

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL
MARCH 15, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Collins. Members present: Terri Collins, Jack Evenson, Lucas Olson, Mark Schreck & Jon Buyck. Members Absent: None. Also present: City Manager Rob Wolfington, Director of Finance Glen Pederson, Public Works Director Dan Gens, Police Chief Ian Hodge, Terry & Jennifer Sullivan, Hillary Tweed from CEDA and Reed Anfinson. Also attending telephonically was Ray Davies with Agra Waste Energy Operation Inc., and Gene Doscher.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked for any changes to the agenda. The physical tour of the Armory was removed from the agenda. It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

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

- March 1, 2021 City Council Minutes
- February 1, 2021 Planning Commission Minutes
- The following liquor licenses effective April 13, 2021 contingent upon receiving the necessary paperwork from Mi Mexico:

Off-Sale 3.2 Malt Beverage License:

Holiday Stationstore, LLC

Sunday Liquor License:

Track Bar & Grill, LLC
McKinney's on Southside
Benson Golf Club
Patrick's Pub & Grill

On-Sale Liquor License:

McKinney's on Southside
Benson Golf Club
Patrick's Pub & Grill
Mi Mexico
Track Bar & Grill, LLC

Sidewalk Café Permit

Patrick's Pub & Grill, LLC

- The following General licenses effective April 1, 2021:

Sewer Tap License:

Grossman Plumbing and Heating
Hawley's Inc.
T & K Kennedy Inc.

Craig's Refrigeration
Rapid Response Plumbing & Heating

Garbage Collection License:

Mattheisen Disposal

Electronic Transfers:

- Payroll: \$107,823.38 – March 11, 2021
- Journal: \$1,578,682.64 – February 2021

- Thank You Note from Gail Svor

The Mayor asked for anyone with unscheduled business. Anne Johnson approached the Council

to ask the Council to reconsider tearing down the Armory. She said she sees a big benefit to turning the Armory into a community center. The Armory has served a lot of uses in the past, and can be used for future community events with fixing the building up. She asked the Council to delay demolition to review the possibilities for the space more closely. The Mayor thanked Johnson for her input and concern.

Davies introduced himself. He is the project developer for Nature Energy. He gave an update on what has happened since the City and Nature Energy signed the Letter of Intent (LOI) last fall. Last November he said he and Wolfington met with the state regulators to introduce the project. Another key meeting was held with the City, Nature Energy, University of Minnesota Morris, dairy producers and himself. He said it was a good meeting. In February of this year they met with dairy farmers and three are ready to go on to the next step. He said they are currently working on the budgeting process, environmental assessment and air assessment for odor control. Their timeline is to finish permitting by the end of 2021. In 2022 it will take 18 months for construction and they are aiming for start-up in 2023. Davies said the LOI dated September 9, 2020 with the City is expiring soon, and said Nature Energy would like to extend the LOI from 180 days to 360 days. Wolfington said the intent of the LOI is to see it turned into a development agreement with the City. After discussion, it was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to extend the LOI to 360 days to September 9, 2021.

Jen Sullivan from Patrick's Pub and Grill approached the City Council about Kid Day weekend, and the desire to hold a street dance on Friday, July 16th, 2021. She said they are also holding a bean bag tournament the following Saturday. They requested closing 13th St. S. between Kansas and Pacific Avenues Friday and Saturday of Kid Day weekend. Per the last Kid Day celebration it was suggested Sullivans talk to the neighboring businesses, about the times they would like to close the street. Sullivans said they have a certificate of liability insurance that covers the building, sidewalk and street. After discussion, it was moved by Olson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve Patrick's Pub and Grill's request to close 13th St. S. between Kansas & Pacific Avenues from 6am July 16 – 8am July 17, 2021 for their street dance and bean bag tournament.

Next Sullivans had a request to hold a wedding reception at their business. In order to have the wedding reception and dance they are requesting to close 13th St. S. between Kansas & Pacific Avenues 6 a.m. June 10 – noon on June 12, 2022. They would like to put up a tent on 13th St. S. to accommodate additional seating, set up an outdoor beer/liquor garden and set up a DJ on the street as well. Mayor Collins said she sees a red flag with the tent, as the companies usually anchor the tent in the asphalt, which will damage the street. Evenson said 3 days is too long to close a public street for a private party. There was discussion on whether the dance will be open to the public or remain private. Sullivan said she would talk to the couple and get some more information back to the Council before the next meeting.

Wolfington presented a request from the Prom Afterbash group, requesting support for the event. He stated in the past we let the group use the Armory for free, but it is unusable after the asbestos abatement. Wolfington reminded the Council if there is a donation, there needs to be a public purpose attached to it. Buyck sees a public purpose in keeping the youth and public safe. Mayor Collins said she would reach out to the group and find out what they are asking for, and bring it back to the next Council meeting.

Wolfington presented a letter to the Council addressed to the US Department of Commerce with a request to use the UMVRDC for administering the Federal EDA grant if awarded. The UMVRDC is a partner to the Federal EDA and it would be very helpful to partner with them. He recommended approval of the letter. Schreck asked how much will it cost to use the UMVRDC. Wolfington said up to \$60,000. This cost is built into the grant, and we will not pay them unless we get the grant. Schreck asked how much have we paid into the project so far. Wolfington said roughly \$125,000. He said the project is a \$1.7 million project, and we will need to pay 20% of the project cost. He went on to explain the project and cash layout. He said the project started in 2017, we

submitted the application in 2020 and it would be finished in 2024. It was moved by Olson, seconded by Evenson to approve the letter of recommendation to the Federal EDA. The following vote was taken: AYES: Olson, Collins, Buyck, Evenson. NAYES: Schreck. The motion passed.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to approve the bills and warrants in the amount of \$394,691.64.

Lastly was discussion on the Armory bids. After discussion, it was agreed to talk about the Armory at the Strategic Planning session on March 27, 2021. It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to table a decision on the Armory bids until the next regular City Council Meeting. Wolfington reminded the Council the purpose of the meeting on March 27, 2021 is to take recommendation from the EDA's work session the night before for Tweeds work plan for the year, and the Armory discussion can be added to the agenda. He said Marcy Douglas will be facilitating the work session.

There being no further business to come before the Council a motion was made by Evenson seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to adjourn the Council meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk