

## City of Blair Regular Council Meeting Minutes, December 2, 2019 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 December 2, 2019. The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Mayor A. Knutson; Alderpersons-W. Cartrette(\*arrived @ 7:30 pm), T. Wheeler, J. Anderson, P. Syverson, C. Ekern, M. Lisowski, Clerk/Treasurer S. Frederixson, Attorney A. Robertson, Trempealeau County Times.

Public Comment: Randy Obieglo had concerns about the need to get our sidewalks shoveled sooner and alleys more salt/sand, he also had a complaint about the new 'Broadway Bar' being too loud. City will review and respond to concerns.

Clerk report: Public Nuisance Ordinance update: City, Mayor, Chief Wheeler, Attorney Robertson and myself met with Harold Olson owner of East Center and Tappen Coulee Road mobile home properties week of 11/11/19. Plan to use normal City Ordinance violation letter to all non-compliant properties(Mobile Homes, businesses and stick built homes) identified by Police department pictures and reviewed by Ordinance committee(report to be given later in this meeting). Letters to give a time limit, to be determined by Council, for compliance, which will be monitored by Police department. If not compliant by time limit, the highest fine allowed by ordinance may be given, \$1000 per violation (also to be determined by Council). If not compliant after that 'abatement' process will be considered, which needs a 20 day formal notice from City? Harold Olson along with the Police department will deliver the letters to Olson's properties. Police department will deliver the others. Recommendation from this group that met is to have dumpsters available and collect similar to 'clean up' days. A draft letter is in the Council packets for consideration. Council wishes to keep working on this at the committee level, may take some time as the winter weather makes things more difficult. GVCC fascia: City notified 11/20/19 fascia has been repaired gutter work set for 12/25/19. Junk Vehicles: City office received a thank you from Fred Stendahl to the Police department for getting 2 junk vehicles removed at 508 E. Center Street. Also, camper at 312 Peterson Avenue was given a traffic violation warning 10-28-19 and was moved soon after. Reminder to the public: this Council, Police department and City office work on these Ordinance issue on a regular basis. A similar campaign was approved by this council in late September 2017, with many properties becoming compliant. This is an on-going issue that is worked on regularly and will be continued to be worked on. It does help though when citizens like Alan point out specific areas of concern to them, so they can be addressed. Eagle Scout structure update: Eagle Scout Witcraft happy with the structure going to Sportsman's club. I have notified the Sportsman's club, unfortunately it may not be set into place until April 2020, but it is on the calendar and plans are in place. The plaque will be replaced on structure and between the City and Club it can be given a new coat of stain/sealer so it is in good condition again. Christmas lights: Thanks to our public works guys for getting our lights up early this year. Especially to Randy who was the one up on the lift installing them all, but it took everyone as they are 'hand tied' to fresh real garland each year. Big thank you to Stetzer Electric Company for donating the use of their safety lift for this project. Thank you to the City Council for benefits and wage increases. The budget recommendation for Health Insurance were made on estimated information. After the last Council meeting the Health Insurance information was finalized: We are a member of a municipality coalition, for our health insurance. That being said, the coalition gets to VOTE on changes. The majority voted to go with a different plan option for 2020 that would increase the employee deductibles from \$500/single to \$1,000 and from \$1,000/employee & spouse/family to \$2,000. This would allow for the annual increase to go from our budgeted 12.2 % to 8.5%, but would cause the City to recover a \$6,400 budget savings, but the employees to have a \$500 or \$1,000 increase 'out of pocket' expense. **Agenda item # 9 will address the new information and ask the Council for a decision on the change in deductible amount to employees for 2020.**

Reminder to Alderperson's (Wanda, Jill & Mike) that December 1 was the first day to obtain signatures for nomination papers, and they need to be returned completed by January 7, 2020 to City office. Thank you to S.E.H. for helping with request from our Business and Economic Development Committee for additional copies of the City Comprehensive Plan and also with large City maps for that Committee, also to Rob Grover for helping with maps requested for this committee planning purposes. This Committee has an energy as I witnessed at the last meeting and it helps to be able to assist them quickly to keep that energy growing. WI D.O.R. annual TID reporting meeting is set for 12/9/2019 at the City Council Chambers at 11:30 am. Ehlers assists us with this meeting so all requirements are being met. Representatives from all taxing districts meet and review our active TID's, Blair Taylor School District, Trempealeau County Board, Western Technical College, City and City member at large. City is hosting the annual Advanced Safety Training at the Community Center on 12/18/2019, it is an all-day training, which includes blood borne pathogens, confined space and compliance with State safety requirements. City office, Library and Public Works staff attends this training. Waumandee State Bank purchased property on West Broadway Street, formally the Ladsten Chevrolet car dealership parcels, most recently owned by Schaefer properties. I was informed by a resident that, Channel 8 visited Grandma Carol's dress shop, located at 206 W. Broadway Street on 11/13/2019. I left a message with Carol Ekern owner of business, to try to see how that went, but no reply yet. Nice spotlight on one of our downtown businesses though.

Present minutes for approval: Regular Council Meeting 11/4/2019. **Motion T. Wheeler to approve 11/4/19 minutes as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

**Motion by C. Ekern to open 2<sup>nd</sup> CDBG-PF Public Hearing for City of Blair 2019 Street/Utility Project, 2<sup>nd</sup> by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** Clerk/Treasurer Frederixon reported In 2018 City received a State Community development Block Grant for Public Facilities in the amount of \$500,000. The street reconstruction included replacement of sanitary sewer & water lines, storm sewer, sidewalks and curb and gutter on Main, Oak, Immell and the alley between Dover Street and Urberg Avenue. The Construction is 100 % done with a few 'punch list' items remaining to be approved by engineering. No final pay request has been submitted from the contractor in November. To date we have drawn \$485,000 and matched \$814, 407.54. The final request for disbursement and project closeout will take place when final pay application is received from contractor and approved by the Engineer and the City. Is there any public comment on the project? Question related to sign in yard advertising project, with Clerk/Treasurer verifying it has been removed and check on time limit to close out the project? Clerk reported project is expected to be closed out by 12/31/19 and S.E.H. will make sure we are in compliance with grant requirements on close out of project. Hearing no additional comments. **Motion by C. Ekern to close public hearing for CDBG-PF project, 2<sup>nd</sup> by T. Wheeler. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

2020 Election workers submitted for approval: Chief Inspector, Gary Olson, Election Inspectors: Janet Helstad, Terry Wheeler, Lorrain Loken, Dean Dale, Debi Fremstad and Susan Frederixon. **Motion by J. Anderson to approve all as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Lisowski. Discussion: none. Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.**

S.E.H. Reports: Per David Schofield 2019 CDBG Streets - We have not received a pay application from Gerke Excavating at this time and, in any event, there are several outstanding punch list issues. No action is needed. 2020 Drainage Improvements - We will be preparing bidding documents and will request authorization to proceed to bidding at your January 2020 City Council Meeting. Bids will be opened in January 2020 for consideration at the February 2020 City Council Meeting. No action is needed. Lake Henry Dredging - We are currently awaiting direction regarding bidding, pending fundraising. 2021 Street Improvements - It would be beneficial for the City to start discussing possible street & utility projects for 2021. We submitted ITA/PERFs for Center Street and Gilbert Street on the City's behalf. CDBG-PF Applications are due in May 2020.

**Reports:** Ordinance Committee Meeting held on 11/13/2019: Chairperson Ekern reported, topics included changing Ordinance Chapter 46 B-1 Downtown Business District to eliminate street level apartments in the City downtown business district, apartments currently on street level expected to be ‘grandfathered’ in, plans to eliminate going forward, **committee recommends to full council to send this to Attorney Robertson to redraft as stated.** Ordinance Chapter 46.04 Zoning Districts: for new construction of accessory buildings, consider adding language requiring that siding needs to match primary residence going forward/**Tabled for further research from other municipalities for correct language and then plan to request updating of ordinance.** Reviewed and considered ‘Vaping Ordinance’ draft presented by Attorney Robertson/**Committee sent back to Attorney Robertson for some adjustments to the draft with plans to review at later date.** Taylor Fire Pit variance request: **committee tabled.** Campers/RV’s parked/stored for long periods on City streets: Discussion of adding Ordinance language of ‘no more than 5 consecutive days’ for RV’s/Campers/**request Al Robertson to draft and committee review at future meeting.** Committee recommending to assign Police department task of monitoring the nuisance complaints, they should be watching for noncompliance of the Ordinance and work with Clerk office to send letters and then follow through per ordinance as far as penalties. They are out on patrol daily so that is what we are recommending, in hopes that ‘public nuisance’ compliance will lesson and be an ongoing item to be monitored by our Police Department with enforcement assistance from Clerk office. **Motion by M. Lisowski to put the Police department in charge of monitoring and follow through on compliance on Chapter 18 Public health hazards, public nuisance ordinance violations as well as the Chapter 17 for abandon vehicle ordinance violations/compliance/2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Ekern. Discussion: None Vote: Yes 5, No 0. Motion approved.** After discussion, it was determined that Attorney Robertson believes he has already drafted an Ordinance 46, downtown street level apartment elimination & 5 consecutive day camper parking on city streets update for Committee review. That will be tabled and researched until after Committee has a chance to review drafts.

Park/Lake Committee Meeting on 11/7 and 11/19/2019: Chairperson Cartrette reported, discussions focused on how we can bridge the gap between the City’s support amount and raise additional \$1.4 million to dredge Lake Henry. Kevin Lisowski was going to contact local and LaCrosse papers, WHTL and BRF Radio stations for a report on our Lake project, also contact Church, Sportsman Club for possible website space on the project and check with school district newsletter if information could be shared through that. City Office will work with Kevin to have information on City website. Chairperson Cartrette is working on a ‘draft’ fundraising letter on the project that can be sent to possible supporters/contributors. We are really hoping and in need of good financial support from residents, the public and businesses toward this project. Ash tree removal is being planned, hoping to wait until ground is completely frozen so there is minimal damage to grass. Per Committee ok to allow the 2 individuals approved previously to take wood for personal burning, with signed waiver of insurance. Clerk shared the contracted tree business is willing to discuss removal of a boulevard tree for City as part of the original accepted bid.

Business & Economic Development C. Ekern/Chairperson, reported Committee met on 11/14/19, brainstorming session, discussions about the City needing to use City Ordinances and Ordinance enforcement as a way to manage/improve condition of downtown buildings/properties, also letting property owners know the City wants to assist if possible on bringing buildings up to code. Chamber/WEDC representatives shared recommendations to organize some smaller immediate work to improve conditions, example, contact empty building owners, asking what their plans are for building, request access to inspect inside conditions so a good inventory of types of properties we have in City downtown district. Also, suggestion to form work groups to help owners clean up the outside appearance of empty buildings, trim weeds, clean frontage, windows and make sure realtor signage is in good condition and visible even lighted for night time visibility.

Discussions of involving citizen/school district groups for assistance. Hopes are to involve input from school students on what they would like to see in our downtown and suggest ideas. Plans for this Committee, Chamber and WEDC to at some point develop a good informational presentation for the school kids. Next meeting is set for 12/12/2019, possible agenda items to include mission statement work and short action planning and meet with the City Finance Committee for long term planning/budgeting related to downtown revitalization.

Review/consider approval of Special meeting minutes of 9/19/2019. Clerk reported this meeting was held in closed session with a motion in open session “to allow City Employment Attorney Gill to negotiate with Chief Wheeler’s employment attorney on employment related issue.” **Motion by P. Syverson to approve with spelling of his last name corrected on last line, 2<sup>nd</sup> by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Employee Health insurance update: Clerk Frederixon reported that final information on health insurance rates is now available, only estimated numbers were available at the time of the November Council meeting where the 2020 budget was set. Amounts were budgeted for a 12.2 % increase, final information shows the increase is 8.5%, which will allow for savings to the budget of \$6,400. The lower percentage was achieved by a vote of the municipality coalition to change the plan options for employees to include a higher deductible: from \$1,000 to \$2,000, also increases to co pay, prescription, urgent and emergency care visits. Question to Council is will they City use already budgeted amounts to cover deductible increase for employees? Considering these points, City Finance Committee had considered a 3% pay increase, but lowered to 2% to help cover some of the expected 12.2% health insurance increase, now that increase is at 8.5%. Also, there is an Employee Funded Health Savings amount available of \$2199.19. Total new cost to employees will be \$8,000 total. Available money would be \$6,400 over budgeted amount and \$2,199.19 HSA, which would cover new cost to employees. **After some discussion, Motion by J. Anderson to cover the 8.5% increase, and the \$1,000 deductible portion as previously done, but not the new \$1,000 increased deductible, co-pay, prescription or urgent/emergency care visits for 2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Application for Class B liquor license for Sportsman’s Club 1/11/2020 Ice Fishing Contest/Motion by W. Cartrette to approve as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Ekern. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

Joint Sewer Advisory Committee: consider change to appointed members from Blair. It was noticed that per the agreement between Whitehall and Blair we are to appoint 3 members to attend those meetings. We have 3 Council members appointed and to my knowledge there was always representatives from AMPI also in attendance as they are a major part of the wastewater issues that are discussed at these meetings. In order to be compliant with the agreement I am asking that we replace one of our Council members with an AMPI representative to allow for their continued seat at the table. Mike Lisowski, current member of that committee offered to be taken off the Committee for this reason. **Motion by W. Cartrette to remove M. Lisowski from Joint Sewer Advisory committee and replace him with ‘a representative of AMPI’, 2<sup>nd</sup> by P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

Building Permit: Mathew & Seth Dale @ 623 Maple Street for bathroom and laundry room remodel. **Motion by C. Ekern to approve with County permit, 2<sup>nd</sup> by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

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

Motion by W. Cartrette to move into ‘Closed Session’ per agenda language, 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Anderson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.

**Motion by C. Ekern to reconvene in to 'Open Session', 2<sup>nd</sup> by W. Cartrette. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

**No action was taken as a result of the 'closed session'.**

**Next Council meeting is January 6, 2020 @ 7:00 pm**

**Motion M. Lisowski to adjourn meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> P. Syverson. Discussion: None. Vote: Yes 6, No 0. Motion approved.**

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Susan Frederixon-Clerk/Treasurer