

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, April 8, 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 April 8, 2019. Mayor A. Knutson 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 3/11/19. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve as presented, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Public Comment: Clerk/Treasurer Frederixon shared that the Whitehall School District did a wonderful “Snow Plow Workers’ Appreciation Breakfast last week to include all the surrounding towns. They wanted to recognize that this past winter was unusually tough with record snow fall amounts, rain and ice. They let these employees know that they understand it is early and long hours and pretty much ‘thankless’ as people usually comment on what was missed, not what was done well. Street Superintendent Randy Ekern and Brian Stenberg attended the event and said it was GREAT! Lots of wonderful food, thank you notes, gifts and personal thankful comments from the kids.

Clerk research on Alderperson questions from residents shared at the 3-11-19 meeting: Alderperson J. Anderson has gotten comments about the poor condition of the plowed streets. **Question:** if our equipment cannot be lowered completely to the pavement? **ANSWER:** Street Superintendent said he was taught that only so much down pressure can be applied while plowing, since equipment can be damaged if a manhole or curb stop is hit. We make sure our blades are in good condition and try to go back with smaller equipment after initial plowing to clean things up more. Our goal is to do a good job, but we are working with one less Public Works person since Jeff Lee retired. It’s not easy to try to compare to the “SNOWMAN”, he was an expert. **Question:** What is the protocol for a water main break? Hoping for better communication with residents affected, even if not the normal work day. **ANSWER:** Clerk/Treasurer and Water Superintendent worked on a ‘standard operating procedure’ DRAFT. This was presented and accepted by the Council and will be implemented. The plan requires ‘door hangers’ to be put on all affected properties with information if unable to reach via phone. Council thought S.O.P. was good to implement. **Question:** Can City employees use equipment/loader for personal use, move snow out of own backyard. **ANSWER:** After investigation, Loader was not used to ‘plow snow’ on personal property, this instance was an employee only using the loader for a short time to pull a valuable covered trailer away from the flooding creek. We do this type of thing for residents as needed at no charge if involves safety or to avoid damage to resident property. Example, we move sand bags to many residents property if requested and then we pick it up again at no charge. Clerk shared in the “City Personal Policy” there is a section “Usage of City owned facilities”, which states City owned items may be utilized for personal use by employees upon approval of the City Clerk. I would have approved this use. We appreciate Council and residents checking into questions they have and giving a chance for explanations to be provided and then understood.

AMPI request for road ban exemption for milk product whey: Clerk shared research that the D.O.T. site shows that milk product is considered exempt and that Town of Preston has approved an agreement allowing a stipulated weight and dedicated haul roads already. Request is that we do the same as we share many of these roads. Discussion centered around wanting to follow Town of Preston’s lead and checking to be sure this agreement was enough for what they needed to assist their business operations. AMPI confirmed that this will work at this time. **Motion by C. Ekern to approve agreement, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Source Energy Preston Financial Assurance “Letter of Credit” annual review: every year each mine is required to submit information to the City about mining activities. The City Clerk uses this information to submit the required annual report to the WDNR. Each mine is inspected by the City Zoning Administrator from S.E.H. to verify the information on the report and recommend if the current financial assurance amounts need to be adjusted. After review of Source Energy Preston information, the City Zoning Administrator & City Attorney agreed the amount should be increased by approximately 7.1 % to \$2,539,003. It was requested that this be given formal approval by City Council so Source Energy Services can move forward to increase financial assurance amount. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve as presented, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Source Energy Slurry Line update: Nathan Stobb reports they just received report from an independent hydrostatic pressure testing company that both the feed line and return line for the slurry passed the pressure testing completely. The test showed they will be able to have the slurry fully operational by end of this week. The goal of Source Energy Services is to send as much product as the slurry capacity can handle via the underground line, which will reduce the need as much as possible for trucking of product.

Blair Lutheran Church ‘not for profit’ entity update: Vicar Paul Sannerud shared that the Blair Lutheran Church congregation has approved turning the East building over to a 501C4 Organization. A local board will be set up to guide this entity. The wish is to turn this building into a Community Center for the larger community to benefit from and be an asset to the City and the surrounding community. The Vicar is looking for feedback on things that might be helpful to be part of the center. Ideas so far: space for organizations to meet, ipad training, cooking classes, overflow for Library programing-all ideas will be considered. Call the Church and share ideas. The hope is to have it used on a much more regular basis and occasionally to hold funerals/weddings if requested. This building is much loved and close to many families heritage in this area. Idea would be to offer space at a low or free rental basis. Timeline is approximately 6 months to set up the entity and board.

Resident request for zoning change from Residential 1 to Agricultural: Tammy Long explained she would like to purchase her father’s property which is along the North side of highway 95 just past the bridge at the end of the City limits. She is requesting the change so she can have a stable for her horses on the property. Tammy said there is a corn field bordering the yard at this time and feels the area lends itself to an Agricultural Zone. Clerk Frederixon explained stables are not a ‘permitted use’ in R-1 Zone, but are in Agriculture Zone. Clerk explained this would need to be reviewed by our Plan Commission for them to make a recommendation to the full Council in the future. City Attorney confirmed that is the process. **Motion by C. Ekern to send this to our Plan Commission for review and recommendation, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Sons of Norway and Cheese Festival Committee request to re-hang group pictures, plaques and local awards in remodeled Community Center: group would use command strips that would not damage upgrades. **Motion by W. Cartrette to send this to our Public Building and Property Committee Meeting on 4/11/19 for review, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Storm Water runoff resident concerns: Clerk reported residents on East Olson Street had questions and concerns about storm water runoff affecting their property. They must have forgotten this meeting and are not present? Clerk stated the City had 2 studies done on these areas in 2016 by S.E.H. Engineers, with findings and possible remedies the City might be able to help with. Council remembered this has been an ongoing topic they maybe they should revisit. **Motion by C. Ekern to send to Joint Streets & Water/Waste Water Committee for review of the reports and discussions with residents, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Consider formal approval of 2 Motor Actuators for Dam upgrades & payment: After inspection it was determined that 2 of the 10 motors need immediate replacement prior to our 2019 WDNR inspection and to keep our dam operating to full capacity. Inspection stated that we are able to manage our dam safely as it is now, but these motors need replacement. Clerk was encouraged by the local Fire Department and County Emergency Government Coordinator that with the large snow melt, which can cause flooding, these motors need to be rush ordered and that if needed they could ‘mandate’ that. Based on that Clerk/Treasurer emailed Council that the order was going to be placed and that ‘formal approval’ would be sought at this meeting. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve the purchase of 2 motors priced at \$6,910 each, plus cost of installation and labor to adapt with our current “manual” operation system. Money to come out of contingency CIP funds, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

City Police Officer vacancy/replacement update: Since the City Council approved 3 full time officers in 2015 as their policy; ads were placed with the same starting wage as 2016 hire of Mark Spaeth, to request applications to begin this process. Three officers are already budgeted for 2019. The Police Department, Police/Ordinance Committee and Personnel committees will be involved during this process.

Park Shed Insurance update: Mowers damaged from the snow load shed collapse have been repaired and demo costs have been reimbursed. Amount of \$12,573.81 has been received.

Co-op land parcels for sale update: Co-op has been given the Councils offer of purchase information. They meet 4/24/19, so no additional information is available at this time.

Blair/Preston Fire Department Class B liquor license application for Dance on May 11, 2019. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve as presented, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Blair Cheese Festival Committee: Paul Syverson reported, the Committee provided the City with size needed to update the easement with telephone company for the new electronic sign. Attorney Robertson will be able to complete easements, which was previously approved by the Council. They are asking for an update on the Large shelter expanded concrete that they have agreed to fund-Clerk Frederixon will check on this. Committee has approved funding for 10 new weather resistant, extra supported picnic tables for our park area at approximate cost of \$2,500. Thank you very much from City Council.

Blair Lions Club park donations: This club is planning on painting the interior of Schroeder shelter and bathrooms with City supplying the paint and prep work and replacing the broken glass in recognition case and repair case. They will also consider replacing some trees in the park when ash trees are removed. They want to also give a portion of support for Community Center bathrooms, which is roughly estimated at \$10,000. Thank you very much from the City Council.

Reports:

Park Committee meeting 3/13/19: Chairperson W. Cartrette reported – **Lake Project updates:** S.E.H. has met with WDNR and they are not in favor of mechanical dredging related to wetland concerns. Planning to submit plan with hydraulic dredging permitting with mechanical as a bid alternative. If bids would show hydraulic was cost prohibitive WDNR may reconsider. Next step is S.E.H resubmit plan to WDNR as stated previously. Next meeting April 11th with plans to discuss funding of project, S.E.H. was asked to put together template for capital fundraising. **Pool Update:** Some pool items were damaged in Park shed collapse and are expected to be replaced with insurance funds. Aquatic Center Director: formal hire & salary. **Motion by J. Anderson to offer positon to Cathy Mathson at a salary of \$2,000, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

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CDBG Street Project update: Dave Schofield/S.E.H. reported- we are currently working with Gerke on finalizing contracts including insurance and bonding. Permit applications have been approved or, in the case of CDBG ER and WDNR minor wetland fill, are pending. Next steps are a preconstruction meeting on 4/23/19 at 2 pm. Gerke expects to start construction on Monday 4/29/19.

Building Permits: Randy & Donna Ekern @ 805 E. Olson Street for deck; Sand Products WI @ 17353 Bunyan Road for access driveway for pond 15; AMPI @ 220 E. Center Street for increase driveway; Anna Waldera @ 416 S. Immell Street for fence; Clerk reported all permits meet Ordinance requirements as presented. The Ekern permit will need a County permit returned to the City prior to beginning of project and inspection when completed.

Motion by M. Lisowski to approve with needed permits supplied, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Fire Pits Applications: Krista Nitek @ 902 E. Olson Street; Monte & Jynette Noren @ 227 Mill Rd.; Larry Hestikin @ 511 E. Broadway Street; Janice Woof @ 409 W. Broadway Street; John M. Berg @ 405 1st Street; Ardell Knutson @ 320 S. Urberg Avenue; Jeanette R. Bay @ 327 S. Pearl Street; David Smikrud @ 312 S. Peterson Avenue and Larry Jorgenson @ 315 S. Peterson Avenue/Clerk reported that all permits meet Ordinance requirements as presented and all applicants have been given copies of Ordinance. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve as presented, 2nd by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6 No 0. Motion approved.**

Clerk report: Spring Cleanup days set for Wednesday, May 1, from 3 pm to 7 pm and Saturday, May 4, from 9 am to 1 pm.; Clerk has completed and submitted the City 2 % fire dues report to the State ahead of the due date, last year's amount was \$4,000; Spring general election went well, 146 voters. Congratulations to Mayor Knutson, Alderpersons: Terry Wheeler, Chris Ekern and Paul Syverson who all won re-election with landslide victories for 2 year terms; City Council annual checks will be ready after 4/11/19 payroll has been processed; Baseball field dug out safety fence, which the Council approved funds for has been completed by Park Superintendent Jim Nyen with assistance from BTSD staff Alan Austad and Lucas Solberg, comments from ball coaches and school administration is it looks great. BTSD also donated some of the fencing material for this project.

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

Motion by P. Syverson to adjourn, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Next Council Re-Organizational meeting is April 16, 2019 @ 7:00 pm

Susan Frederixon-Clerk/Treasurer