CITY OF BENKELMAN

REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2024

The City Council met in the Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m. for the Regular Meeting. Present: Mayor Tammy Buffington; Council Members JoAnn Decker, Barb Pinkerton, Deb Stamm, Nicholas Baney; City Clerk Diane Rosenfelt; City Superintendent Tim Smith; City Attorney Tawna Holmstedt. Absent: Sheriff King. Others Present: Deputy Mike Damon, Trevor Horner, Linda Jones, Larry & Carol Wiese and Mike Hoback; AMGL CPAs & Advisors.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, Mayor Buffington called the meeting to order and stated that we follow the open meetings law, which is posted on the south wall by the main entrance.

Mayor Tammy Buffington thanked all for coming to the meeting.

Michael Hoback of AMGL CPAs & Advisors was present to give the 2022-2023 Audit Report. Mr. Hoback distributed a two-page summary report which compared the City of Benkelman audit report to other communities of a similar size. The size of the City’s accounting and administrative staff precludes certain internal controls that would be preferred if the office staff were large enough to provide optimum segregation of duties. This lack of segregation of duties creates an opportunity for employees to commit fraud that may go undetected. This situation suggests that the City Council remain involved in the financial affairs of the City to provide oversight and independent review functions, along with monitoring all utility accounts so that we do not get behind on rate increases as suggested. Major capital asset events during the current fiscal year included the following:

* City Shop approach - $21,980
* City Shop Road - $24,416
* City Shop Shelving - $15,476
* Dundy County Processors Transformer - $30,964
* SCADA Upgrades - $107,074
* Sewer Improvements - $157,165

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to approve the audit report as presented for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023 by Michael Hoback of AMGL, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member Nick Baney made a motion to open the public hearing at 7:09 pm to approve the New Zoning Book prepared by Miller & Associates, seconded by Deb Stamm. Ayes: Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm, Baney; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member JoAnn Decker made a motion to close the public hearing at 7:15 pm for the New Zoning Book prepared by Miller & Associates, seconded by Barb Pinkerton. Ayes: Pinkerton, Stamm, Decker; nays: none; abstain: Baney. Motion passed.

Council member Nick Baney made a motion to approve the New Zoning Book prepared by Miller & Associates, seconded by Deb Stamm. Ayes: Stamm, Baney, Decker, Pinkerton; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member Nick Baney made a motion to open the public hearing for the Blighted Study prepared by Miller & Associates at 7:17 pm, seconded by JoAnn Decker. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member Nick Baney made a motion to close the public hearing for the Blighted Study prepared by Miller & Associates at 7:21 pm, seconded by Barb Pinkerton. Ayes: Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm, Baney; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member Nick Baney made a motion to table the Blighted Study until it can be redefined as discussed, seconded by Deb Stamm. Ayes: Pinkerton, Stamm, Baney, Decker; nays: none. Motion passed.

CRA minutes enclosed in the packet. Trevor Horner was present and gave his report. The next meeting of the CRA will be on Monday, March 11, 2024 at 4:00 pm at BWTelcom Board Meeting Room.

Deputy Damon gave the Sheriff’s Report.

Council member Nick Baney made the motion to approve the consent agenda with the change in the bills for Nebraska Municipal Power Pool from $59,974.78 to $86,974.78, seconded by Barb Pinkerton. Ayes: Stamm, Baney, Decker, Pinkerton; nays: none. Motion passed.

**CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:**

* Approve Minutes of January 15, 2024, Regular Meeting.
* Approve Treasurers Report.
* Approve Bills.
* Approve & have Mayor sign Road Use Agreement.
* Approve Mayor’s Appointment of Dee Marie Ingraham to the Planning Commission.
* Approve Mayor’s Appointment of Nicole Sutton to the Health Board.
* Approve Benkelman Volunteer Fire Department meeting minutes from 2-12-2024 and By-Laws returned to the original ones.
* Approve to hire Larry Wiese for Yard & Park Maintenance for a 2-Year Contract at $1,030.00/month.
* Approve Write-Off’s of UB Aged Accounts Receivable in the amount of $4,524.01.
* Approve Write-Off’s of AR Invoices (Dump Fees, Mowing, etc.) in the amount of $4,431.73.
* Approve Invoice Number 13246 to RVW in the amount of $700.00.
* Robyn Mathews will have completed her 90-day probationary period on February 26, 2014—approve $.50/hour raise.
* Approve hiring Mauricio Diaz full time at $15.00/hour and for a probationary period of 90 days.
* Approve and have Mayor be the authorized signature and to date all of the executable documents where indicated and return the completed documents to MEAN for the modernized Service Schedule M Agreement.
* Planning Commission: Approved New Zoning Book; Motion to table Blight & Substandard Study until it can be redefined as discussed; Craig Kerchal Building Permit for tear down and rebuild Garage at 321 Buffalo/Already constructed and meets requirements.

The Mayor and City Council discussed Swimming Pool Rates for the new year. Council member JoAnn Decker made a motion to leave the Swimming Pool Rates the same as 2023 rates and wage increases as of last year, new employees will receive a $.50/hour raise. New Lifeguards can order two (2) swimsuits for the season, if the managers and guards come back from last year, they can use the suits they had from last year if still good or order new if needed, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion that once Mauricio Diaz meets his 90-day probation period bump him up to $16.00/hour, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm, Baney; nays: none. Motion passed.

The Mayor & Council discussed the Peddlers & Solicitors Ordinance we have in place. City Attorney Tawna Holmstedt will study what we have and see what needs to be added as we have had some questions concerning Food Vendors.

Enclosed in the packets was a Water Report that was submitted by Jeremiah Unger (attached to these minutes).

Enclosed in the packets was an Electric Report submitted by Paul Castillo (attached to these minutes).

City Clerk/Treasurer Diane Rosenfelt gave her monthly report (attached to these minutes).

City Superintendent Tim Smith gave his monthly report (attached to these minutes).

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

 Tammy Buffington, Mayor

ATTESTED:

Diane L. Rosenfelt, City Clerk