

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, December, 2021

Mayor John Rawson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Open meeting requirements verified. Attendance roll call: Mayor J. Rawson-yes, P. Syverson-yes, C. Ekern-absent, D. Stephenson-yes, T. Wheeler-yes, M. Lisowski-yes, and J. Anderson-yes. Others attending: Attorney M. Radcliffe, WEDC Representative, Mark Tallman, Ehler's Representative, Brian Reilly, and Treasurer/Clerk/Deputy Treasurer S. Frederixon. Trempealeau County Times, Brian Jahr, David Donnelly, Perry Kujak, Mike Haarsma, Andy Graff & Jeremy Tranberg.

Request by Mayor Rawson, for a motion to move up the 1st closed session topics for scheduling purposes. **Motion by P. Syverson to move # 16 (the 1st closed session item) up to this point in the meeting and convene into closed session, pursuant to Wis. Stat. State Statute 19.85(1)(e) for purpose of deliberating or negotiating the investing of public funds and discussion developers agreements with the Blair Meat Market, LLC (Perry & Renee Kujak) and The Blair Haus Sports Bar, LLC (Jeremy & Kristin Tranberg) as competitive and bargaining reasons require, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Roll Call Vote: D. Stephenson-Yes, P. Syverson-Yes, J. Anderson-Yes, M. Lisowski-Yes and T. Wheeler-Yes. Motion approved 5 yes and 0 no.**

Motion by M. Lisowski to return to open session, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Roll Call Vote: D. Stephenson-Yes, P. Syverson-Yes, J. Anderson-Yes, M. Lisowski-Yes and T. Wheeler-Yes. Motion approved 5 yes and 0 no.

- **No action was taken from the 'closed session'.**

Present minutes for approval: Regular Council 11/8/2021. **Motion by P. Syverson to approve 11/8/21 minutes, 2nd T. Wheeler. Discussion: none. Vote: Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion carried.**

Public Comment: David Donnelly, resident and owner of The Barnyard Tavern, explained he is still frustrated with City Police doing walk through's his business for no reason, it is ok for them to enter if they are acting as an agent of the Dept. of Revenue Alcohol & Tobacco Agency to do bottle checks and look at paperwork related to the business, but they have never done that. David said since he spoke about these topics at previous public comments sections of Council meetings, he feels he and his customers are being targeted and harassed by the department and the Chief. Also, stated that he agreed to a meeting with Chief Kent Johnson (at Johnson's request), where David says Johnson insulted him multiple times and said the City Council has no authority over him and his department. Donnelly also said he recorded this meeting. Said he is not sure who he can ask for help on this topic, but feels the City Council that he believes oversees the Police Department needs to know this and hopefully would be able to assist to improve the situation. **Council is unable to respond to 'public comment' section topics due to public notice requirements, but takes information and work on as they deem appropriate.**

CDBG-PF Project Update from Dave Schofield/S.E.H.: presented the Supplemental Letter Agreement for the following: 2022 CDBG-PF Application for Broadway and Pearl Street Improvements. Task 1 @ \$3,500-Grant Application resubmitted with changes required by new D.O.A. after November 2021 webinar. D.O.R. should be making decisions in August 2022, if awarded further agreements would have to be looked at with a 2023 project planned. **Motion by J. Anderson to accept the SLA resubmission of the CDBG-PF Application, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Roll Call Vote: D. Stephenson-Yes, P. Syverson-Yes, J. Anderson-Yes, M. Lisowski-Yes, and T. Wheeler-Yes. Motion approved.**

Discuss/Take Action: Source Energy Services Preston Annual Road Agreement renewal: Nathan Stobb/S.E.S. was present for questions. Clerk Frederixon explained this agreement is related to truck traffic to and from S.E.S. Preston site and their rail location. It is in partnership with the Town of Preston as there are shared roads. It has been in effect since 2014(approximately), with only a few changes. For 2022, S.E.S. legal advisor sent the edited copy to the City, stating there are no changes to the 2021 document except the 'new Mayor name, renumbering of the paragraphs for clarity and the dates to coordinate with 2022. Clerk Frederixon verified that is the case as she reviewed it line by line. **Motion by P. Syverson, to approve the 2022 road agreement as presented, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion City Attorney Radcliffe, having not seen this agreement before, had concerns on how it could be enforced without tests to the road condition and proof that S.E.S. was the traffic that did any damage to the road if that happened. Clerk Frederixon, agreed and stated this agreement was part of the initial annexation process and agreed to by all 3 parties as a way to control the amount of heavy traffic on the roads. S.E.S. has already assisted both the Township and the City previously related to road repair on designated roads, after discussions were had and estimates were given S.E.S. agreed to assist with a portion**

of the road improvements. Attorney felt there needed to be some additional investigation on this agreement before Council should take action on it. Request of Clerk to send original annexation agreement and previous road agreements to Attorney Radcliffe for review, after review he will offer opinion at January 3, 2022 Council Meeting. **P. Syverson and T. Wheeler withdrew their original motion & 2nd. Motion by J. Anderson, to table the 2022 S.E.S. Preston Road Agreement until further investigation can be done by City Clerk/City Attorney, and revisit at the January 3, 2022 Regular Meeting, also to extend the current road agreement to January 3rd, 2022, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Discuss/Take Action Election Workers 2022/2023: Motion by J. Anderson to approve Janet Helstad, Terry Wheeler, Gary Olson(Chief Inspector), Lorrain Loken, Dean Dale, Kandace Witcraft, Candace Popham, Debi Fremstad & Susan Frederixon as 2022/2023 City of Blair Election Workers, 2nd by D. Stephenson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Discuss/Take Action on Committee Meeting minutes previously distributed to Council members and Mayor: Motion by J. Anderson to approve and place on file the minutes in the Council packets for Tax/Finance/Personnel Committee Meetings on 11/15, 11/22 and 11/30/2021; Police/Ordinance Committee Meeting on 11/16/2021, Combination Public Property and Buildings & Water/Sewer Committees Meeting on 11/17/2021 as presented, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Discuss/Take Action: Personnel Committee recommendation to full Council to offer the Public Works Full Time 'Utility Assistant' position to Joshua Greenwold. Motion by T. Wheeler, to offer position to Joshua Greenwold @ \$19.00 per hour with increases as required certifications are completed, if for some reason Joshua does not accept this motion includes the option to offer the position to the next candidate designated by the Committee as a good fit, 2nd by D. Stephenson. Discussion: Committee felt they received good quality applicants. Request for Clerk to offer position after meeting. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Discuss/Take Action: City Council use of iPads in place of paper meeting packets: Alderperson J. Anderson reminded the Council that approximately 2 years ago, it was approved by unanimous Council vote to switch to electronic meeting packets, using iPads that were budgeted for in the place of paper packets. This was done in an effort to save hundreds of printing, paper and work hour cost to the city budget. We need to start this going forward as previously approved. Motion by P. Syverson that as of January 3, 2022 City Council Regular meeting, all meeting packets will be distributed via iPad device, with no paper packets being done by the Clerk, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: Is it ok to print the packet off at home and bring to the meeting if so prefer, YES. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Discuss/Take Action: Personnel Committee recommendation after 11/2021 review of current Personnel Policies: In an effort to update and reflect Council direction, changes were made in the following sections of our current Policies: Employment, Termination of Employment, Holidays, Hours of Work, Vacations, Funeral Leave, Leave of Absence, Employment Compensation, Training, Employee Services and Regulations. Copies of the current policy, with changes highlighted and a clean copy of the updated Personnel Policies if approved as presented were distributed prior to the meeting and in the meeting packets. Motion by D. Stephenson to approve the new 'personnel policy' as presented and recommended by Committee, with requirement that all employees review, sign and return signed copy to City Clerk to be kept on file, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Discuss/Take Action: Updates to current Employee Job Description: Committee reviewed all current City of Blair Job Descriptions and are recommending updates to them as presented in the copies in your packets. General updating was done to the following job descriptions: Library Director, Police Chief, Police Officer, Park Manager, Street Department Manager, and Water/Sewer Department Manager. Motion by M. Lisowski to approve updated Job Description as listed and in packets, require every full time employee to review, sign and return signed copy to City Clerk to be kept on file, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No. 0. Motion approved.

Discuss/Take Action: Review of 'City Clerk's Office Wednesday's closed to public for workday' policy: J. Anderson/Personnel Committee Chairperson stated the Committee decided to recommend to full Council to discontinue the policy of allowing the City office to be closed to the public on Wednesday's. Wednesday's closed was unanimously approved by the Council, February 2020, as a solution to workload management without increasing the budget impact on

taxpayers. It was revisited after approximately a year and approved again to continue. **Motion by D. Stephenson to discontinue the practice of City office closed on Wednesday's, and reopen Monday through Friday, 2nd by P. Syverson, Discussion:** Clerk Frederixon asked Personnel Committee members what the discussion had been and why this topic was on the agenda again, were there complaints people could not get their business done in the other 4 days? Dennis Stephenson said it was to be revisited and to his knowledge had not been revisited since he had been on Council, and the Committee decided they wanted to recommend the office reopen Monday-Friday. Jill Anderson stated it had not been revisited, previously. City Clerk Frederixon stated, "She was very disappointed that this committee and Council would not think to at least check with the Treasurer and myself as part of the discussion and decision making process, to see the positives of the policy and how helpful it was to manage the workload with no added financial impact on the taxpayers." **Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Discuss/Take Action: Personnel Committee recommendation for approval of 'new' job descriptions for Water/Sewer Utility Assistant (new position to cross train in that department); City Treasurer/Deputy Clerk position (changed from Deputy Clerk/Treasurer); City Clerk/Deputy Treasurer position (changed from City Clerk/Treasurer): New draft Job descriptions were distributed to Council prior to the meeting and also in packets. **Motion by M. Lisowski to approve the descriptions presented and recommended by the Personnel committee, request Clerk to distribute new descriptions, require employees to review, sign and return to City Clerk to be kept on file in employment files, 2nd by D. Stephenson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Discuss/Possible Action: Police Chief request removal of part time officers from police department roster/J. Anderson reported the Chief was recommending removing some part time officers on roster if no longer needed. Attorney Radcliffe stated this cannot be acted on with our current organizational structure. **No Action was taken.**

Park Commission update on Summer Rec. Program/Trempealeau Valley Baseball/Softball League/J. Anderson stated **no action at this time.** 10 municipalities are participating and they meet once a month. She and Summer Rec. Director Lauren Kidd have attended meetings and there is more meetings coming up before they are ready to bring recommendations to this Council.

Discuss/Take Action: Creating Ordinance 49.10 related to combining Contiguous Lots: City Attorney presented a 'draft' Ordinance requested by the Ordinance Committee, prior to this meeting and also in the packets, on the 'combination of contiguous lots'. After some discussion and a recommendation from the City Ordinance

Committee, **Motion by J. Anderson to approve the draft Ordinance 49.10 as presented tonight, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion:** Attorney Radcliffe said the process will be the applicant will need to have a 'certified survey' done of the area in question, deliver the completed survey information to the City for review and approval prior to any project starting. **Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Clerk Report: **Christmas lights** were up early this year and looking super! It really is quite a job, we use real garland, and it takes many hours with all the guys to attach the lights to the fresh garland. Brian Jahr/Andy Graff led the process, but Brian Stenberg, Mark Hanson, Bob Fraust are all needed. Stetzer electric lets us use their lift and it takes a couple days of outside very high & cold work to get them placed. They certainly bring Joy to our City. **Nomination papers for Council members**, planning to be on the ballot at February 15, 2022 Spring Primary and the April 5, 2022 Spring Election, the deadline to return completed packets is Tuesday, January 4, 2022. Dennis, Jill and Mike are up for re-election and I hope will return. If you are not planning on being on the ballots please stop in and complete a Notification of Noncandidacy. **Thank you very much to City taxpayers and City Council for our employment, benefits, health insurance and 2022 pay increases. CIP items approved for 2022:** Park: lawn mower, paint for pool, water bottle fill bubbler, softball field lights, pool chairs. Streets: New plow edge. **Holiday Parade** Organizers did obtain a Street Closure permit and if you didn't attend you really missed a wonderful, delightful Community event, really felt warm and fuzzy to see all the businesses lite up, welcoming people for hot chocolate, information on what services they provide, was a super turn out. Santa, Frosty and even Clark Grizzwald were in attendance oh and Mayor Rawson too☺. Put it on your reminder list to attend next year. Special thanks to Brian Jahr and Andy Graff to taking seriously the safety of our participants and set up great street safety, also to Police department for their assistance. **Park electrical repairs** have been pretty much **completed** if not completely done. **American Rescue Plan funds projects:** Water/Sewer dept.: New control panel for back wash, computer to match

Updated Building permits approved by G.E.C. spreadsheet in packets for Council and Mayor/No action required.

Server License Applications: None for review.

Motion by P. Syverson for the City Council of Blair, pursuant to **Wis. Stat. 19.85(1)(b)**, may convene in closed session to consider the possible dismissal, demotion, or discipline of a public employee and/or the investigation of charges against such public employee and possibly taking formal action on any such matter; **and** also, pursuant to **Wis. Stat. 19.85(1)(g)** to confer with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved regarding a complaint received **and**, pursuant to **Wis. Stat. 19.85(1)(f)**, may convene in closed session to consider financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems and possibly taking formal action on any such matter, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. **Roll Call Vote: J. Anderson-Yes, T. Wheeler-Yes, D. Stephenson-Yes, M. Lisowski-Yes and P. Syverson-Yes. Motion approved 5 yes and 0 no.**

Motion to come out of closed session, into open session by D. Stephenson, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Roll Call Vote: J. Anderson-Yes, T. Wheeler-Yes, D. Stephenson-Yes, M. Lisowski-Yes and P. Syverson-Yes. Motion approved 5 yes and 0 no.

- **No Action was taken from the Closed Session.**

Present Vouchers for review and approval: **Motion by J. Anderson to approve the vouchers as presented in packets, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Roll call vote: D. Stephenson-yes, P. Syverson-yes, J. Anderson-yes, M. Lisowski-yes and T. Wheeler-yes. Motion carried.**

Next Council meeting is January 3, 2021 @ 6:30 pm.

Motion by M. Lisowski to adjourn, 2nd J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Ayes-5, Nays-0. Motion approved.

Time 8:55 p.m.

Susan Frederixon, City Clerk/Deputy Treasurer