

City of Blair Council Meeting Minutes, Combination Regular April & 2020 Re-Organizational Meetings, 4/21/2020 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 21, 2020. Due to COVID-19 this meeting was held both in person at 122 S. Urberg Avenue observing 'social distance rules' and via Zoom on-line meeting attendance. The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Mayor A. Knutson; Alderpersons-W. Cartrette (7:30 waited to be admitted to meeting), T. Wheeler, J. Anderson, M. Lisowski, P. Syverson, Clerk/Treasurer S. Frederixson, Attorney A. Robertson, Trempealeau County Times, S.E.H. David Schofield, Aaron Symicek (P.T. Police officer), R. Jensen, Acting Police Chief, Absent: C. Ekern.

Attorney Alan Robertson administered the Oath of Office to Jill Anderson/Ward 2 via 'zoom' and Mike Lisowski-Ward 3 in person.

Re-organizational Meeting portion:

Mayor presented standing Committees for 2020-2021- Mayor felt the current committees work well and many are in the middle of large projects; so the Committees and Chairpersons will remain the same. Person listed 1st is Chairperson: Board of Health-P. Syverson, J. Anderson, W. Cartrette. Committee wishes to continue with Paul Syverson as Chairperson, Park & Recreation-W. Cartrette, J. Anderson, P. Syverson. Business & Economic Development Committee-C. Ekern, W. Cartrette, P. Syverson. Police/Ordinance-C. Ekern, W. Cartrette, M. Lisowski. Public Property & Buildings-M. Lisowski, W. Cartrette, T. Wheeler. Street, Lights, & Equipment-P. Syverson, C. Ekern, T. Wheeler. Tax, Finance, & Personnel-J. Anderson, P. Syverson, T. Wheeler. Water & Sewer/Joint Sewer Advisory-T. Wheeler, AMPI representative, C. Ekern. Library Board Representative-J. Anderson. Ambulance Board Representative-S. Frederixson. Fire Department Liaison-T. Wheeler and C. Ekern. Joint Fire Board Representatives-Jay Vehrenkamp and Bill Hamble. **Motion to approve as presented by M. Lisowski, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: none. Vote: Yes 4, No 0. Motion approved.**

Nomination of Council President: J. Anderson to nominated P. Syverson. Called 3 times for other nominations; no other nominations. **Motion by J. Anderson to close the nominations, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: none. Vote: Yes 4, No 0. Motion approved.**

Presentation of General Offices: City Assessor-Eric Kleven, City Attorney-Alan S. Robertson Law Firm, City Civil Defense Directors-Chief of Police and Officer J. Pride, Official Depository Bank-Union Bank of Blair or successor. **Motion P. Syverson to approve as stated, 2nd M. Lisowski. Discussion: none. Vote: Yes 4, No 0. Motion approved.**

Blair Plan Commission and Zoning Committee Appeals Board Members: Blair Plan Commission: Mayor Knutson, Wanda Cartrette-Alderperson, Mike Lisowski-Alderperson, Rod Anderson, Brian Stenberg and Joe Arneson (accepted new term), Leslie Moen (accepted new appointment). Zoning Board: Carl Axness/Chairperson, Jim Peterson, Carlyle Helstad, Katy Lien, Dean Dale and Paul Polege (accepted new appointment). **Motion to approve members by P. Syverson, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: none. Vote: Yes 4, No 0. Motion approved.**

Set meeting dates & time through April 2021: Regular Council Meeting dates presented: May 4, June 1, July 6, August 3, September 14, October 5, November 9, December 7, 2020; January 4, February 1, March 1, April 12 & 20, 2021. **Motion by P. Syverson to approve dates as presented, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: J. Anderson asked to revisit starting time of regular meetings, request to go to 6:30 pm., also wondered if it is in Ordinance as 7 pm. Vote: Yes 4, No 0. Motion approved. Motion by P. Syverson to change meeting times to 6:30 pm from 7:00 pm, and change Ordinance if needed, 2nd by J. Anderson, Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 4, No 0. Motion approved.**

Regular April Meeting Portion: Public Comment: Alderperson Lisowski asked where we are on the 'clean up the City project' that was discussed last fall. There was discussion about a letter to property owners with yards needing clean up. Clerk/Treasurer Frederixon explained there has been a letter drafted, but it has not been approved yet by Council. The Council had decided the Police department was going to monitor the clean-up and then the Chief retired and Mark Spaeth resigned, so it has been on hold until the new Chief is hired. This item will go to the next Public Property Committee meeting.

Present minutes for approval: Regular Council Meeting 3/2/20 & Special Meeting 3/10/20. **Motion P. Syverson to approve both 3/2 and 3/10 meeting minutes as presented, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 4(W.C. waiting to enter zoom meeting), No 0. Motion approved.**

Class B Temporary Liquor License Application: Blair Preston Fire Department for May 9, 2020 Dance/Chicken Cookout Event. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: Randy Jenson will talk with Fire Chief to talk with Health Dept. about correct COVID-19 requirements. Vote: Yes 4, No 0. Motion approved.**

7:25 pm * Host for Zoom meeting admitted, Aaron Symicek/P.T. Police Officer, Wanda Cartrette/Alderperson, Andrew Dannehy-TCT, Clerk recapped others in attendance and meeting topics already covered. Al Robertson administered oath of office to Wanda Cartrette, Ward 1, Wanda accepted.

S.E.H. engineering report: David Schofield reported, Council needs to decide if they will apply for the next CDBG Street Project at this time or postpone that application for a year? Project area would be portions of Broadway Street water/sewer/street upgrades, estimated cost of \$2.3 million, grant if awarded of \$1million, local funding of \$1.3 million. **Motion by P. Syverson to postpone the CDBG Infrastructure Grant application until April 2021, if grant approved plan for construction 2022, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** 2020 Drainage Project: Contractor has mobilized to the site, with some heavy equipment, will probably get storm sewer in on Hickory this week, most likely not start on the Olson Street culvert replacement, etc. until things dry out a bit. Clerk was able to get in contact with most residents to inform of project.

Reports: Blair Police Department March 2020 report by Randy Jenson (interim Chief): 125 calls, 5 where there was no officer available and County had to handle. 10 animal, 2 child services assist other agencies, 1 restraining order violation 3 suspicious vehicle/person, 1 threat, 6 disorderly conduct, 23 other misc. calls, 11 welfare checks, 8 EMS calls, 43 traffic stops, 11- 911 calls, 1 Community service-birthday parade. Records show disorderly conduct complaints are up 160 % from last year this time (difficult with people cooped up at home), Traffic citations are down 66 % (less people on the road with COVID-19 & less coverage) and Public service calls are up 78 %. Chief application/interview update: Police/Ordinance & Personnel Chairperson's were informed that only 3 applicants were received; thoughts are to maybe start the process over with updated salary consideration. The ad salary posted (\$22-\$26.01). The average surrounding communities' current wage for Chief is \$29.64 for Chief; Blair's wage is about \$5 lower. It is believed the ad wage is too low to draw interest for the position and the group is hoping for a larger group to interview. Candidates that originally applied would be ok to re-apply. **Motion by P. Syverson to re advertise using only the Police Wilenet service, with a shorter deadline, with wage of \$28.00-\$32.00, depending on experience, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: M. Lisowski wondered why we wouldn't interview the 3 and see if we find a Chief, J. Anderson wondered about population comparison for wage consideration, more discussion. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** Police Department Computer update research report: R. Jensen shared current computer is 8 years old, not supported by windows, cannot get virus protection... quote from Hanson Consulting, Inc. (City IT consultant) Dell Inspiron 12GB RAM, Windows 10 Pro, 512GB SSD, 6TB HDD, 3 year Warranty, 24" Monitor and configuration, installation labor of \$2,413.94. **Motion by W. Cartrette to order new computer equipment as presented with**

cost to come from the small equipment Police budget, knowing the overall P.D. salary budget will have excess for 2020, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: J. Anderson asked if this was as new as available, answer yes. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved. Police squad is in need of additional work as check engine light is on again.

Park/Lake Committee Meeting 3/4/20 Chairperson W. Cartrette reported Lori Gonzalez Memorial flag and flower bed donation update: Rita Borreson, mom of Lori, requested approval to do a cement based flag pole display with a raised flower bed boarder. Jim Nyen and Rita found a nice location between the 2 ball fields near the Schroeder shelter. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve as presented, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** Crystal Moen tree donation to Park: 1 in memory of Lori Gonzalez and 3 other memorials. Request to stay away from ash trees, discussion around the autumn glazed maple tree as a good choice, 10' starter tree. Ok to work with Jim for good locations. J. Anderson suggested them to go in campground to replace shade trees recently lost. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve Crystal Moen to work with Jim Nyen to place 4 tree donations to our Park, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** Ash tree replacement planning: plan to have this on future Park Committee agenda for discussion, using the City budget. Clerk Frederixon also mentioned that Cheese Festival Committee is interested in discussing park tree donations. P. Syverson has money from his brother's memorial designated for trees.

Combination Streets, Water & Sewer Committee Meeting on 3/17/2020: Chairperson P. Syverson reported on Police Squad replacement- R. Jensen shared 3 local quotes with trade in, Chevy Service Pickup @ \$18,995, and Dodge Durango @ \$17,960 & Ford Interceptor @ \$20,460. Equipment switch over estimate is an additional \$4,500. 11-12 week delivery time. Committee recommendation to have R. Jensen order Chevy Service Pickup. Committee also recommended improved preventative maintenance program be implemented. **Motion by P. Syverson to purchase Chevy Service Pick-up to include equipment switch over amount, using CIP for Public Safety fund for payment, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: Truck is a better trade in value at trade in time. Expecting about \$15,000 in trade in for current squad. Lettering should be included in switch over cost or close. Some of current equipment will switch to this new truck. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** 2002 Park Pick up replacement discussion: purchased in February 2015 for \$4,919.50. Repairs to date are \$3,450.37. Jim says the tailgate is ready to fall off and not at the hinge location, door is hard to shut and when you get it shut things fall off. Committee recommends start looking for replacement. This will go on next Equipment committee meeting. Next Community Development Grant Project update: David Schofield/S.E.H. engineering attended via phone, Street and Water Department City superintendents also attended and presented ideas of areas in greatest need. Streets thought to be a good grant proposal are Gilbert Street (Hwy 95 to Broadway), Center Street (Hwy 95 to Water Plant), and Pearl Street (Center Street to 4th Street). Grant is for up to \$1,000,000 with a minimum matching from City, so need project to be at least \$2 million project, the areas discussed would be estimated at \$2.3 million. Deadline for CDBG application is May, Safe Drinking Water Grant is June and for Clean Water Fund is September we are looking at applying in 2021. Dave S. said if apply next year we would apply in May 2021, would know if awarded grant in fall 2021 and construct in 2022 and would pursue the Safe Drinking water items in 2021. Committee was also updated by S.E.H. on 2020 Drainage contract with Erickson Excavating. Possible seal coating projects for 2020 are Snake Road, South River Road, Mill Road and East Broadway (Tappen to Elland). Committee decided to have Randy Ekern get bids for East Broadway Street. Committee is recommending to Finance Committee to increase budget to street project CIP going forward. Committee decided to work on 'snow/ice procedure at a later date, Randy Ekern will document current procedures for committee to review and use as template. No paving projects set for 2020. Questions at committee level were about # of trucks hauling from Source Energy Service mine and tipped Mill Road sign (question was answered and sign has been fixed already). **Motion by P. Syverson postpone applying for CDBG project grant until 2021, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Public Property Committee Meeting on 4/8/2020: Chairperson M. Lisowski reported, this meeting was requested by Source Energy Services to discuss the 2020 Financial Assurance reports done by City Zoning Administrator Michael Nied, specifically the new addition of an 'inflation percentage' this year which was added to bring amounts current to 2020 costs. Current amounts are based on 2013-2014 costs. In attendance were City Committee members, Mayor, Source Energy representatives and City Zoning Administrator. Everyone was in agreement that the inflation adjustment is permitted by state statute. Source Energy was asking for consideration on the 9 % - 10.7 % amount for the mines, and questioned if they should be asked to pay for inflation amounts before they owned the property. Committee felt rates need to be adjusted for inflation and recommended Source Energy Service work to provide updated pricing to City Zoning Administrator when a possible adjustment can be considered at a later date. Discussions also were heard to consider spreading the inflation increase over a couple of years until compliant with current rates. Committee feels this is very important and needs to be addressed and resolved ASAP to protect reclamation efforts if needed. Topic was tabled until additional information can be brought to full City Council for consideration. Motion by committee to leave rates at current amount until can be further discussed. Clerk Frederixon shared Source Energy Services request to table to a June meeting given the COVID and market things they are dealing with. Council decided this needs to be addressed at the May 4 meeting.

Blair Community Development Group Meeting on 3/19/2020: CANCELLED due to COVID-19.

Gerke stockpile request: Related to road project on 53, but with no information provided by Gerke, so thinking request was withdrawn, and Council doesn't think they would want to allow anyway.

Tappen Coulee Creek Project II: to improve safe flow of storm water, in 2019 City approved a bid of \$8,200.00 for Trinity Farms Excavating for clearing of trees, debris & obstructions, hauling items away, cleaning culverts of soil build up, etc. and treat stumps so they won't grow again, seeding and mulching affected areas from Tappen Coulee creek banks from Broadway Street to Center Street and from Center Street to Gilbert. The bids today are for the same type of work and continuation of the project from Broadway bridge by Fire Station to Main Street bridge. The Council considers this continuation of the previous project, thus requesting a bid only from Trinity Excavating. Trinity Excavating owner Aaron Kidd explained the clearing of the banks is less of a job than the 2019 project, but the real issue is the amount of sediment found in the South Main Street box culvert. First bid is \$8,150 for clearing trees & stumps, shape creek banks between Second St. and Broadway, haul debris away from site, seed and mulch creek banks and all disturbed areas. After meeting with property owner who wishes to keep most of the trees on his bank we need to adjust & resubmit that bid to \$3,500. The second bid of \$25,000.00 is for maintenance of box culvert South Main Street, site assessment & locate of utilities, clear trees, remove approximately 112 cubic yards of material from north half of culvert, remove sediment form inlet and outlet areas of box culvert, ventilate culvert during work, haul debris away from site, reshape, seed and mulch creek banks. Kidd checked with 2 other Hydro genic and Hydro vac companies about the removal of the sediment and their estimates were approximately \$33,000 and that didn't include the bank clean up, so he decided his company would bid the work. M. Lisowski asked about a long term management plan for the box culverts, not to fill up again. Kidd said there should be an annual maintenance review of the box culverts done, Clerk will add to monthly list in month of August. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve Trinity Excavating revised bids of \$3,500 (creek bank clearing) and \$25,000 for clearing of sediment under Main Street bridge box culvert, paid for from \$5,000 Storm Sewer repairs and balance from general checking, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

COVID-19 affect/planning for Park, Shelters, Pool, and camping seasons: Clerk Frederixon shared Whitehall has decided not to open their pool this year. Discussion about length of time to get things ready, estimation of a week for pool, by Clerk, but will check. Not enough applications have been received at this point, we are still accepting applications. We need to consider the startup cost for pool. W. Cartrette was asking about a program to cover loss of revenue for pool/camping/shelters that was brought up to her by City Deputy Clerk/Treasurer. Frederixon was not aware of any such program and will check on that and inform. At this point due to recommendations from State and County experts, due to COVID-19 we are not able to open our shelters, camping or pool. After much discussion council opinion was not to take any reservations for camping/shelters until after our June 1 meeting. **Motion by J. Anderson to table decisions on park activities until June 1 meeting, with this item on both May 4 and June 1 agendas, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Revisit liquor license fees: Information received from League of Wisconsin Municipalities tells us we may reduce alcohol beverage licensing fees in response to COVID-19 Pandemic for 2020 licensing renewal period. Currently Taverns are charged \$100 for Beer and \$500 for Liquor. **Motion by W. Cartrette to lower 2020 (only this year-back to previous for 2021 renewal) Alcohol beverage Licensing Fees to Beer/\$10 and Liquor/\$100, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Local business owner question of possibility of downtown hotel permitted: Our Ordinance tells us hotels are ‘not permitted’ in our B-1 Downtown Business/Commercial district. They are permitted in our B-2 Highway/Commercial district. Per City Attorney the Ordinance would have to be changed which would go to Plan Commission then back to Council. Council would certainly be willing to look at a plan at a committee meeting.

Building Permits: Patrick Tulus @ 325 Urberg Avenue renewal for a pool permit, has had a pool for multiple years and has done ok with it. Henry Schrock @ 414 Urberg Avenue for Portable tarp building, meets setbacks and will not require a county permit. Chris Mish @ 503 E. Broadway to upgrade gravel driveway to concrete, no size change from current. Town of Preston @ W13356 S. River Road for new town hall and garage, has conditional state approved plans attached. Ron Tranberg permit was withdrawn **Motion by J. Anderson to approve as presented, with the exception of Paul Syverson working with County Land records office for correction to a Blair address on Town of Preston permit, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: M. Lisowski wondering if tarp type sheds have been allowed, Clerk said they have been allowed previously. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Capital Improvement Plan Fund balance update: Clerk believe that under the contingency fund there was a 2nd set of municipal dam motors that was approved to be taken out of the contingency fund, but with the work not getting done in 2019, it wasn’t subtracted on the spreadsheet. There is enough to cover the Ehler’s long-term financial plan, which was approved, but just to alert that when those motors become available (approximately \$ 17,820) we will have to look at where the Council wishes the funding to come from. We believe the spreadsheet to be accurate at this time. No action, just clarification of the CIP fund.

Hen License request from Henry Schrock @ 414 S. Urberg Avenue/**Motion by P. Syverson to approve as presented, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Motion approved.**

Clerk report: More than 2 weeks ago I checked with Source Energy Services and they said the slurry line was up and running and had been for a couple of weeks, going well. Spring Clean-up: through emails it was divided on how to handle spring clean-up with COVID-19. So at this point we have a dumpster near the City shop and will take appointments to comply with social distance rules and City staff will not handle items. Payment will be

made through drop box or handled with social distancing in mind. **Motion by P. Syverson, defer decision on ‘clean-up event’ until June 1 meeting, and if COVID-19 regulations allow the clean-up could happen the 2nd week of June, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: return money for those that were charged @ Spring clean-up days, discontinue at this time. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** Spring Election: caused a lot of anxiety, but thanks to County Clerk, State election board, poll workers, fellow municipal clerks, National Guard and super residents we had a good election that was able to comply with social distancing rules. Randy Ekern engineered and built a perfect plexi glass shield stand for our election poll book site. We have a very nice building for that, thank you. Good turn out and we got to keep our 3 council members. It was great to see the interest in our local races. P. Syverson complimented the Governor’s order to have 51 National Guard member assist with election poll place. W. Cartrette gave big compliments to Susan and team for the organized well done election. Annual Non-Metallic Reclamation report was submitted and also the 2% fire dues report were completed. Debi completed the annual recycling grant report. Ash tree update: about 50% done, doing a super job.

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

Next Council meeting is May 4, 2020 @ 7:00 pm

Motion M. Lisowski to adjourn meeting, 2nd W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Susan Frederixon-Clerk/Treasurer