

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, October 5, 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 October 5, 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, C. Ekern & M. Lisowski; W. Cartrette was absent. Clerk/Treasurer S. Frederixon, Attorney A. Robertson, Trempealeau County Times, D. Schofield/S.E.H.

Public Comment: David Donnelly, perspective owner of 212 W. Broadway, formally the Peterson Bar building came to introduce himself & Becky Dalton (plans to help make business look nice) to Council. From Minneapolis, been looking for fixer upper type property. I have done construction, maintenance and also bar manager type work and am a licensed realtor. Want to work with Council to have a respected business in this City, become a long time resident, business owner and member of the community.

Present minutes for approval: Regular Council Meeting 9/14/2020. **Motion T. Wheeler to approve all minutes on agenda as presented, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

S.E.H. Engineering reports: David Schofield/S.E.H. Engineering, Mill Road Drainage update: Review work has been completed. Summary & recommendations are, Drainage from Mill Road-from Mill Road to Trempealeau River appears to be adequately conveyed in an existing mapped wetland along west side of House #227. Recommendation: No municipal improvements are recommended. Drainage along Mill Road-There is an existing culvert east of driveway to House #240, No culvert under driveway to House 236, existing culvert under driveway to House #230 is clogged. Due to lack of functioning culverts north ditch does not drain. Recommendation: City install a 38 foot long x 15 inch diameter culvert under driveway to House # 236 and a 24 foot long x 15 inch diameter culvert under driveway to House #230. Also, City to regrade north ditch from 167 feet east of "B" toward "B" at a slope of 1.11%, which has been marked with lath and marking paint in the field. Drainage to Mill Road-We observed a portion of watershed upstream of Mill Road and Groundwater seepage was noted northwest of House # 230. Seepage is likely caused by groundwater traveling laterally atop clay/rock layer and exiting hillside. The 45 acre watershed has 2 NRCS-style grade control structures to promote infiltration & increase groundwater flow. This area appears to be historically wet as willow trees had been planted to absorb excess water. No active leaking was noted from City reservoir. A shed southeast of House #236 appears to have removed & replaced with gravel parking area after 2014, but unable to determine if surface increase or remained same. Recommendation # 1: No municipal improvements are recommended. Recommendation # 2: House # 230 should consider constructing a swale to shed water west then south around the house toward Mill Road. The groundwater seepage area could be stabilized with drainage fabric and light riprap. Council Discussion about who pays for improvements, S.E.H. said City is improving City property by doing this work by creating proper drainage, council felt that this situation is different than a new construction where property owner is required to install culvert at their expense, when these Mill Road homes were built no one required the culverts. Drainage on that road may have never been correct, City should consider paying for improvements. **Motion by T. Wheeler to do the work, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved. Motion by J. Anderson to table who pays what until we have costs of project to consider, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** 2019 CDBG Street & Utility Project warranty items update: Letter to Gerke on 4 warranty type items that have come up from the 2019 CDBG Street project, 3 driveway issues 1 section of curb, Gerke said they will have fixed by end of month. C. Ekern relayed a resident concern related to project & asked David to speak with them. 2021/2022 CDBG 2.3 million dollar Broadway/Pearl Street project: City will be applying for a \$1 million grant to offset costs. Applications due in May 2021 and selections made in August 2021. The construction costs would not be incurred until 2022 but design & application costs would be in 2021. Council was presented information/engineering proposals for application costs of \$32,000 & design & bidding costs of \$138,000 for project. This information

was for budget purposes and will be acted on at a later meeting. Lake Dredge project update: Just wanted to let Council know the WI DNR permit for Lake Project is good until 2039 if need be, plenty of time to do the work. Current delay due to COVID-19 will not affect the ability to do project when ready.

Blair Taylor School District Referendum Information: Jeff Eide, BTSD Administrator, Lynn Halverson, BT Elementary Principal and Ashley Beck parent member of Committee explained the main points of referendum that will be on ballots for the November 3rd, 2020 election: Total costs of \$4,145,000. Additions of Day care Facility, 6th Grade, Life Skills, and Business Ed. Classrooms and Baseball field. Improvements: Elementary Playground, School Health Services bathroom in the middle/high school officer, Scene Shop storage for auditorium and more and 2 sections of roof replacement for the 1999 addition. Why now? Historically low interest rates gives us opportunity to extend term of our building debt by 3 years, allowing us to AVOID an increase in our building debt tax obligation, remaining cost-neutral while improving our Campus. Thank you for opportunity to assist with getting information out to public and we are hoping for your support on 11/3/2020.

Blair Community Day update/Jeremy Tranberg-Owner Operator Blair Haus Sports Bar: Basically just wanted to come to City Council and sincerely thank you for allowing us to do the event. We believe it went well and really appreciate the support of the Council. Tranberg also complimented the new Police Chief as doing a good job of creating a good relationship with Tavern owners trying to be a support to their success.

Shared Attorney to monitor Hi Crush Chapter 11 actions/Attorney Alan Robertson explained it has been announced the courts have approved the restructuring plan for Hi Crush, it should become final in October 2020, therefore Robertson and the Whitehall/Independence City attorney's believe there is no need to hire an attorney to monitor Chapter 11 for Hi Crush.

Building permits: **Thane Mattson @ 224 W Broadway Street** for installation of a front door and a double door in the back of building. No County permit is required as County does not inspect Commercial sites. **Nathan Lisowski @ 427 S. Pearl Street** for detached garage, I have been assured by owner representative they comply with Ordinance requirements, only 1 other accessory building which is allowed. Meets required size and height limits required by Ordinance and setbacks also. This permit will require a County permit to be obtained prior to project start with county inspections as required. Clerk Frederixon recommending approval of both as presented. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve both permits as presented with the Lisowski permit requiring a County permit prior to start of project, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Formal approval of New Police Officer hiring wage range: In an effort to be more comparable to area wages, Council had verbally discussed the starting wage for hiring of new police officers be increased from \$19.00 to a range of \$22.00 to \$24.00 per hour depending on experience, but there was no 'formal' action taken. **Motion by J. Anderson to increase the hiring wage of new Police Officer's to \$22.00 to \$24.00 per hour, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Halloween in Park event explanation/request: Brenda Shefelbine longtime resident of City, came to Council with a COVID-19 respectful, "Halloween in the Park" event idea...Brenda felt like there has been so much lost by the kids this year, there might be a way to still give them a nice Halloween trick or treat experience safely. Picnic tables 15 feet apart, participants with tables would agree to have hand sanitizer, gloves, masks and individually wrapped treats. She plans to use local advertising on social media and in City Hall for people that might want to have a decorated picnic table in the Park for children to come and 'trick or treat' on October 31st from 3 pm to 5 pm. If approved plans would be to have hopefully 15 or more picnic tables for kids to stop at, located on the lake side of the Schroeder Shelter. The circle around that shelter could be blocked off to cars for safety. Brenda has also had offers from high school kids to assist as a way to gain credit for community service hours.

Motion by T. Wheeler to approve this event as presented, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: Police Chief Johnson said he would for sure have a table. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

City of Blair will not make any changes to normal Halloween trick or treat, they want families to make their own decisions and hope everyone will follow our County Health departments COVID-19 recommendations for safety.

Reports: Police Department October report: Chief Johnson reported lot of good work done in office, 2 contractors working on bids, Officer Potts, my wife and myself have been in quite a lot doing prepping for painting, cleaning and organizing. I have been working with Lexipol (Policy upgrading system) set up, which will keep myself and Ordinance Committee incredibly busy. 155 policies will be looked at, they send me a few 'up-to-date' policies every 2 weeks, I and Ordinance Committee need to review/vet them, decide to accept as written, edit to fit our City and send back to Lexipol for changes or reject as not applicable to us, they come up with a recommendation for approval to full council, until our policies are all up to date. Pro Phoenix system is moving a bit slowly but Kim is helping and will continue to work at the set up with county, etc. Hoping to improve on citations writing practice, where we are able to write them as an Ordinance violation instead of a State Statute violations, there are many reasons for that change. Lots of administrative work going on but all calls and resident complaints or requests are still being taken care of. Husky dog that has been on the loose since March, has been collected finally and taken to the Human Society with many request for his adoption already. Still working on a set coverage plan, but with offer from Randy Jenson, switching Officer Potts to 8 hour days and myself covering some we are able to have good coverage until we are up to full staff. I am expecting to get Ad to replace Officer Pride, in this week, to move that along, with goal to get back to fully staffed department.

Housing Committee on 9/23/2020 report: Clerk Frederixon reported, Terry Wheeler, Mayor Knutson, myself and CDBG Housing program 3rd party administrator, Renee Swenson from Cedar Corporation met to review Homeowner loan application # 130, requesting funds to remove & replace front & back entrance, 2 exterior doors & storm doors, gutters & downspouts, soffit & fascia, 4 windows, 2 exterior faucets, basement wash basin and siding. The siding tested positive for lead so this portion will be granted to the homeowner. Also, requesting to install GFCI outlet in bathroom & kitchen, smoke & carbon monoxide detectors. This applicant is in full compliance for this program and recommended for approval by Cedar Corp. representative. Request of \$13,108 loan amount and \$20,265 grant amount for lead work, was approved by Housing Committee. Swenson gave a brief summary or program, current project fund balance is \$76,476.11 after approval of loan #130. Current receivable balance is \$281,395.40. New posters were given to City for posting.

Fire Board Meeting on 9/30/20 report: C. Ekern reported 2020 budget was reviewed and 2021 budget information was prepared for City & Township budget meetings.

Police/Ordinance Committee report: C. Ekern reported, City commercial building inspector topic was revisited with further discussion needed at later time, Ordinance 46 Zoning to allow residential in Industrial, after further review it was discovered single family residential is listed as a 'conditional use' in this district so no action needed, Meat processing considered in B-1 & Hwy Commercial Districts, discussion was favorable to allow as it has been done successfully in the past, but language should be fine-tuned. Concerns about rendering needed to be picked up & disposed of daily. DRAFT from Attorney Robertson: showed options for language changes to be made in (7) B-1 under 'Specialty Shops' and/or (8) B-2 not currently there as permitted or conditional use, but could create. Committee worked on some language, and requested Attorney Robertson re-draft the Ordinance and bring back to Committee. Committee wants language to reflect not all meat processing is regulated by USDA/County, such as venison butchering & packaging where no processing is happening. Make language as universal as possible to include all types of compliance issues if possible. Ekern & Chief Johnson attended training on 'public nuisance' type Ordinance creation, in Green Bay. Very good training, 2nd part of this training in December to

learn how Police department & Council can access areas for possible public nuisance violations & ways to work with property owners before having to enforce Ordinance violations.

Clerk Report: Scott House/Jack Funeral Home, attended an event in our Schroeder shelter and was surprised to see his business name was not on the wall display case as being a contributor to the building of the shelter. He called and said he wishes to donate \$1,000.00 to the shelter. We thank him VERY much for his thoughtful donation and will plan to use it to upgrade the shower/bathroom area. Now the difficult part seems to be figuring out how to get that GIANT glass opened, get Scott's information in and replaced without a disaster happening...Carl Axness, Larry Hill who built the beautiful display case and myself are working on a plan to do just that. Well worth our efforts. 2021 Employee Health Insurance issues proving a concern. 3 years ago, we joined the Wisconsin Municipal Consortium for our Health Insurance, joining 33 other municipalities in a 'self-funded' type program. Each of those 3 years due to unfortunate high claims data & to some extent poor use of insurance, we have seen very high double digit increases, which I think is pretty normal not just for our group, usually in the 12% increase range, and last year the consortium had change the plan, which doubled the deductible which added \$1,000 'out of pocket' amount to employees cost. This year in July the claims data, was showing about a 9% increase, which is manageable, but after 3rd quarter high claims amounts the increase was showing 26% to 36 % increase. Our city has not had high claims any of the 3 years. All 33 municipalities know we cannot absorb that. After many meetings the past weeks the group voted to discontinue the consortium. This is difficult especially as that leaves all scrambling now to find health insurance before the end of the year and just as importantly in time for us to budget appropriately. ☹ Benefit Advisory's Insurance Company, which was administering the Consortium is helping us with this, but we will all have to 'request for insurance proposals' as individual City's. Small group. I am working with them, we will have to have employees complete medical underwriting. Lots to consider. I will be using an educated estimate for 2021 budget numbers. As always thank you for the benefits the residents and Council provide us with. Clean up days went well, somewhat low attendance, but we had many comments about how wonderful and appreciated the 'no pay' event was. All were fine with paying this time, but said the free event helped them make a clean start and now they wish to keep things that way. Not bad to pay when only have few items now. Tri City is letting us keep dumpsters for this week for any that missed event. They can schedule appointment with City hall. Budget meetings are set for this week, Wednesday, 10/7, Thursday, 10/8 & Tuesday, 10/13 if needed. Needs to be completed and published for public review prior to Council approving @ November 9th meeting. Brian Jahr New Park Superintendent/Water/Wastewater Certified Staff Training: The water department type trainings are only offered 2 times a year to my knowledge, fall and spring. Believe it or not the classes needed were offered at Moraine Park Technical College, virtually, starting September 29th. Brian was able to start a couple days early and will have all water classes completed by October 30th, 2020. Certified Pool Operator will be next on the list, usually those are offered closer to spring. Training schedule has kept him from being able to get into the Park though, it is 8:30 am to 3:30 pm 3 days a week last week, this week and then 3 days the week of October 26th. We have been lucky to have Brian Stenberg and Mark Hanson holding down the Park needs with direction from Randy Ekern, who was good to accept 'interim' Park manager until Brian can be full time. Bob Fraust also has helped with park items. Brian is doing GREAT! He is coming in @ 7 before training to learn the water testing rounds and things needed every day and to be able to cover backing up for weekend rotation. He should be ready to accept the weekend rotation possibly even by October 10th which was Jimmy's weekend. Bob/Randy would agree to be available by phone. Anyway he is actively engaged in continuing the Park at its best and has some good 'big picture' plans for nice improvements, also. Examples: Clear to rails, privacy fence for items needing to be stored outside near salt shed, upgrades to heavy duty nice trash containers, so many a year maybe....just getting started ☺ Interested in computer management of lists, process & procedure documentation, using computer to store and manage information related to Park. Office area in Park building. Already making a positive impact in his position.

We miss Jim, he stops in and says hello. City presented him with a tall, well made, metal yard Shepard's hook type gift, with rain gauge, deer buck and North, South East West direction metal cut outs on it. Rain gauge monitoring, deer hunting have always been a hobby for Jim. Also a \$100 gift card to Farm & Fleet, to upgrade his ice fishing equipment, which is something he said he wishes to get back in to in his retirement. He wanted to thank the City for these gifts. Residency requirement clarification: With the hiring we have been doing, I wanted to clarify the residency requirement information. We do not show anything currently in our Personnel Policies, but our Ordinance 8.06 states we do not require full time employees to reside within the corporate limits of the City and Full Time Police Officer must live within a 20 minute response time for emergency purposes, State statute 66.0502 allows the following: no local governmental unit may require any employee except emergency services to reside within any jurisdictional limit: residency requirements on law enforcement personnel can require to reside within 15 miles of jurisdictional boundaries of city. Public Works Training: 9/23/20 I arranged for our Public Works Staff, full and part time to attend a virtual training offered for free by our League of Municipalities Insurance program. ☺ 1 hour training. Training on Leaf & Brush Collection; Tree Trimming & Brush Chipping; Park Sites/picnic table removal, pier removal, building/facility maintenance/waterfront/beach/pools; Snowplowing. All tied to review of safe work practices.

City authorization on 'employee fire call response' during work day/Action item: Clerk Frederixon explained new Park Superintendent Brian Jahr, who is also an Officer and member of the Blair/Preston volunteer fire department, is asking if it is ok for him to respond to fire calls as needed during his work day. Frederixon shared this was brought up at interviews by more than one applicant and Personnel/Park Committee/Mayor/Clerk thought it should not be a problem. Frederixon shared since she has been Clerk no employee has been an 'active' fire department member so she does not know past practice. Clerk Frederixon said Whitehall allows employees to respond and are paid for time at fire call, Osseo allows to respond but not paid, no other information was returned prior to this meeting. After much discussion about concerns of leaving important Park/back up water duties, leaving part time employees unsupervised, not being available for City work responsibilities and thoughts of mutual aid being able to cover during work shift, Council general direction/no action taken, was "responsibilities are with the City and we would rather have him stay at work unless there is a large house fire".

Bid of \$3,500 for lift station generator, from Spring Street Main Lift station. Water/Wastewater Superintendent Bob Fraust thought decent bid and better to not let it sit. **Motion by C. Ekern to accept bid of \$3,500 from Dean Lyngen, 2nd by M. Lisowski. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Aldersperson Terry Wheeler donated \$ 650.00 worth of trees to the Park in memory of Sandy, 1 Bur Oak, 1 Aspen & 1 Blaze Maple. These are large starter trees and Terry will work with Park Superintendent Brian Jahr for placement and planting next week. Big Thank you to Terry.

Ehlers Sewer Utility Long -Range Cash Flow Analysis Update: Brian Reilly reminded us that Council was presented a summary of Sewer rate analysis to help plan to meet cash flow needs and maintenance needs and to identify that if we are only covering current expenses we need a plan for future maintenance and replacement costs and what type of rate plan needs to be implemented. Question from council on how this would impact our largest user, one option was to make a single adjustment to get us to where we need to be, and the other option was to spread the rate increase over a 2-3 year time frame. Committee sounded like they were leaning toward a step increase over 2-3 year period, both are fine. It is somewhat difficult to estimate effect on largest user, as they are billed with a 'look back' period, City does a calculation on maintenance and operations according to the user agreement, so not same as normal residential billing. Using the prior year data, if same allocation data was used it looks like about a \$60,000 annual increase, or about a 20-25 % annual increase. If single step is done, effect on largest user, is estimated to be \$60,000, if step approach is used estimated 1/3 of that amount increase over time frame of 3 years if that was chosen. Once largest user is informed, if they have questions they should put them in writing for Ehler's to reply to. Once Committee decides on which approach Ehler's will work with Susan to

implement plan, with goal of getting residents and businesses information for implementation on 1/1/2021, with increases seen on April 2021 billing.

Ehlers Long Range Financial Plan summary: B. Reilly went over 10 year forecasted Financial Management Plan. Summary: City has managed financial operations well. The need to review & integrate future capital improvements & operating needs of City will introduce new financial pressures along with need to maintain adequate cash balances. This plan indicates City will be able to maintain steady tax rates while financing capital projects identified in this plan. Recommendations: 1) Use available cash for capital projects. 2) Levy to cover the deficient cash flow for TID 7 debt service. 3) Dedicate the royalty revenue to capital projects. 4) Maintain an unassigned General Fund balance between 50% & 60% of operating expenditures. 5) Regularly review and update the financial plan as capital and operational needs evolve.

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

Next Council meeting is November 9, 2020 @ 6:30 pm

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

Susan Frederixon-Clerk/Treasurer