

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, December 7, 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 December 7, 2020. The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The following members were present: Mayor A. Knutson; Alderpersons-T. Wheeler, J. Anderson, P. Syverson, W. Cartrette, M. Lisowski & C. Ekern Clerk S. Frederixon, Attorney A. Robertson, Trempealeau County Times, Source Energy Services-John Behling & Nathan Stobb, B. Jahr.

Public Comment: None

Present minutes for approval: Regular 11/9/20 & Special Meetings 11/18/2020. 2021 budget wage clarification/J. Anderson, finance committee chairperson explained **Motion W. Cartrette to approve 11/9/2020 minutes with change/clarification to wage information for Brian Jahr: Hire wage of \$19.00 per hour with 50 cent per hour increase at completion of 6 month probation period/March 29/2021, effective 1st full pay period after March 29/2021 & 50 cent per hour increase after successful completion of water and pool certifications, expected in Spring 2021. Chief Kent Johnson wage clarification of \$29.00 per hour hire wage and 50 cent per hour increase after successful completion of 1 year probation period/8/31/2021, effective 1st full pay period after 8/31/2021. Officer Kimberlee Potts wage clarification of \$22.00 per hour hire wage with 50 cent per hour increase after successful completion of 1 year probation period/9/18/2021, effective 1st full pay period after 9/18/2021, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved. Motion by W. Cartrette to approve 11/18/2020 Special Meeting minutes as presented, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Source Energy Preston 2021 Road agreement renewal application: John Behling & Nathan Stobb presented the 2021 annual renewal request of the Road Agreement for their Preston facility. The only changes would be the dates from 1/1/2020 through 12/31/2020 to 1/1/2021 through 12/31/2021 and a request to increase the current amount of trucks allowed daily to haul minerals from 10 to 25 as needed to meet expedited customer orders. These trucks travel from the Preston mine to the rail location only, not to highway 53. Source Energy through the pandemic has continued to employ 75 people, while other mines have closed. Frequency of additional truck traffic estimated only during Quarter 1, estimated at 1 week on, month off, another week on and probably done for year. Source Energy will try to give advance notice to City when additional trucking would happen and notify neighbors prior to increase trucking needs. **Motion by J. Anderson to change ‘road agreement’ language to allow increase of trucks from 10 daily to 25 daily for rush type orders, with requirement for Source Energy to notify neighbors & City prior to increase truck needs & notify City if needed other than 1st Quarter, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Blair/Preston Fire Department, Blair Haus fire review: Brian Jahr/Fire department officer reviewed Blair Haus 11/13/2020 Fire, Blair Preston Department responded immediately, excellent job was done to coordinate mutual aid assistance from all area fire departments. Tri County Ambulance was on site to assist as needed. Local businesses brought food, beverages, supplies, City public works crew assisted with water management, traffic control, ice management, debris clean up, etc. Hegg Contracting provided equipment to assist with saving perimeter buildings, with one piece of equipment falling into Blair Haus basement during work, equipment and operator were rescued with no damage or injuries. 90,000 gallons Lake Henry water and 200,000 gallons city water are estimated to have been used to fight this fire. 27 out of 28 Blair Preston fire fighters assisted, fire department members present to assist from Hale/2, Hixton/13, Independence/8, Osseo/2, Pigeon Falls/4, Whitehall/14, Arcadia/8, Taylor/9, Black River Falls/8, Ettrick/12 and Strum/2. Also present were WDNR, Blair Police Department, Tri County Ambulance, Trempealeau Co. Sheriff Department, City Employee’s and Hegg Contractors. Message from Fire Chief Travis Armitage, sad day for City with loss of a well-run business and iconic building. Department wishes to thank City part time and full time employees for use of equipment, assistance with water, traffic control, etc.

Fire Department concern & request for future consideration, with buildings built as one long ago and then split into 2 business at later time. When this happens a fire coded wall should be required, which would provide protection from fires spreading like this one did. We have other buildings in town that are like this and fire department recommends the need to have these inspected and required to have fire walls installed and/or require fire code compliance. Also department recommends the City require fire inspections be done prior to any new business opening, with business being responsible for inspection cost(estimated @ \$150) & any required compliance updates. Fire department see a need/benefit to the City working to develop a 2nd ‘through way’ for City traffic. Difficult during construction projects on Broadway, emergency situations like the 2012 storm, need to close down Broadway for fire like Blair Haus. Request for Council to consider extension of Taft Street to Main or Center Street to Center Street or some other form of access through City.

2021 Election workers approved: request from Clerk Frederixon to approve Lesley Moen to our ‘Election Worker’ 2 year term list (2020-2022). She assisted during 2020 elections and has taken all the training. She takes the position seriously and was a great asset during some of the most difficult elections this past year. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve Lesley Moen as 2020/2022 Poll Worker, 2nd P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Hen License renewal from Amy Mock @ 838 E. Broadway Street: **Motion by P. Syverson to approve license as presented, 2nd W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Reports: Police Department November report: Chief Johnson reported, Happy to announce Connor Kokott has accepted the Full time Police Officer position for City of Blair, start date of January 4, 2021. Lexipol work is just getting started. I will be working closely with Ordinance Committee and City Attorney on upgrading our City Ordinances as quickly as possible. Police Department Offices construction is moving along, floor will be installed next week. Police department recommends using excess P.D. 2020 budget to purchase 2 ‘solar speed monitoring’ signs, estimated at \$9,900 each, we do have some chronic speed issues and data shows these deter speeding. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve purchase of speed signs as long as 2020 police department budget covers cost, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Park Superintendent report: B. Jahr- things are going well, deer are doing well and buck will be going back in with doe/fawn soon, planning to cut trees down that are safety issue soon, working on placing 50’ x 80’ skating rink in new area. Busy working more with water and street department quite bit since it is my off season a bit, learning and covering for vacations & absences, learning a lot.

Park /Lake Committee Meeting on 11-12-2020/Chairperson W. Cartrette reported, Lake portion of meeting- Lake permit is a 10 year permit so we do have time, COVID has not allowed for any events so far, Kevin Lisowski has been researching hard on possible ‘Grant’ opportunities, without much luck so far on grants that fit our project. On hold through winter, FACEBOOK pages are letting people know we are still taking donations we still have a goal to complete the Lake dredge project. Donations will be put in an ‘interest bearing’ account until project begins. Blair/Taylor Recreation Director Positon: 2 applications were received, waiting to hear from Taylor on interviews/plans. Brian Jahr was at meeting sharing vision for Park, trees removal for safety reasons & skating rink placement.

Blair Community Business Development Meeting on 11-19-2020/C. Ekern reported small group met, revisited social media planning, to assist moving this group forward. Looking at ways to offset costs by developing an ‘advertising cooperative’, fee reduces by number of members, so more members lower advertising costs. Professional Company would manage sites, they are currently contracted with many area businesses and come highly recommended. ‘Business spotlights’ ads provided throughout the year. With lack of attendance at meeting the group in attendance, Chris, Wanda, Fred Ackley (Tri Core Insurance Agency) & Jamie/Mike Ressel

(Blair On-line Auction) agreed to divide the businesses within City boundaries and try to contact them in person to share advertising opportunity information, answer questions and encourage participation.

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. Randy Ekern leads the process, but Brian Stenberg, Mark Hanson, Bob Fraust and Brian Jahr are all needed. Stetzer electric lets us use their lift for safety 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 16, 2021 Spring Primary and the April 6, 2021 Spring Election, the deadline to return completed packets is Tuesday, January 5, 2021. Thank you very much to City taxpayers and City Council for our employment, benefits, health insurance and 2021 pay increases. In November the City received a nice donation, to be used for a park tree, from the Frederixon family's IMO Kent Nelson. In November also, we received a very generous \$5,000.00 Lake improvement donation, from Elaine Angst, longtime resident and member of community. She remembered her and John's involvement in the previous Lake improvement project and wanted to help get it back to beautiful again. Wow so nice and a big boost to the project.

Mill Road drainage improvement cost review & decision on payment: Cost of installation of culverts at Tollefson and Anderson driveway for improved drainage was identical... \$1,603.00 each for total of \$3,206.00. Council is being asked to decide if landowners will be required to pay for improvement or if City might cover cost. City engineering company stated this project is a benefit to our City Street, it will add to life of pavement and improve safety of travelers, by managing the water flow away from crossing road. Council discussion centered on the fact that when these houses were built the City didn't have requirements for installation of culverts at property owner's expense as they do now. **Motion by J. Anderson to make a one time exception for reason's discussed and have City pay in full for this improvement, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: Request for Ordinance Committee to review and consider adoption of Ordinance related to culvert installation policy similar to sidewalk 50% 50% resident/City share expense. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Building permits: Bill & Stacy Wittkowski @ 834 E. Broadway Street/Lot 16 for repairs to current deck/requires County permit & inspection; Kristin/Jeremy Tranberg @ 107 W. Broadway Street for rebuild of Blair Haus Sports Bar/requires State approved plans. Motion by C. Ekern to approve both permits contingent on all outside permits being obtained prior to project starting & as presented, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Present vouchers for review/approval: Motion by J. Anderson to approve vouchers as presented, 2nd P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Paul-Yes, Wanda-Yes, Jill-Yes, Mike-Yes, Terry-Yes, Chris-Yes. Motion approved.

Council request for fire department concern issues go to following Committees: 'Fire inspections for new businesses & property owners' to Property/Building Committee and 'Additional Thru City Access Street to Street Committee, consider adding that to the Broadway 2022 project maybe?

Next Council meeting is January 4, 2020 @ 6:30 pm

Motion J. Anderson to adjourn meeting, 2nd W. Cartrette. None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion Discussion: approved.