

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL
FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Collins. Members present: Terri Collins, Jack Evenson, Mark Schreck, Jon Buyck & Lucas Olson. Members present telephonically: None. Members Absent: None. Also present: City Manager Rob Wolfington, Director of Finance Glen Pederson, Public Works Director Dan Gens, and Hillary Tweed from CEDA. Also attending telephonically are Kristi Fernholz with UMRDC and Reed Anfinson.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked for any changes to the agenda to which there was none. It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

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

- February 1, 2021 City Council Minutes
- November 23, 2020 Special Planning Commission Minutes
- January 21, 2021 Library Minutes
- Benson Golf Club Foundation Gambling Permit for April 27, 2021
- Resignation Letter from Benson Librarian Nicole Schmeising
- Electronic Transfers: Payroll: February 11, 2021 - \$104,562.98
Journal Entries: \$1,320,830.08 - January 2021

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing for the Small Cities Grant at 5:31 p.m. Fernholz thanked the Council and said she is the author of the new Small Cities Grant Application for the City. She said the public hearing is a time for citizen input. They are planning on doing 20 owner occupied rehab projects. The target area is the entire city. We had 110 applicants to participate in the residential portion. Each residential project will be up to \$25,000 each. We are also looking at doing 8 commercial rehabs, up to \$40,000 each with a 80/20 match. The project total will be \$942,000. Also included in the residential rehab are \$750 rebates for electric water heaters, electric appliances and up to \$150.00 for a sewer line inspection. The grant is due March 12, 2021. We should hear if we get the grant in June and if so July will be the month to get contractors lined up. The City has 3 years to complete the grant. Swift County HRA will be managing the residential rehabs and Prairie Five out of Montevideo will be managing the Commercial rehabs. After discussion, Councilmember Evenson offered the following resolution:

**Declaring Slum and Blighted Area
(Resolution 2021-08)**

WHEREAS, the City of Benson is concerned about the economic viability of slum and blighted area within its corporate limits, and

WHEREAS, the slum and blighted area projects a negative visual image of the community, and

WHEREAS, the economic, social, physical, and cultural well-being of the City is adversely affected by the conditions of this slum and blighted area, and

WHEREAS, there exists the opportunity to improve, preserve, and re-develop this slum and blighted area to the benefit of the community, and

WHEREAS, the following detrimental conditions have been identified which qualify the area under State law and Community Development Block Grant Program requirements:

- 1) Public Improvements are in a general state of deterioration; or
- 2) At least 25% of the buildings are deteriorated or deteriorating, and have at least one of the following characteristics: Physical deterioration of building or improvement; Abandonment of property; Chronic high turnover or vacancy rate; Significant decline in property value or abnormally low property value in relation to other areas of the community; or Known or suspected environmental contamination.

WHEREAS, of all the parcels within the target area, 81 of them are occupied by buildings. Of the 84 buildings in the target area, 6 of them are structurally standard, 77 of them are structurally substandard, and 1 are dilapidated.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the following area is designated a “Slum and Blighted Area”.

Councilmember Buyck seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Evenson, Collins, Olson, Buyck, Schreck. NAYES: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2021-08 duly passed and adopted.

Councilmember Schreck offered the following resolution:

**Local Government Resolution
(Resolution 2021-09)**

Applicant Name: City of Benson

BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Benson (Applicant) act as the legal sponsor for the project contained in the Application to be submitted on March 12, 2021 and that the City Manager (Title of First Authorized Official) and the Director of Finance (Title of Second Authorized Official) are hereby authorized to apply to the Department of Employment and Economic Development for funding of this project on behalf of the City of Benson (Applicant).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Benson (Applicant) has the legal authority to apply for financial assistance, and the institutional, managerial and financial capability to ensure adequate construction, operation, maintenance and replacement of the proposed project for its design life.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Benson (Applicant) has not violated any Federal, State or local laws pertaining to fraud, bribery, graft, kickbacks, collusion, conflict of interest or other unlawful or corrupt practice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon approval of its application by the State, the City of Benson (Applicant) may enter into an agreement with the State of Minnesota for the approved project, and that the City of Benson (Applicant) certifies that it will comply with all applicable laws and regulations as stated in all contract agreements.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Manager (Title of First Authorized Official) and the Director of Finance (Title of Second Authorized Official), or their successors in office, are hereby authorized to execute such agreements, and amendments thereto, as are necessary to implement the project on behalf of the Applicant.

Councilmember Buyck seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Evenson, Collins, Olson, Buyck, Schreck. NAYES: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2021-09 duly passed and adopted.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to approve the Citizen Participation plan as presented.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to close the public hearing at 5:41 p.m.

The Mayor asked for anyone with unscheduled business to which there was none.

It was moved by Schreck, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to approve a contract with Countryside Public Health for tobacco compliance in the City for 2021.

Gens approached the Council to discuss the anaerobic digester refurbishment at the Wastewater plant. Our engineers on the project, Stantec Engineering, suggested we purchase some of the pieces of equipment now, prior to construction. This is to avoid delays for these items due to Covid related workshop shut downs that have backed up orders for such equipment. After discussion, it was moved by Olson, seconded by Buyck and carried unanimously to approve purchase of the following items at the estimated values:

- Heat Exchanger from Northwester Power Equipment Co for \$33,000.00
- Boiler with duel fuel from Olympus Technologies Inc. for \$180,000.00
- Primary Digester Mixer from GNE/Ovivo for \$138,900

Next Wolfington discussed it is time to renew fire contracts with the townships. He met with the fire board and came up with a 3 year contract with a 3% increase each year as presented in the packet. After discussion, it was moved by Buyck, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve fire contracts as presented.

Wolfington said on March 26-27, 2021 there will be an economic development planning session. March 26 5:30-8:30 p.m. will be for the EDA and BIDC to define a work plan for newly hired CEDA employee Hillary Tweed to work on for the City. March 27, 2021 8:30-11:30 a.m. will be the City Council's time for review of the plan. After discussion, it was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the special meeting date and time.

Gens presented the following two state bids for a new loader to replace the John Deere 544H:

- 2021 CASE 721G - \$165,329.00
- 2021 John Deere 544P - \$135,420.77

Each quote included trade in of the old John Deere loader. After discussion it was moved by Olson, seconded by Buyck and carried unanimously to purchase the John Deere from RDO in the amount of \$135,420.77.

Next Gens presented quotes for a new mower. We will be replacing an existing John Deere X370 mower. He discussed the following quotes:

- John Deere X390 - \$4,490.00
- Kubota CH640 - \$7,891.99

After discussion it was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the quote from Midwest Machinery for the John Deere X390 in the amount of \$4,490.00.

Gens explained they were looking to buy a dump trailer. This has multi-purpose uses from hauling cones and barricades to hauling mowers, grass clippings and other media. There were two quotes

as follows:

- Renville Sales - \$10,385.00
- Novea Corp. - \$14,143.89

After discussion, it was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the quote from Midwest Machinery for the dump trailer from Renville Sales in the amount of \$10,385.00

Gens presented bituminous quotes for the 2021 season as follows:

- Mark Lee Asphalt - \$185,000
- Ferguson Asphalt - \$181,250
- Riley Brothers - \$174,250
- Duinincks Inc. - \$179,750
- Central Specialties - \$166,750

It was moved by Olson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the bituminous quote from Central Specialties in the amount of \$166,750.00.

Quotes for concrete work for 2021 were presented as follows:

- Molden Concrete - \$32,050
- Amundson Concrete - \$29,255

It was moved by Schreck, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to approve the concrete quote from Amundson Concrete in the amount of \$29,255.

Gens said there was one tire quote from Midwest Machine in the amount of \$13,416.24. It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to accept the quote from Midwest Machine.

Wolfington presented two invoices from Environmental Scientific for asbestos work in the Power Plant. The first was for air testing and coordinating the start of the asbestos abatement. It was moved by Olson, seconded by Evenson and carried unanimously to approve the pay request from Environmental Services in the amount of \$9,831.80. Wolfington presented a second invoice from Environmental Scientific for asbestos sampling. It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to approve the pay request in the amount of \$1,525.00.

Pederson approached the Council to discuss moving our City elections to even numbered years. Right now, we hold our Council elections on odd numbered years, which means between state, national and City elections, we have an election every year. Holding elections are costly. Hard costs start at \$5,000 plus staff time, absentee expenses, training and finding election judges to mention a few. Moving elections to even numbered years is a way to cut down on the costs. He explained this can be done by proposing a change to the charter and at the next General Election it would be a question on the ballot. He also expressed he would like to clarify Council vacancy language. He reviewed several scenarios with the Council. Pederson asked for direction from the Council. It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to direct Pederson to work with the City Attorney to start working on election language changes.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve bills and warrants in the amount of \$1,047,207.94.

There being no further business to come before the Council a motion was made by Evenson seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to adjourn the Council meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk