

October 15, 2020 Minutes for Special Meeting of the Common Council of the City of Blair

A Special 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 October 15, 2020. Mayor Knutson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The following were present: Alderpersons: P. Syverson, J. Anderson, T. Wheeler, C. Ekern, M. Lisowski, W. Cartrette and City Clerk/Treasurer S. Frederixon. Members of the Community Jean and Brian Stenberg, Jamie and Mike Ressel, Tim Robertson, Todd Beaty, Lucas Solberg, Brian Jahr, Travis Armitage via 'zoom' call.

Revisit City policy on 'employee fire call response' during work day/Action item: Clerk Frederixon explained that after the City Council's October 5 direction to have new Park Superintendent Brian Jahr, who is also an Officer and member of the Blair/Preston volunteer fire department, "stay at work during most fire calls" there came many requests from the residents and fire department for a chance to talk with the Council about this topic again.

Clerk Frederixon shared: **after further research which was not available at the time of the October 5 meeting**, past practice has shown the City has supported employees to respond to all fire calls, with pay, with the requirement to use good judgement if it is ok for them to leave their duties, example would not leave if in the middle of something important and to use the same good judgement on returning to City duties as soon as possible. They should show on their time card the time they were gone on a fire call for liability purposes. Also Wanda Cartrette was not at the October 5<sup>th</sup> Council meeting for these discussions.

Jean Stenberg gave a stunning, heartfelt reminder to all of us and the Council that the volunteer firewomen and men sacrifice family, work, personal time and personal safety to respond to fire calls to keep all of our families, personal and business property safe, 24/7...365 days a year. And there should never be a question of IF they should be allowed to respond, but instead a THANK YOU for responding and a TRUST that the intelligent, competent people you have hired as City Employees can make good decisions. They have the respect and support of this community and should have the support of their City Council.

Fire Chief Armitage, City Park Superintendent Brian Jahr, current City Employee Brian Stenberg and former City Council member Todd Beaty all spoke in support of Jean Stenberg's comments and of allowing City employees to attend fire calls with good judgement. Brian Jahr also stated he would be considerate of his City duties, when responding and return to them as soon as he is not needed or will not leave in situations he feels would be best served to stay.

Council member's M. Lisowski and C. Ekern, felt there may have been a misunderstanding on their October 5<sup>th</sup> directive, but it was clarified as a quote from the audio recording that the directive related to Park Superintendent being allowed to respond to fire calls was "**we would rather have him stay at work unless there is a big house fire**".

With the information from the community members and the added information from Clerk Frederixon, **Motion by J. Anderson to allow City employees who are also members of Volunteer Fire Department be allowed to respond to fire calls, using good judgement related to their work duties and also to be paid during time normally scheduled with City and to apologize personally for any bad judgement I may have shown in the October 5<sup>th</sup> directive, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Discussion/consider change to CDA/Community Development Authority Policy Language/Action item: Community Development Authority is a tool to expand the 2009 City of Blair Beautification Project. Targeted area is basically our downtown district. It is a low interest loan and up to \$2,500 grant program. Up until now only 'exterior' structure improvements could be considered by the Authority, but City Council in an effort to create additional financial support incent

**Motion by C. Ekern to change CDA Procedure Policy language as follows: delete ‘eligible improvements include exterior siding, windows, roofs etc.... and create in its place ‘Interior and exterior building improvements are eligible.’, 2<sup>nd</sup> W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

**Motion by C. Ekern to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

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Susan Frederixon, City Clerk/Treasurer