

City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, November 9, 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 November 9, 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 was absent. Clerk/Treasurer S. Frederixon, Attorney A. Robertson, Trempealeau County Times & D. Schofield.

Public Comment: Brenda Shefelbine, Coordinator for the 2020 Halloween in the Park, said the event went extremely well. More than 300 people attended and 15 or more tables were set up with support from local businesses and residents. Council members and our Police department participated. City helped set up and it seems many want to make it an annual event. Police Chief Johnson agreed with the statements made and has ideas for improving it next year.

Present minutes for approval: Regular 10/5/20 & Special Meetings 10/8/2020 & 10/15/20. **Motion W. Cartrette to approve all minutes on agenda as presented, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Mayor Knutson opened the 2021 budget hearing: Clerk Frederixon stated the handout shows the 2021 Proposed City budget. General Fund Revenues and Expenditures were balanced with \$116,638.00 remaining for Capital Projects fund. Budget will be discussed in more detail later in the agenda.

S.E.H. Engineering reports from David Schofield. 2021/2022 CDBG \$2.3 million Broadway/Pearl Street project: City will be applying for a \$1 million CDBG grant to offset costs and applying for a Clean Water Fund low interest loan. Applications due May of 2021 with selections made in August of 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/grant administration costs of \$32,000 & design and bidding costs of \$138,000 for project. Application cost is \$7,000, with \$3,500 due initially and the remaining \$3,500 due only if the grant is awarded to City. Because of timelines, design and bidding costs need to be worked on prior to award notification, but can try to keep to 30% (only pay for work done until award notification) or so in case City isn't awarded grant this time. This work can be used in the next year if not awarded in 2021, work done by S.E.H. could be used 2023 or 2024 also. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve both the 'Application/Grant Administration & Design & Bidding' proposals as presented. 2nd by J. Anderson.** Discussion: Council discussion that the City portion of the project would come from borrowing (Clean Water Fund loan @ approximately 1% interest rate, eligible expenses include water-sewer & street), Street CIP, water & sewer funds. Dave estimated at least 50% of the project could be funded at 1% interest rate. **Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Town of Preston proposal on sale of 101 W Broadway Street building: Township Chairperson Darrel Nelson shared since building of our new Town Hall/Shop, Township electors met and decided they would give first chance opportunity to purchase ½ of the building, for the use by the fire Department to the City. Feel keeping the building between the two entities would benefit the fire department for storage & Cheese Festival for their event. Township has had other parties show interest in the building. Township feels value of building is \$100,000 and City share if agreed to would be \$50,000. We understand this is big decision but hoping for a decision by the December council meeting. Mayor asked about condition of building, Nelson said they feel it is fair condition for 75 year old building. Nelson said M. Lisowski asked appraised value: Nelson said \$94,000. W. Cartrette asked for explanation on what ½ of building means. Nelson said similar to the shared ownership for Fire Department/Community Center building. But Township idea is for use of the building by the fire department not by City/Township. Darrel has talked some with fire department but still needs to follow up to see if this arrangement would be helpful for them. **Motion by J. Anderson to send to Public Property and Buildings**

Committee for discussion/recommendation, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

SPW slurry status check by Clerk: email was sent to check that slurry line is in good working order and ready for winter processing, but haven't heard back yet, can report at December meeting.

Nomination papers for 2021 Spring election, were distributed to Mayor Knutson, Alderpersons Wheeler, Syverson and Ekern. December 1st is the earliest day to obtain signatures required for ballot placement.

Building permits: Francis Pyka @ 528 E. Broadway to enlarge driveway, information shows his permit size request is within the Ordinance guidelines, set backs are ok also. Francis also received permission from Trempealeau County Highway department to do improve his driveway per the permit information. No County permit is required. David Donnelly @ 212 Broadway Street for a privacy fence. David says he will build the fence out of treated wood, no pointed edges, no more than 8 feet tall and within his property lines. He was given the Ordinance on fence requirements and this permit seems to meet the requirements. No County permit is required. **Motion by P. Syverson to approve both permits as presented, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Clerk report: Election was amazing, incredible turn out...571 voters when we only had 638 total registered prior to election. 200 people voted absentee and we had 76 new voters register on Election Day. Thank you SOOO much to Gary Olson, our Chief election inspector who runs a tight ship, Leslie Moen and Terry Wheeler election poll workers who worked pretty much straight through for 17 hours...unreal...came in at 6:30 am and left at 11:30 pm when final vote was counted. Same with Jim Nyen and Jacky Johnson who were greeters and helped with sanitation, COVID awareness and organization. Steady line down hall and out City Hall ramp all day. Everyone was polite and courteous and most all were COVID-19 respectful. Debi and myself did all we could to help with efficiency, by answering questions, doing voter registrations. We have been getting information from Trempealeau County Treasurer related to preparations for tax bill season, expecting the bills in December. December 21, 2020 is the final date by WI Statute that tax bills can be mailed out. City office getting quite a few compliments about the fine job Chief Johnson and Officer Potts are doing. New Park Superintendent Jahr completed his water based training the last week in October, but due to COVID issues unable to test until spring. Jahr is also been trained to handle weekend rounds on his own, with offers to call as needed from Bob Fraust.

Reports: Police Department October report: Chief Johnson reported his Lexipol training will be 1 hour a week the next 8 weeks. This project will keep him busy; 170 polices on over 700 pages. He will review and edit; then send to Al Robertson for review, then Police/Ordinance Committee. Finally, one last review by Chief and back to Lexipol to be finished. Looking at February 2021 for that project completion. Kim and I are working on updating Ordinance deposit schedules. Randy Jensen and Chief Johnson both completed the 'Field Officer Training'; will be able to train new officers 'in house'. We do need to develop a program for that. Painting being done, construction to start on Wednesday, in the Police department Office and property room, plans to be done by Christmas. Park Superintendent report: B. Jahr-things going well, learning more each day. Working with Randy in preparation for snow plowing. Main focus for the Park is 'safety & beautification'. Working on a tree inventory, spreadsheet and map of each tree, type, condition, and size and looking for any safety concerns. Plans to remove dead limbs in December with a rented lift. Have been trimming and chipping limbs, finding that the maple limbs and adjustment of the chipper we can get some pretty nice chips, and use them around the smaller trees. Also, mapping benches, playground equipment getting information on spreadsheets. Plan for annual tree inspection and quarterly bench/playground equipment inspections.

Tax, Finance & Personnel Committee Budget meetings- Chair J Anderson reported: Jill, Paul, Terry, Debi and Susan met 3 nights in October and went over the entire budget line by line, compared it to last year and made adjustments as needed. We had department heads and fire department come in and report their needs/hopes for their departments for 2021. We tried to prioritize those as we can't do everything in one year. After recommendations from Clerk/Treasurer Frederixon, Committee is recommending the Debi and Susan's positions be more equitable, titles and wages would reflect this change, bringing Debi up to Susan's wage effective 1/1/2021 titles to be Frederixon-Clerk/Deputy Treasurer & Fremstad-Treasurer/Deputy Clerk. Employee Health Insurance change was a big budget issue. City was paying 91% of employee premiums; the State plan for 2021 only allows City to pay 88%, which is huge savings to City but not so easy on employees depending on which plan they choose. Susan did some shopping around and we can get in to the State Plan. The State Maintenance Plan (Mayo) would increase some employees' premiums by 6%. Employee will have to make some tough decisions, they can stay with Gunderson but would have to pay the 143.2 % increase difference in premium. City will base premium payments on the lowest cost plan, State Maintenance Plan. The deductible went down \$1,000, some changes with prescription costs, but a very good plan and similar to 2020. Total savings for the City is about \$50,246.08. Police budget will go up due to 3 officer department in 2021. Fire protection budget amount stayed the same. Our equalized value did decrease to 53% Blair-47% Township, last year the split was 57%/43%, which is how we share expenses for shared buildings/fire department. The Business and Economic Development Committee budget increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000 for 2021 to support the good work on downtown improvements. After balancing our revenues and expenses, Committee had \$ 116,638.00 for the Capital Improvement budget as follows, Pool Outlay-0, new pool hope no large expenses, Ambulance Outlay-0 no longer required, Law enforcement- \$9,000 normal amount for new squad rotation, Fire protection-\$15,000 same as 2020, Highway equipment outlay-\$40,000 (debt service), Highway/Street Outlay-\$0, Lake Outlay-\$20,000 (\$20,000 less than 2020, Park Outlay-\$10,000 (0 for 2020) and Contingency- \$ 12,938 (\$ 3,566 less than 2020). Wage increases were between 2% and 3 % per department (individual increases are listed on wage schedule included with budget information), except Debi Fremstad who was moved up to be equal to Susan. **Kent Johnson stays at his hire wage until 1 year probation is successfully completed, roughly September 1, 2021. Brian Jahr will stay at new hire wage until 6 month probation is successfully completed and will get a 50 cent increase. Officer Kim Potts will stay at new hire wage until 1 year probation is successfully completed. For the 2021 budget, Committee is proposing to raise the** Cigarette, beer license fees for retail only sales, Kwik Trip, Express Mart and Dollar General to equal what we charge the taverns. Feel that is fair for all to pay same and will equal about \$1,700 additional revenues annually. Some items planned for in the 2021 budget, tires for street department vehicle, dam repairs, plans to trade mower again this year to get on a 3 year rotation so all mowers are under warranty at all times, save on repairs/maintenance, training for new officer, possible some police department updates, hoping for most to be done with 2020 budget, Water/Sewer needs will have to come out of Water/Sewer funds.

Joint Review Board Meeting 10/19/2020 report/Clerk Frederixon: 2019 data reviewed with taxing district representatives. Mayor Knutson called the meeting to order. The following members were present: Jeff Eide (Blair/Taylor School District), Amy Schmidt (Western Technical College), Debi Fremstad (City of Blair Public member), Randy Tollefson (Trempealeau County), Ardell Knutson (City of Blair), Susan Frederixon (City Clerk/Treasurer), and Brian Reilly (Ehlers Public Financial Advisors). Summary: TIDs 4, 5, & 6 are projected to pay back all funds by the closure of these districts. TID 7 is projected to have a negative balance at the end of its life and requires additional development to recover expenses. The City has capacity to create a new TID or expand boundaries of existing TIDs. The City will continue to review opportunities to retire debt early and close TIDs in advance of maximum life. Question: How does value increment get decided? Answer: depending on type of property would be either State (Manufacturing districts) or City local Assessor would do all other districts. General Information: Base value is decided at creation of TID, then any increased value is used to create tax increment amount. Resolution #10-19-2020 Joint Review Board Resolution Acknowledging Filing of Annual

Reports and Compliance with Annual Meeting Requirement City of Blair. **Motion by J. Eide to approve as presented, 2nd by R. Tollefson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Page 4, 11/9/2020 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Combination Streets & Equipment and Finance Committees on 10/20/2020: Meeting called to order at 5:30 pm by Chair Paul Syverson. Present: Paul Syverson, Terry Wheeler and Chris Ekern of Equipment and Jill Anderson, Paul Syverson and Terry Wheeler of Finance. Also Present: Brian Jahr, Parks. Committee discussed the lawn mowers for the City. We have three, a 2014, a 2016 and a 2019. All three are John Deere. The 2014 has 1,200 hours, the 2016 has a cab and has 1,000 hours, while the 2019 has 130 hours. Brian got quotes on a new mower. We would get \$4,000 trade-in on the 2014 and \$5,800 trade-in on the 2016. At first we thought it would be best to trade the 2016 so we could get into a three year rotation on the mower. We get the best trade-in when the mowers are under 4 years and/or 700 hours. The cab can be switched to one of the others or a new one. At first it was discussed to only need two mowers, but Brian thought it best to have three. Tractor Central quoted a 2020 Model 734 at \$11,094. Discussion as to which one to trade. Brian also said a zero turn costs less. Motion by C. Ekern and 2nd by T. Wheeler to trade the 2014 for the 2020 at a net of \$7,094. Carried & recommended by Committee to full Council tonight. **Motion by P. Syverson and 2nd by W. Cartrette to trade the 2014 for the 2020 at a net of \$7,094. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** The Park would like a Gator type vehicle. We have three trailers and feel we do not need this piece of equipment. It would not look good if the City had an ATV/UTV when we have an ordinance about travel in the City. The Committee then talked about the loader. New loader doesn't have enough power to run snow blower if snow is heavy and wet, it is on track to be traded in 2023. We also talked about the blower which will have to make do with for now. The Committee the discussed the downtown parking lot. It is usually full with semi-trucks/trailers. There needs to be better lighting. We could put in more lighting. Committee decided that maybe we should look for another place for semis to park. Maybe check on the lots by Allied on the east end. Committee heard Brian Jahr's suggested improvements for skating rink. Lake area has to freeze pretty hard to be able to safely skate, plus it is so big we need to be on it with heavy power equipment to plow which is a concern. Brian researched other cities and they thought it was really too big and because it is a lake it always has big cracks on it and finish is not good. Brian would like to see rink moved from the lake to somewhere in the park where a concrete berm could be built, lined and flooded with water to have a nice finish. That works well in other communities. At some point he would like to see it be permanently placed near the concession stand and at some point have a roof over it and lighted. This would also be able to be used as shelter for events in the Park similar to the 'open shelter' near the Gilbert Street entrance of the park. Brian spoke with a couple of community organizations who thought they would donate to that idea. **Motion by J. Anderson to move skating rink off the Lake to near the Pool, build a berm with boards, line and use fire hydrant for water and temporary lighting and work toward the permanent spot later and discuss at future Park meeting, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Community Business Development & Combination Business Economic Development and Finance Committees Meetings on 10/22 & 11/2/20 W. Cartrette reported: Provare presentation on social media possibilities for City. Businesses would get information to Provare and they would update sites. Price: logo-\$200-\$300, Website build-\$4,000, monthly management fee- \$ 250.00. Extras would be photo aerial footage. Provare would help develop timeline for launch. Request for Susan to send out personal invitations to businesses. Meeting set for 11/19/20 @ 6:30 pm. Suggested having BT kids assist with design of logo and slogan. \$5,000 cost would need to come out of City Business & Economic Development Committee budget. P. Syverson reminded Council the 2021 budget for the Business Committee was increased by \$5,000 so that would cover this project if Committee decides.

Water/Sewer Committee meeting on 10/28/20 Chairperson T. Wheeler reported: Water/Sewer Superintendent, Bob Fraust, explained to Committee there are large cost maintenance items due in the near future...City water iron plant is 9 years old and industry recommendations are that after 10 years of operation the main cells need to

be re-done; there are 5 cells. One was done in 2018. There are maintenance issues with a 2nd cell that needs to be done ASAP. Then need to plan for the other 3. The estimated cost is \$40,000-50,000 for each cell.

Page 5, 11/9/2020 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Other maintenance needs include: Broadway lift station pump replacement @ estimated \$15,000-\$20,000; Olson Street lift station-\$6,000-\$8,000; Well # 6 estimated \$15,000, Bob is getting a quote; water line on Mill Road will need maintenance in future; need to re-route AMPI flow inside main lift station. Committee recommending to full Council to have Bob make arrangements with 'Kurita company' quote of \$59,207.00 to get the 1 cell done now and make plans to do 1 cell a year after until caught up. Committee requested Bob get quotes on all items for consideration. Clerk Frederixon reminded the waste water lift station items should be covered funding wise with the new 1/1/2021 increased sewer rate plan. The water items will probably not be covered with current water rates as that fund will need to be looked at soon with a plan for increases similar to the wastewater in order for it to support the required ongoing maintenance. By law these utilities are mandated to support themselves with user rates. **Motion by M. Lisowski to move forward with 1 cell this year @ \$40,000-\$50,000. Bid was \$59,207.00 from Kurita company, understanding that this cost may have to be supported by the general fund until water fund can re-pay, 2nd by P. Syverson, Discussion: M. Lisowski said we need to start planning for an annual replacement of cells until caught up. None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Police/Ordinance Committee on 11/5/20 report: M. Lisowski reported, discussed Ordinance deposit schedule and meat processing considered in B-1 & Hwy Commercial Districts. Committee reviewed and recommends approval for draft Ordinance language change to create Subsection 12 of Section 46.04(7) (a), relating to meat processing as a permitted use, in Downtown/Commercial District. **Motion by W. Cartrette, 2nd by J. Anderson to approve new Ordinance language as presented. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** Reviewed and recommended for approval to change Ordinance 8.06 relating to residency requirements as follows: repeal and recreate Subsection (2), as follows (2) Full time police officers must reside within 15 miles of the corporate limits of the City. This will align our Ordinance with State Statute guidelines. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve change to Ordinance 8.06 as presented, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Allow for further Budget Discussion: Brian Jahr said he felt this Council works pretty well together, gets quite a bit done. Paul Syverson reminded our levy only went up 1.28% or \$7,296.00. **Motion by J. Anderson to close the budget hearing, 2nd by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

Motion by J. Anderson to adopt the 2021 City of Blair budget, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Hen License request for 2020 from Amber Smith/Thompson @ 221 W. 2nd Street. **Motion by W. Cartrette to approve as presented, 2nd by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

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

2021 Sewer rate review & rate increase discussion/decision: This has been reviewed multiple times throughout 2020. As of 12/31/2019 the Sewer Utility has the following debt outstanding: General Obligation: \$170,000; Revenue: \$733,986; and Advance from General Fund: \$297,238. Our ordinance tells us we are to establish rates that will sustain the utility including maintenance and replacement costs. This study estimates the typical residential customer at average consumption will experience a 65% increase to their total quarterly bill (\$36.44). Council was reminded that water fund is starting to struggle to keep up and rate study will need to be done soon

on that fund. Council voiced concerned about increases, but data shows our utility rates are very low in comparison to those around the state. In many cases, what we pay in a quarter is being paid monthly in other cities. We are mandated to keep the utilities funded appropriately and self-sustaining. **Motion by W. Cartrette**

Page 6, 11/9/2020 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

to adopt the recommended rates as presented, in full effective 1/1/2021, 2nd by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Motion by J. Anderson to move to Closed Session per agenda language, 2nd by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

Motion by M. Lisowski to come out of Closed Session, 2nd P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.

No action was taken from Closed Session discussions.

Next Council meeting is December 7, 2020 @ 6:30 pm

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

Susan Frederixon-Clerk/Treasurer