CITY OF BENKELMAN

REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2023

The City Council met in the Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m. for the Regular Meeting. Present: Mayor Tammy Buffington; Council Members Nicholas Baney, JoAnn Decker, Barbara Pinkerton, Deb Stamm; City Clerk Diane Rosenfelt; City Superintendent James Summers; Acting Police Chief/Sheriff Smith; City Attorney Tawna Holmstedt. Others Present: Michael Hoback; AMGL, Linda Jones, Becky Brown, Buck Menuez, Mary Deyle, Jeremy Borchard and Bobbi Pettit and Doug Christiansen; Five Rule Planning was present by phone.

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 Buffington appreciated the way the city crew has gotten the streets cleaned up after the snowstorms that we have had, they did a great job.

Michael Hoback of AMGL CPA’s & Advisors was present to give the 2021-2022 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 is so small that the City Council needs to remain involved in the financial affairs of the City to provide oversight and independent review functions. They recommend that we continue to monitor the operating costs of providing services in the utility funds for necessary increases in the rates and not falling behind. Every utility fund had an operating loss this year, which is not a good thing. The City of Benkelman’s total debt decreased by 5.8 percent during the current fiscal year due to scheduled payments. USDA requires annual contributions to the reserve water account, make sure the annual required contribution is being made. Major capital asset events during the current fiscal year included the following:

* City Shop - $689,039
* 2022 Ditch Witch HX30A - $75,501
* Reclosers phase 1 - $159,798
* Water service to shop - $22,224
* 7th Avenue between A and B Streets water line - $37,828
* 1974 Cat motor grader - $24,000
* Ditch mower - $10,388

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to approve the audit report as presented for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022 by Michael Hoback of AMGL, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Bobbi Pettit and Doug Christiansen of Five Rule Planning gave an update on our VPR Program. They are planning on giving us updates every quarter to keep up with the changes that have been made. Our starting total was 38 properties and we are at 21 active properties to date, this is with properties that have reconnected to utilities, deeded to the city, demolished, etc. Progress is being made.

Approve Special Conditions for the CDBG Grant 22DTR003 on next month’s agenda with WCNDD.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to approve and sign the Confirmation for Participation in the MEAN Green Energy Program, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm, Baney; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to waive the three (3) readings of Ordinance Number 2023-836:

 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING EXECUTION OF THE GREEN ENERGY PROGRAM SUBSCRIPTION CONFIRMATION BY THE CITY OF BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA, WITH THE MUNICIPAL ENERGY AGENCY OF NEBRASKA; TO PRESCRIBE THE TIME WHEN THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT.

Motion was seconded by Deb Stamm. Ayes: Pinkerton, Stamm, Baney, Decker; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member Barb Pinkerton made the motion to adopt Ordinance Number 2023-836, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Stamm, Baney, Decker, Pinkerton; nays: none. Motion passed.

Mary Deyle and Buck Menuez was present to report on the CRA. Minutes were enclosed in the packets. Mary and City Clerk/Treasurer Diane Rosenfelt will open two (2) savings accounts for the tax dollars for Collinsville One and 906 Chief Street TIF Projects.

No action has been taken by the City Council on funding for cleaning up the Furman Properties.

Acting Police Chief/Sheriff Smith gave the monthly Police Report.

Council member JoAnn Decker discussed concerns she has about the bills and the spending on tools. Mrs. Decker does not want to see duplicate tools being purchased, we have so much budgeted and the spending needs to slow down. Everything needs to be at the new shop, that is the reason it was built was to use and get away from the old city shop.

**CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:**

Council member JoAnn Decker made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

* Approve Minutes of January 17, 2023, Regular Meeting and January 25, 2023, Special Meeting.
* Approve Treasurers Report and CD Balances.
* Approve Bills.
* Approve Funding Application: Dundy County Senior Center
* Approve & Sign Certification of Compliance with Civil Rights.
* Approve & Sign Certification of Restrictions on Lobbying.
* Approve Labor Narrative.
* Approve & Sign Special 5333 (B) of Title 49.
* Approve & Sign 2022-2023 Certifications & Assurances for Federal Transit.
* Approve & Sign Transit Asset Management (TAM) Certification & Accountable Executive.
* Approve Certification of Equivalent Service.
* Advertise for Park/Yard Maintenance (2 Year Contract), Swimming Pool Personnel & (3) three part-time summer employees.
* Approve Interlocal Agreement with Benkelman Rural Fire Protection District.
* Planning Commissions Minutes: Approved Jeremy and Karmen Borchard building permit for new meat processing plant at 70388 Hwy. 61.

Floodplain Administrator Diane Rosenfelt will sign off on Floodplain Development Permit Application with information that has been furnished by Engineers from E-A Collective (Engineering International) for Jeremy and Karmen Borchard.

City Superintendent James Summers visited with Brent Burklund of T.C. Engineering about the conversation at last month’s council meeting concerning if there was a warranty on the road work at the new city shop. The reply that Mr. Summers received was that the weather has been challenging. Our road description fits almost all the gravel county roads around, and most have been around for decades. New roads take some time to get established and there is a balance between unusual weather and warranty. Sometimes a blended approach is to have the city pay for additional gravel and ask the contractor to install it and blade the road back.

Council member Nick Baney made the motion to approve Low Down Farm Estimate for the new city shop road and not to exceed $25,000, seconded by Barb Pinkerton. Ayes: Decker, Pinkerton, Stamm, Baney; nays: none. Motion passed.

The Mayor and City Council discussed information from MEAN to Coop with Stratton and Trenton on utilities; no action was taken at this time.

Council member JoAnn Decker made a motion to approve a local contractor to install an exhaust fan for new city shop and not exceed $1,500, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Pinkerton, Stamm, Baney, Decker; nays: none. Motion passed.

The Mayor & City Council discussed the split with the county for a dozer, not to exceed $60,000. This item will be tabled until next budget cycle, as it was not put in the budget for this year.

Mayor Buffington is going to the Dundy County Commissioners meeting tomorrow and will discuss with them the C&D Site Yearly Expenses/Receipts from 2019-2022. We would like to raise the Administrative Fee from $750/Annually.

City Attorney Tawna Holmstedt will prepare an Ordinance for electrical work to be inspected by the State Electrical Division for next month’s meeting.

The Mayor and City Council discussed information from Karen Barrett of Nebraska Department of Revenue concerning continuing the Benkelman 1.5% Local Sales Tax and timelines that will expire April 1, 2024.

Council member JoAnn Decker made a motion to move the City Council meeting from March 20th to March 27 due to Clerk’s School, seconded by Deb Stamm. Ayes: Stamm, Baney, Decker, Pinkerton; nays: none. Motion passed.

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

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

City Superintendent James Summers gave his monthly report (attached to these minutes).

Meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

 Tammy Buffington, Mayor

ATTESTED:

Diane L. Rosenfelt, City Clerk