

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL
APRIL 15, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Evenson. Members present: Jack Evenson, Dan Enderson, Mark Schreck, and Nancy Maanum. Members Absent: Chris Carruth. Also present: City Clerk Valerie Alsaker, Director of Finance Lisa Kent, City Manager Kyle Harris, Assistant City Attorney Stephen Kowal, Police Chief Ian Hodge, Police Officers Luke Sealfolk, Sergeant Scott Girard, Noah Marrs and Paul Larson, CEDA Representative Hillary Tweed, Swift County Assessor Joe Tschida, Swift County Appraiser Jen Grussing, Jerry Peterson, Darlene Iverson, Jan Iverson, Neil Mulder, Carl Lindblad, Joey Pelzer and Reed Anfinson.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Evenson asked to add Police Department Recognition to the agenda. It was moved by Schreck, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

Mayor Evenson said May 15 is Police Officer Memorial Day. Today is the anniversary of Pope County Officer Josh Owen's passing away in the line of duty. Rather than wait until May, he went on to voice his appreciation for the Benson Police Department and all they do to protect the citizens of Benson and handed each officer a Challenge Coin.

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

- March 18, 2024 City Council Minutes
- April 1, 2024 City Council Minutes
- March 4, 2024 Planning Commission Minutes
- April 4, 2024 Safety Committee Minutes
- Charter Communications Channel Changes
- LMC Annual Conference

There was no one with unscheduled business.

Mayor Evenson opened the Board of Appeal and Equalization at 5:33 p.m. Tschida approached the Council to field questions on anyone's market value declared on their proposed tax statement. Carl Lindblad representing Craig & Miriam Lindblad of Craig's, Inc. located at 2015 Minnesota Avenue, questioned the substantial increase in market value of their business buildings, in comparison to surrounding similar buildings. Lindblad feels his buildings are valued much higher per square foot than the other businesses discussed. Tschida said their buildings have been valued at \$172,800 since 2007, and he did an evaluation on the property which is reflected in adjusted market value. After further discussion, it was moved by Schreck, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to reduce Craig's Inc. market value from \$320,700 to \$290,000. Next was Neil Mulder, who asked questions on his market value. Then Jan Iverson asked for a reduction, stating her market value went from \$299,000 to \$404,900 and is asking for a reduction to \$392,000. After discussion, it was moved by Scherck, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to reject the request, and asked her to have Tschida work with her to look at her valuation and then she can appeal to Swift County for an adjustment if warranted. Lastly was Darlene Iverson. She questioned her valuation going from \$117,000 to \$151,000. Tschida said He hasn't looked at this one for

a few years and said they could meet and reevaluate. Being there were no more questions, Tschida said he had the following market adjustments on properties for citizens that came to his office ahead of today's meeting:

Nicholas Neuman parcel #23-0567-000, \$260,800 to \$215,100. It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve this reduction in market value.

Aleshia Camp parcel #23-0833-000, \$76,400 to \$64,000. It was moved by Schreck, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve this reduction in market value.

Shirley Foster parcel #23-1130-451, \$184,000 to \$175,300, It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve this reduction in market value.

Charles & Jewel Schlagel parcel #23-1130-450, \$184,100 to \$175,300. It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve this reduction in market value.

Patty Madden parcel #23-0881-000, \$103,800 to 97,300. It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve this reduction in market value.

Tyler Enderson parcel #23-1333-000, \$148,200 to \$110,000. It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Schreck and the following vote was taken: AYES: Schreck, Evenson, Maanum. NAYS: none. ABSTAIN: Enderson. The motion carried unanimously to approve this reduction in market value.

It was moved by Schreck, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to close the Public Hearing at 6:42 p.m.

Next was a Variance Application from Triple J Homes LLC. Owner Joey Pelzer is requesting to build a duplex on the small odd shaped lot at 101 – 19th St. S. There was a small home there many years ago that burned down. Harris said the ordinance requires a lot of 10,800 sq feet. This lot with the small one bedroom duplex does not meet this requirement. Harris went on to say he feels the intent of the ordinance says anything less than 60% of that 10,800 requirement is not eligible for a variance or building permit, which pertains to this variance. Evenson presented the Planning Commission's findings as follows:

The Planning Commission listed the following findings:

1. Reasonableness: The Commission determined the building of the units is a reasonable request.
2. Uniqueness: The Commission feels the landowner's problem is due to circumstances unique to the shape of the property in its odd size.
3. Essential Character: The Commission feels the essential character of the neighborhood will not be changed by the proposed build.

Kowal added that the proposed action will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, increase the danger of fire, endanger the public safety, unreasonably increase the congestion in the public streets, unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the neighborhood, or in any way be contrary to the intent of the code. Evenson said the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Variance Application at their meeting today. Enderson said he feels approval will contribute to increased tax revenues on this lot and add housing to the City. After further discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve Variance Application #04-24.

Next Evenson presented a proposal for providing mentoring/advising services for City Manager Kyle Harris. He said at the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) meeting a month ago, he spoke with Liza Donnabauer from David Drown as well as LMC staff that recommended a mentoring program with Bart Fisher from David Drown. Evenson went on to outline some of the benefits for new city managers and said the annual cost of this program is \$5,000. Evenson said Harris's first session is scheduled for May 2024. Maanum asked where in the budget this expense will come from. Harris said the administrative training budget for the year is \$4,000, and so there is not enough in that budget line item, and he isn't sure where the balance will come from. Enderson also asked where is the equity for the rest of the staff's training. Evenson said he feels this program will help Harris to grow into his city government roll and it will benefit the City and staff as well as the public. Enderson expressed concern this program just came up to Council today, and Evenson received the proposal in March. Evenson said Harris is comfortable with the idea of a mentoring program. Enderson expressed concern about David Drown being the company that conducted our City Manager search is the same company that will be doing the mentoring. Schreck said Harris is coming up on his one year review, and suggested that this review be conducted, then Council could consider a mentoring program after the review. It was then moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to table the David Drown mentoring program proposal until the next meeting.

Harris said City Council approved bituminous bids for the 2024 season at their last meeting with the 17th St. S. portion removed from the projects. The Golf Club agreed to take any extra materials we may have from our projects. They have recently contacted us and said they are no longer interested in taking that extra bituminous. He went on to say he, Public Works Director Nelson and Kevin Thompson from the Street Department looked at Idaho Avenue just south of the Courthouse which is in bad shape. The storm water under the street is in good shape. Staff plans to camera the sewer in that portion of the street to check the condition, but they don't feel there are any issues there. Harris said he contacted Ferguson Asphalt Paving, the company we awarded our bituminous quote to, and they said to pave Idaho Avenue it will take an additional 70 tons, and cost an additional \$5,460.00 from the original bid. Schreck said he preferred to have the camera work done on the sewer under Idaho before making a decision on the project. It was moved by Schreck to camera the sewer, then bring back the information to the next Council meeting. It was seconded by Enderson and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Schreck, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the Arbor Day Proclamation for April 26, 2024, and to declare May 2024 Arbor Month.

It was moved by Schreck, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the bills and warrants in the amount of \$654,410.71.

There being no further business to come before the Council a motion was made by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to adjourn the Council meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk