CITY OF BENKELMAN

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY NOVEMBER 15, 2021

REGULAR & VIRTUAL MEETING

The City Council met in the Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m. for the regular council meeting and using Telephone Conference. Present: Mayor Robert Rhoades; Council Members Nicholas Baney, JoAnn Decker, Barbara Pinkerton; City Superintendent James Summers; Deputy Lucci; City Clerk Diane Rosenfelt; and City Attorney Jon Schroeder (arrived at 7:03 p.m.). Absent: Acting Police Chief/Sheriff Nichols. Others Present by Phone: Council Member Deb Stamm, Matt Clause; Engineering International, Attorney Krista Shaul, Keith Carl; Hanna:Keelan Associates and Bobbi Pettit & Jess Vanden Berge; Five Rule Planning and In Person: Buck Menuez, Sharon Rhoades, Paul Higgins, Jason Frederick, Larry Boyd, Frank Merklin, Marilyn Hendrickson, Megan Spargo and Larry & Carol Wiese.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, Mayor Rhoades 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 Rhoades commented on the Incident Reports that are in the packets; this makes the council aware of what has been going on throughout the month.

Council comments will be addressed as we move through the agenda.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to open the public hearing on the zoning change recommendation for the property owned by the CRA, Lot 15, Block, 2, Collinsville Addition, seconded by Barb Pinkerton. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to close the public hearing on the zoning change recommendation for the property owned by the CRA, Lot 15, Block 2, Collinsville Addition, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Decker, Pinkerton, Baney; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to waive the (3) three readings of Ordinance No. 2021-830, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Pinkerton, Baney, Decker; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member Barb Pinkerton made the motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-830:

AN ORDINANCE CHANGING LOT 15, BLOCK 2, COLLINSVILLE ADDITION FROM R-3 HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO C-3 HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT; REPEALING CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; AND PROVIDING EFFECTIVE DATE.

Council member Nick Baney seconded the motion. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member JoAnn Decker made a motion to approve the Planning Commission’s recommendations for Dundy County Stratton Public School Building Addition at 400 9th Ave. W., Gary Deyle Garage on East 14th Street, Robby & Amy Haines Fence Permit at 725 Eagle Street and Marilyn Hendrickson’s new Building Permit for the attachment of the sheds to the property at 605 Arapahoe, seconded by Barb Pinkerton. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed. No action was taken on the demo permits for 521 Chief (The Bricks) and 914 Chief (Newtson Trailer), as they have already been removed. Demo permit for 310 RR Avenue (Liewer Funeral Home) was tabled at the Planning Commission meeting for lack of pictures of the project; this will have to go before the Planning Commission and the City Council next month. Marilyn Hendrickson and her Attorney, Krista Shaul thanked the city council for taking the permit into consideration and they will continue to work in the right direction on the permit.

Paul Higgins introduced himself to those in attendance. Mr. Higgins gave a presentation concerning a Dundy County Airport that would be more appropriately sized to service the County, but more importantly to provide faster air ambulance services to the Dundy County Hospital. Mr. Higgins has given his presentation to the Benkelman CRA and also the Dundy County Commissioners, with his thoughts that this project would also assist the City of Benkelman as well as Dundy County in growth.

Bobbi Pettit and Jess Vanden Berge of Five Rule Planning updated the council on the Vacant Property Registry. Five Rule Planning has received (3) three payments, this leaves 8 properties that have not paid their fees; they will begin to file liens against these properties. We have (5) five properties with new ownership that have until March 22, 2022 before they have fees come due.

Keith Carl of Hanna:Keelan Associates updated the council on the Blight and Substandard Area that they are working on and the possibility of wanting to expand the area.

Attorney Jon Schroeder discussed the bidding process for the 15 KV Reclosers and timeline for getting the project started.

City Superintendent James Summers discussed the C&D Site Inspection with the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy and being wrote up on books, newspaper, plastic, coffee containers, general household garbage and cardboard being put in the C&D site. We need to make sure that before properties are being demolished, the inside of these properties has been gone through by the owner and inspected by the city.

Matt Clause of Engineering International updated the council on the new city shop. Wednesday morning, they will be inspecting the rebar before the concrete work begins.

Megan Spargo gave the CRA report.

Deputy Lucci gave the monthly Sheriff’s report.

Council member JoAnn Decker was questioning how many Engineers we have working on the new city shop project and how we need to be getting pay applications to sign off on when bills are going to be paid.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to transfer $34,025.69 from City Sales Tax to Roads in the amount of $9,254.00 and Water in the amount of $24,771.69, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Decker, Pinkerton, Baney; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

**CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:**

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

* Approve Minutes of October 18, 2021 regular and virtual meeting.
* Approve Treasurers Report.
* Approval of Bills.
* Approve & Sign Resolution # 11-15-2021 #1 Year-End Certification of City Street Superintendent 2021.
* Approve & Sign Year-End Certification of City Street Superintendent.
* Approve to allow for on-line banking with city financial institutions (view only).

Council member JoAnn Decker discussed the need to have a Zoning Administrator. Mayor Rhoades believes this should be someone from the city, but has not found anyone that wants to take this on. We will advertise for this position and see if we can find someone that is interested in this position.

Mayor Rhoades and the Council Members discussed the need to be looking into the suggested utility rate increases that the city has been given. This item will be on the agenda next month and will have to be done by updating Ordinances.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to approve Christmas Bonuses for all full-time and temporary full-time employees in the amount of $110.00 with taxes taken out and part-time employees in the amount of $55.00 with taxes taken out, seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

gWorks has been working on the Redistricting for the East and West Ward Council Seats. It was 420 in the West Ward and 401 in the East Ward; it looks like it is going to 411 in each Ward at this time.

Enclosed in the packets was a Water Report that was submitted by Jeremiah Unger.

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).

Council member JoAnn Decker discussed getting the Personnel Manual finished up, and do it in house if at all possible.

Frank Merklin was in attendance and explained the need of having a new Zoning Map made.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to go into closed session at 8:54 p.m. to discuss Employee Wages, seconded by Barb Pinkerton. Mayor Rhoades asked City Superintendent James Summers to leave the meeting and City Clerk/Treasurer Diane Rosenfelt to stay in the meeting. Ayes: Baney, Decker, Pinkerton; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion carried.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to come out of closed session at 9:05 p.m., seconded by Nick Baney. Ayes: Decker, Pinkerton, Baney; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Council member JoAnn Decker made the motion to approve pay raises as presented effective the beginning of new pay period (attached to these minutes), seconded by Barb Pinkerton. Ayes: Pinkerton, Baney, Decker; absent: Stamm; nays: none. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Robert Rhoades, Mayor

ATTESTED:

Diane L. Rosenfelt, City Clerk