

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL
MAY 6, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Evenson. Members present: Jack Evenson, Dan Enderson, Chris Carruth, Mark Schreck, and 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, Police Chief Ian Hodge, CEDA Representative Hillary Tweed, EDA Director from Hutchinson Miles Seppelt and Reed Anfinson.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Evenson asked to remove Prairie Five Rides from the agenda. It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

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

- April 15, 2024 City Council Minutes
- March 18, 2024 EDA Minutes
- Charter Communications Channel Changes
- Pay Request to Swift County – 2024 Assessments - \$23,086.00
- Electronic Transfers:
 - Payroll: April 18, 2024 - \$98,982.59
 - May 2, 2024 - \$108,986.78
 - Journal Entries: March 2024 - \$1,213,587.40

There was no one with unscheduled business.

Tweed introduced Seppelt who was instrumental in starting Hutchinson's business incubator program. Seppelt gave a presentation, outlining how Hutchinson developed the program, and how an incubator program works for helping a new business get a start, as well as helping existing businesses expand through erecting a building and entering into a short- term lease. The Council thanked for his time and information.

Next was a request from MiniSota Museum to close Nevada Avenue between 13th & 14th St. N. on June 20, 2024 from 4-9 p.m. for a petting zoo. They are going to piggy back on the Music in the Park event and have several activities in Roosevelt Park. After discussion it was moved by Carruth, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve MiniSota Museum's request as presented.

Harris approached the Council. He informed them we sold the dump truck at auction for \$17,000. He now has some other items he would like to sell at auction. He presented three air compressors, an electric hot water heater and a few other items. These items are sitting in the old Fibrominn truck wash building not being used. Public works has no need for them and Harris said he would like to sell them before they deteriorate. After further discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve selling the items on auction as Harris presented.

Hodge approached the Council to discuss a Police Department drone program also referred to as

an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) program. He said it could be a tool for the Police Department to use. He went on to say there are grants available to launch the program. Cost to train an operator is \$150 per operator. He said he is asking for Council blessing to move forward with pursuing the program. He said he will have to have a public hearing at the May 20, 2024 Council meeting to receive public comment. Schreck asked if there is a line item in his budget for the program. Hodge said it will be self-funded with grants. He will have several guys trained, so there will be no call out. He said he could get a drone for \$2,000. Price goes up depending on the bells and whistles you want on it. Enderson asked if other cities our size have this program, to which Hodge said he didn't know of any in the area. Maanum asked if Hodge had reached out to Swift County Sheriff. Hodge said they have shown no interest in a drone program. After further discussion, it was moved by Schreck, seconded by Carruth and carried unanimously to allow Hodge to proceed to the next step in pursuing the drone program.

Next Harris presented a quote from Craig's Inc. for an air exchanger for the digester building. He said they have had trouble with methane gas coming back into the air intake which contributed to the boiler failure. He went on to say this issue was discovered by Craig's being in the building at the right time to diagnose what was happening. Harris said this has been an issue for several years. After further discussion, it was moved by Schreck and seconded by Enderson to approve the quote from Craig's. Mayor Evenson asked for discussion. There was question as to why there hasn't been an air exchanger in the past. Council questioned Harris on where in the budget this will be paid for. Schreck feels it is a safety issue and we need to find the money. Enderson said he would like to see capital outlay requests and a heads up on these types of projects. After further discussion, Enderson recinded his 2nd motion, and Schreck recinded his fist motion. It was agreed by the Council to bring more information on funding back to the Council at the May 20, 2024 meeting.

Harris said Public Works Director Nelson had Their Well out to do an inspection on our water wells. Our Well #32 is in need of rehabilitation. We have a quote from them and are currently waiting for a second quote. We will be taking the water tower off line next year for repairs. It would be beneficial to rehab the well this year. It is an expensive endeavor. The question came as to how we will pay for the rehab. Harris said we had money in the budget to rehab the Fibrominn wells and are no longer going to do this. We could shift that budgeted amount over to the rehab of Well #32. This request will come back to the May 20, 2024 meeting with a second quote.

Harris presented the possibility of removing the two decommissioned generators, the Worthington and Enterprise, from the power plant. He feels they are taking up valuable space and by removing them, we could discuss adding more generation to the power plant. The Council questioned resources Harris had for removal. Council asked Harris to continue forward researching what all would be entailed in the removal of the decommissioned generators.

Harris presented a request to extend Public Works Director Elliot Nelson's current work schedule from 24 hours per week to 30 hours per week. Schreck said the personnel committee asked Nelson if he was open to expanding his hours to which he is open. It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to extend Nelson's hours from 24 – 30 per week through 12/31/2024.

Next was the City Manager's review. Mayor Evenson said the Council will go into closed session for Harris's review at 7:10 p.m.

Mayor Evenson reopened the meeting at 8:11 p.m. The Mayor said the Council conducted Harris's review and are pleased with his performance. It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Carruth and carried unanimously to approve a salary increase for Harris in the amount of \$5,000 for an annual salary of \$114,000 effective April 14, 2024.

Lastly a mentorship program for City Manager Harris was discussed. It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Carruth and carried unanimously to enter into this program with David Drown Associates in the amount of \$5,000 for 12 months, with the contingency if Harris leaves employment with the City of Benson of his own accord before December 2026, he will reimburse the City half of the mentorship program fee.

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 8:17 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk