

**City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, September 14, 2020 at 6:30 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 September 14, 2020. The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30 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, D. Schofield/S.E.H., Public: Travis Armitage, Thane Mattson & Joyce Schneider.

Public Comment: None

Present minutes for approval: Regular Council Meeting 8/3, Special Meetings on 7/23, 8/6, 8/10 & 9/3/2020. **Motion W. Cartrette to approve all minutes on agenda as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

'General Engineering Company' Commercial Building Inspector introduction: The Council/Economic Development Committee has felt there is a need for a City Building Inspector that can help us with Commercial building inspections and general building permit oversight. Mike Parrott/General Engineering Company comes highly recommended by many of our neighboring communities. Mr. Parrott, explained they have over 200 communities they work with and do residential, commercial, property maintenance on distressed buildings, plumbing, and electrical and all types of inspection services. We have a host of inspectors, many local. Suggested it usually works better if a community uses one inspection service for all building inspection needs, for better consistency and overall understanding of how inspections/permits are being handled, one agency to call for all items. They have much experience working with State/County agencies and local contractors. Cost for services would be 'pass through' cost to permit applicants, so really no cost to City. There would be a contract & fee schedule provided if City decides to use us. Usually are able to provide services within a day or two of notification/request. M. Parrott also looked quickly at our Ordinances and didn't see a lot on 'property maintenance, minimum requirements, etc.' and they are able to help strengthen those also. Best if City 'designates' General Engineering Company as building inspector, give them more authority. Proposal for Building inspection services was shared. **Motion by W. Cartrette to go to Ordinance Committee for review and recommendation for full council, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Lisowski. Discussion: M. Lisowski wondered about them doing just certain Commercial building inspections for construction under the State square footage requirement, Mike Parrott said yes could do as City needed. C. Ekern shared a commercial building owner in City said to him, they were hoping for City to have a knowledgeable inspector to contact on what is needed to bring building up to code. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

S.E.H. Engineering reports: David Schofield/S.E.H. Engineering: CDBG 2019 Street project update: There is a 1 year warranty on this project. I walked project with City Public Works staff and found 8 items for repair and I believe that work has been completed when I drove by before meeting. Contractor replaced a couple sections of curb and sidewalk; when I come back Friday I will verify work has been completed. No cost to City, work covered under warranty. Application # 2: final for Erickson Excavating for work on 2020 Olson Street Drainage project. Amount left was for contingency on a couple of small restoration work that needed to be completed and that has all been completed to satisfaction of Street Supervisor/S.E.H. and residents in area so I recommend payment of final \$ 2,512.30, felt they did a very nice job and were very happy with work done. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve final payment to Erickson Excavating of \$2,512.30, 2<sup>nd</sup> by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.** Mill Road Drainage Review S.E.H. Agreement: Council had requested S.E.H. to do a review of Mill road related to resident poor drainage concerns. Initially it was thought S.E.H. could and did work with City Office and Street department to solve issue at no charge, but ended up becoming more involved, this agreement will include reviewing drainage patterns/sources, set stakes for recommended improvements, summarize findings and report to City, amount is estimated for \$2,200. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by P. Syverson. Discussion: S.E.H. said City has limited involvement in what**

**happens North of Mill Road. If we can address what is happening under and along Mill Road that is good, But if this is happening due to a water source 3,000 feet to the North, the City does not have any responsibility there. We will use our best judgement to try to improve situation on/along Mill Road. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.** Lake Dredge Project update/guidance for S.E.H.: It's been about a year, since we have discussed when project may go forward, things have changed with COVID, but what is the City thinking? We have permits in hand, easements have been submitted with over 50% back, haven't finalized bidding documents because of uncertainty. Wanda Cartrette said we need to pull together a Lake Committee to discuss. Project was shut down due to COVID and hard times for people/businesses, fundraising. S.E.H. is good, just wanted to be sure City wasn't waiting for something from us. City isn't waiting for anything from S.E.H. Permits are good for 3 years and can be extended out possibly 9 years or even more.

Perspective new business owners with zoning question for B-1 District: Joyce Schneider/Thane Mattson plan to purchase 224 W. Broadway Street (previously NAPA store) in B-1 District & implement 2 businesses, a thrift type store in front & venison processing business in back of building. Currently the Ordinance does not list 'meat processing' as a permitted use in the district. Council does remember there has been similar type businesses in this district previously, did that fall in the Ordinance under 'Specialty shop or Professional Service'? Clerk checked Osseo Ordinances which seems to have it under Specialty Shops. With meat processing business, all processing scraps & hides would be removed daily from premises. Cooler/Freezer would have to be installed. Only cut up and packaging is planned at this time of venison. Mattson has done this type of work for 30 years out of home, but understands by Ordinance that is not allowed in City and in his rural home distance is difficult for customers. Store downtown may be the answer. In future may consider getting license for sausage making, etc. Hopefully it would help other businesses also. Questions about state licensing requirements, Mattson said none is needed. Clerk shared Osseo has a shop like this in their business district and going well. Attorney Robertson felt it should go to Ordinance Committee to change to have 'meat processing' as a permitted use. **Motion by W. Cartrette to allow this new business, Thrift/Venison shop under current Ordinance of 'Specialty shop', contingent on all USDA permits obtained if needed with Clerk doing research on USDA requirements for both meat of all kinds vs. just venison and for topic to go to Ordinance Committee Meeting for consideration of adding 'meat processing as a permitted use in B-1 District, 2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Voting machine replacement: Clerk Frederixon explained: We currently have 2 'Edge' voting machines, they have worked well for us. One is still working perfectly, but the other is showing some signs of issues, during the past 2 elections. We are being told these models will no longer be able to be serviced/repared and all cities will need to change to a new model, starting in 2021. County Clerk Syverson set up training for the entire county and the model that will work the best for us is called the 'ICE' Image Cast Evolution – All-In-One Tabulator. \$8,400.00 per machine, City of Blair needs only one. Voters get paper ballot, complete & insert into tabulator. Eliminates hand counting & speeds up election closing. ICE has an Accessible Voting component also for voters needing assistance. Cost discount is available through Trempealeau County, with enough municipalities ordering the cost will go to \$6,600.00, which can be split between the 2021 & 2022 budgets if wish. There is an \$800.00 Acceptance testing, installation & training fee and a \$150.00 Delivery fee cost. Paul Syverson shared that also there is a chance if purchased, paid for this year and ownership taken before 12/31/2020, the cost may be considered under the 'Routes for Recovery' COVID grant fund program. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve purchase of ICE voting machine for \$7550.00(estimated cost)in 2020 as presented & if able to take possession by 12/31/2020, due to consideration & concern for poll workers/voters safety related to COVID-19, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0, Abstain 1(P. Syverson). Motion approved.**

**Reports:** Tax, Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting on 8/12 & 8/19, 9/1, 9/2 & 9/10/20: Chairperson-J. Anderson: Long range Financial Plan review was discussed at 8/12 meeting. Plan takes into consideration our General fund budget and tax base forecasts through 2030. Capital plan updated through 2025, Anderson said Lake was removed until information on next steps is available. Clerk Frederixon wondered if 2021-2022 planned Street project should be in there @ approximately 1.5 million. City share is 1 million if Community Block Grant is awarded, council wants Ehlers to be informed of that and added to plan. Sand mine revenues were looked at, with consideration given to market decline at this point, repayment of General Fund advances to TIDs & Sewer of \$400,000 by 2030. Levy Projection for TID 7 debt service, use General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance for projects, no new debt levies. Ehlers was to incorporate feedback & revise plan with final FMP delivered shortly. Park Superintendent replacement meetings were 8/19 review of applications & decision to interview all 13 as all were good applicants and probably capable of doing a fine job, 9/1 & 9/2 meeting were interview of Park position applicants, 9/10/2020 was meeting where 2 applicants had 2<sup>nd</sup> interviews with Committee recommending Brian Jahr be hired as our new Park Superintendent @ \$19.00 per hour (consideration given for possession of current CDL & experience), wage can increase to \$20.00 per hour, after required education is completed and licenses/certifications obtained. If for some reason Mr. Jahr is unable to accept position, Committee recommends Mr. Dan Austad be offered the position. **Motion by W. Cartrette to offer Park Superintendent position to Brian Jahr at \$19.00 per hour, to increase with certifications as presented, if Brian is unable to accept, Committee recommends offer position to Dan Austad with details to be determined, 2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Ekern.** **Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.** Estimated start date at September 30 to October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Police Officer starting wage range: Action item WAS MISSED in discussions. Will put on October meeting.

Comb. Personnel & Police Comm. Meeting on 8/6/2020: Chairpersons-J. Anderson reported: Committees interviewed 7 excellent Police Chief Applicants. Committee recommended Mr. Kent Johnson at a Special meeting of full council, he was approved at that meeting and we welcome our new Police Chief Mr. Kent Johnson, official start date of 8/31/2020. Blair Police Department August Report: Police Chief Kent Johnson reported: Officer Jordan Pride voluntarily & in good standing resigned his position with City of Blair. The timing of Jordan's hire was difficult, we had the Chief retire, full time officer Spaeth resign, leaving Jordan in a difficult position as the only full time officer with very little opportunity for training/support. I have checked on Jordan and he is already working part time for other agencies. Officer Kimberlee Potts has been approved and accepted the City's 3<sup>rd</sup> full time officer position that has been open for some time. She has been a part time officer for Blair for many years and had been interviewed by full council during the most recent round of officer interviews. Kim's start date is 9/18/20. She is preparing her home for sale, with intentions of moving closer to meet the response time requirement. Police department call report for August is unavailable due to computer program problems. Updates are needed and being researched. Police department offices are in need of major cleaning, organizing and updates both for outdated equipment and physical things like floors, walls, etc. Kim and I are doing the work of going through every piece of paper, evidence, file and desk to be able to have a good system for organization in place for future. Equipment needs are being assessed and updated as required. Updates to equipment and office may be in excess of \$10,000, really won't know for a while. How should expenses be handled? Clerk recommended use of Police budget for 2020 which has excess funds in 'salary & benefit' funds to re-allocate to items approved by Mayor and Clerk. I met with Tavern owners and have had good discussions with their hopes & our needs being discussed. Talked with them about 'Safe Ride' program, taverns owners feel it is expensive even when State covers 80 %, the 20% can add up. Blair Police department will help fundraise for that program. Tent event in City this weekend, cabs have been arranged for people that need rides home @ \$1 per mile. I am requesting the City will allow Police budget to be used and reimbursed related to these fundraisers. **Council verbal agreement to allow Chief to use his budget and allocate as needed for these types of things as well as office & equipment updates. Things will be reviewed for 2021.**

Owners have requested we do ‘walkthroughs’ anytime and shortly prior to closing to encourage patrons to head out. I feel like meeting went well and will be working to have positive relationships going forward. My plan is to have P.D. office open to public as much as possible. After review, the Blair police department policies & procedures are in desperate need of updating. These are important to have successful court processes and for the legal protection of the City and department related to policing of the City. The best program for these updates is called Lexipol, which is professional policy development company for EMS, Police, solely Public Safety, well respected for quality work. Estimated cost of Lexipol is \$2, 277.00. They watch changes @ state level, etc. and update us as needed. This would be ongoing partnership, so we are always up to date on our policies and procedures. There is a grant from Insurance Company that will reimburse us for up to \$2,500 for these updates...so no final cost to City. Uniform change for department, going to (Wildcat) blue polo shirt for comfort and ‘officer friendly’ look and black pants. Safe vest can be worn under or over shirt. Hoping the look will be received well. Class “a” uniform will also be maintained for official events such as funerals, etc. Working on a lead on grant program for vest. Concern of J. Anderson about speeders and loud vehicles on Sylfest, Chief will monitor. May look into portable speed signs. Chief complemented Debi and Susan for all the help. Clerk shared that we are receiving many good compliments from visitors to the department, also. Paul Syverson reminded Officer Kim Potts was hired as our new 3<sup>rd</sup> officer.

Police/Ordinance Committee Meeting on 9/3/2020: C. Ekern/Chairperson: Zoning Ordinance 46-Consider change to allow residential in Industrial Zone. Ekern had been approached by a couple people interested in building in the Industrial District on East end of City and they wondered about adding a residential component to their building. Blair Industrial Development Corporation owns the lots for sale there. Clerk Frederixon checked with BIDCO and without more information, they did not think they would approve that. Plans to bring BIDCO and Police/Ordinance Committees together to further discuss. No recommendations for Council.

Blair Community Development Group on 9/10/20: C. Ekern reported: 7 members present. Discussion to try to re-energize Committee after COVID-19 began. Re-visit with City Finance Committee/City Council on possible incentives for businesses that City could support. Main hope is to work on developing a good/organized process for businesses to apply for any incentives that may be available. Goal to have a process that can be efficiently done for all. Ekern shared there is a party interested in a meat processing business possibly in City, some discussion on that was heard with hope to have more discussions.

WI DNR- Blair Municipal Dam Grant Application update: Clerk Frederixon reported – Our application was considered compete and eligible, however, we were not funded at this time. Applications exceeded funds available. 32 applied/23 were funded. WDNR reviewed documents submitted that demonstrate ownership and deemed them complete. However, WDNR realized the mill building use and configuration has changed in recent years. As a result, the validity of ownership documentation for any future Municipal Dam Grant applications may come into question and will likely need closer review. Oakridge Engineering that helped us with grant application is helping us work on getting needed repairs done at City expense. Updates will be given as available.

Fire Department Class B Liquor License Application for 10/17/2020: **Motion by C. Ekern to approve as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Building Permits: Sign Art Company Inc. for Blair Cheese Festival for new ‘Welcome to Blair’ electronic sign. D.O.T. has been informed and are ok with design, placement as long as sign does not disturb traffic and we assured it will not. Easement information has been verified by Alan Robertson: Town of Preston new Town Hall/Shop @ 1102 E. Broadway Street, for installation of ‘We Energies gas line’; Thomas & Lee Carpenter @ 126 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street for back yard fence. Fence will be wooden post with chain link fencing attached along lot lines. Kwik Trip, Inc. @ 511 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street for addition of another fuel type to this location, needing a sign attached to entrance side of Diesel fuel canopy & new pipe & wire to fuel dispensing units & tanks. No County Permits are

required for these applications. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve all as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Clerk Report: Fall Clean Up dates are set. Wednesday, 9/30/2020, 3 pm to 7 pm and Saturday, 10/3/2020, 9 am to 1 pm. Back to the regular charge for item practice. 2020 WEC CARES subgrant program – helps to cover ‘additional ELECTION expenditures, due to the Pandemic: \$ 842.40 received, Good work Debi ☺ Friday, afternoon we had a visitor come in and hand us \$270.00 cash. . .stated it was IN MEMORY OF HER DAD, JOHN SKORSTAD. The family & friends had been celebrating his life and remembered our Park had many trees cut this summer due to ash boar disease and thought it would be a good thing to replace some of those with the money. Request Oak or Maple please or whatever is needed. Information is in Park Superintendent mailbox for consideration/action. Nice letter from rural Blair resident, Dale Haymann, for Kris McNamer our Blair/Preston Librarian. Letter starts by saying how much the Corona Virus has upset lives of everyone, Kris has helped keep our composure and sanity. She has always been wonderful librarian, but has went above and beyond her normal duties, I think we all agree.

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

**Next Council meeting is October 5, 2020 @ 6:30 pm**

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

---

Susan Frederixon-Clerk/Treasurer