

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL
JANUARY 16, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Evenson. Members present: Jack Evenson, Chris Carruth, Mark Schreck, Dan Enderson, Nancy Maanum. Members Absent: None. Also present: City Clerk Valerie Alsaker, Director of Finance Lisa Kent, City Manager Kyle Harris, Assistant City Attorney Stephen Kowal, Public Works Director Elliot Nelson, CEDA Representative Hillary Tweed, Police Chief Ian Hodge, Shelly Mikkelson, Shiela Krohse from Bolton & Menk and Reed Anfinson.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked for any changes to the agenda. Avenu Fees were added, and removal of Engan Associates proposal for Armory redesign. It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Carruth and carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Carruth and carried unanimously to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

- January 2, 2024 City Council Minutes
- December 11, 2023 Planning Commission Minutes
- November 20, 2023 Airport Commission Minutes
- January 4, 2024 Safety Committee Minutes
- Appointed MacKenzie Dokkebakken Park Board with term ending 12.31.2026
- Centerpoint Energy – Request to MN Public Utility Commission for Rate Increases
- Bolton & Menk Pay Request-Airport AWOS Replacement Engineering - \$8,700.00
- Bolton & Menk Pay Request-Airport Master Plan Update - \$3,600.00

There was no one with unscheduled business.

Shelly Mikkelson with the 2nd Slide Committee approached the Council to discuss the fundraising effort to place a second slide at the Benson Swimming Pool. She said because of negative publicity, she is concerned the current City Council is not in support of the actions of the 2022 City Council. She went on to say in 2022 the City Council agreed to be the fiscal agent in their fundraising efforts for the second slide. She stated one large grant was turned back by the City, and she is confused as to what direction to pursue. She said the negative publicity is keeping the fundraising low. Enderson said we have \$106,000 dedicated to pool repairs in 2024 alone, with another estimated \$800,000 in repairs needed. He went on to say he feels the City needs to direct their money toward maintaining the pool, and doesn't see it possible to commit to the 2nd Slide Committee. He lastly expressed his concern with fundraising capacity of the citizens of Benson. The Council shares in supporting the fundraising efforts of the committee, and will continue to show support by continuing to act as the fiscal agent. There was discussion on the City's responsibility as the fiscal agent. Mikkelson stated they are looking for another fiscal agent. Mikkelson then asked if the committee could have another \$1,000 to continue fundraising. The Mayor reminded her she has \$400 left in the original start up funds, and wished the best of luck to the 2nd Slide committee.

Tweed approached the Council with a loan agreement for Abundant Ag who is purchasing the fuel hall property at the old Fibrominn site. She said the EDA recommended approval of a \$99,999.99 five-year forgivable loan at a 2% interest rate to be used to clean the fuel hall. When the loan went to the EDA, Abundant Ag had applied for a REED loan, but had not yet received it. They were awarded the \$400,000 Reed loan with the understanding the EDA would subordinate their first position to the REED Foundation. Since the EDA cannot approve this loan on their own, she said she is bringing it to City Council for consideration. After further discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Carruth and carried unanimously to approve the Abundant Ag loan as presented.

Tweed presented language for a new mixed-use land use zoning category. As previously discussed, there are areas zoned B-2 business with residential housing in them. As it is zoned, these houses may have a hard time selling. She presented a draft of the proposed ordinance language. She said the Planning Commission recommended approval to the City Council. There were questions on how the process will work. Alsaker said the Council will have to go through a public hearing, first and second reading and 30-day publication period before the mixed-use language will become part of the ordinance. Tweed stated we will be bringing the language back as an action item and another City Council meeting.

Harris presented a variance application from Pat Hawley for a townhome he built at 2020 Robert Street. He is asking for a variance from the square footage requirement in the zoning ordinance. This townhome is slated for a parcel split upon approval of the variance and one side will be sold. Council asked how this home was built to which Harris said he felt it was missed at the building official level. He went on to say if this variance application is denied, the owner cannot do the property split. Mayor Evenson said he would like to postpone the Council decision until the next meeting when the property owner can be present to answer questions for the Council.

Hodge presented December's Police Department activities. The Fire Department report was also reviewed.

Next two EDA board applications were reviewed for one opening. Rick Horecka and Mike Nicholas both submitted applications. After discussion it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Carruth and carried unanimously to appoint Rick Horecka to the EDA board with his term ended December 31, 2027.

Harris then presented a quote for LED snowflake Christmas light decorations. The line crew stated these decorations are 12-15 years old and some are no longer safe to hang on the light poles. Harris said the City started out with 90 snowflakes. This is an order for 12 large and 12 small decorations. Enderson asked if the funds will come from the line department. Kent said these lights are expensed under street lights. Maanum expressed concern if the decorations are necessary. The Mayor said he has a lot of positive feedback from citizens about them. After discussion, it was moved by Carruth, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the quote from Display Sales in the amount of \$12,561.00.

Next Harris said repairs to the water tower have been discussed for several years now. He presented three quotes for engineering and management based on KLM Engineering analysis as follows:

- Bolling Inc. \$6,900 for bid docs/specs and estimated KLM fees of \$93,025 for Construction management for a total of \$99,925
- KLM Engineering \$15,000 bid docs/specs and \$86,525 for construction management for a total for \$101,525, including a 2026 warranty inspection.
- Bolton & Menk \$12,500 for bid docs/specs and \$55,500 for construction management for a total of \$68,000.

Harris said he and Nelson decided the project would best be done in 2025 which will give time for budgeting and planning. After discussion, it was moved by Carruth, seconded by Maanum and carried

unanimously to approve the quote from Bolton and Menk in the amount of \$68,000 as presented.

Harris presented three pay requests from T & K Kennedy for work they did this last summer for the City. The first pay request is for digging the water line to the new concession building being built by the Baseball Association. Alsaker iterated that the water line to the Lion's concession was also included in this project. The line was buried deeper as to accommodate turning on the water earlier in the baseball/softball season. After discussion it was moved by Carruth, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the pay request to T & K Kennedy for the water line dig at Northside Rec in the amount of \$10,825.48. The next pay request for a lift station for the concession stand at the baseball field. It was moved by Carruth, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to approve the pay request to T & K Kennedy for sewer lift installation in the amount of \$16,550.18. The final pay request is for installing a 1,600-gallon septic tank at Ambush Park for the new camping pads. It was moved by Carruth, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the pay request from T & K Kennedy for the septic tank installation in the amount of \$8,819.92.

Kent approached the Council. She said we are moving forward with the new financial and utility software conversion. In this process, we were not made aware that we would be charged by our current software company, Avenu, to extract our data and give it to the new software company Tyler Tech. Our current contract with Avenu expires this August, and in order to avoid paying another year's fee to them, we are stepping up the process. She presented fees for the pulls from Avenu. She said there could be up to three pulls. We may not need all three, but cost for the maximum pulls of data could run \$27,500.00. After discussion, it was moved by Maanum, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to approve the bill from Avenu not to exceed \$27,500.

It was moved by Carruth, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the December 31, 2023 bills and warrants in the amount of \$350,287.57.

It was moved by Carruth, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the January 9, 2024 Bills and warrants in the amount of \$395,963.92.

There being no further business to come before the Council a motion was made by Maanum, seconded by Carruth and carried unanimously to adjourn the Council meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk