: Current City Clerk and Deputy Clerk Treasurer, Police department: current full and part time employees, Library: current Librarian & part time Library aides, to approve the increase of the revenues as presented to include camping fees, building permits, pool passes and shelter rentals, and to approve the projects funded by the Capital Improvement fund for 2020 as presented to include trade in of Park mower and Police squad, ash tree removal, softball field lighting improvements, Schroeder Shelter upgrades as presented, new campground sign, financing and purchase of new loader with trade in and new snow blower without trade in, city hall floor upgrades as presented. 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: This is a balanced budget that is being proposed. General discussion was that Health Insurance would stay the same for employee costs, Clerk will update if final rate changes. Other discussion was related to general support for plans to move toward electronic meetings in 2020. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

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

Motion by W. Cartrette to move into 'Closed Session' per agenda language, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Motion by C. Ekern to reconvene in to 'Open Session', 2nd by W. Cartrette.

Motion by C. Ekern to rescind 10/22/2019 Special Meeting 'closed session' motion and request Clerk/Treasurer to establish 3 person panel pursuant to section 62.13 Section 5 of WI State Statutes, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved. No other motions were made as a result of the Closed Session.

Next Council meeting is December 2, 2019 @ 7:00 pm

Motion C. Ekern to adjourn meeting, 2nd M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Susan Frederixon-Clerk/Treasurer