

City of Bronson
Regular Council Meeting
January 9, 2023

Mayor Watkins called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: McConn, Earl, Johannes, Watkins, Rinehart

Absent: None

Public Comment – Branch County Commissioner Tom Matthew introduced himself. He said he took over the seat formerly held by Commissioner Kolcz. He gave a little background on himself and said he was always available to Council and people of his district if they needed him. Alyssa Temple and Kerry Winright were present to express their support in changing the city ordinance banning chickens.

Presentations – FY2022 Audit – Jeff Berry, CPA of Gabridge & Company – Mr. Berry said the city was given a clean opinion, the best available, and conformed with all accounting practices. He said the general fund had an increase in fund balance of \$96,429. He said the water and wastewater funds did cover depreciation. He said the city was required to do a single audit this year for federal monies and the city did receive a clean opinion for this audit also. Mr. Berry thanked the city staff, especially Clerk/Treasurer Smith for their assistance during the audit. Council thanked Mr. Berry for his work on the audit.

Consent Agenda – Councilman Rinehart moved to approve the consent agenda including payment of invoices totaling \$35,218.93. Seconded by Councilman Johannes. Motion carried.

New Business – Urban Chicken Discussion – Mayor Watkins, Vice-Mayor Earl and Councilmen McConn and Johannes said they felt the current ordinance prohibiting chickens should stay in place. Councilman Rinehart said he was in favor of letting residents have chickens. Residents Kerry Winwright and James Mahaffa said they would like Council to change the ordinance and allow chickens with restrictions. After further discussion Council referred the matter to the Planning Commission for review and recommendations.

Credit Card Discussion – Mayor Watkins said he talked with Quincy and they do have credit card for utilities but not for tax bills. Clerk/Treasurer Smith explained with the way taxes are paid out to the different taxing entities it makes it difficult to pay with a three-day payment delay from Point & Pay. It meant there always wasn't enough funds in the bank account to pay out what the tax program says should be paid out. After further discussion Councilman Rinehart moved to suspend allowing tax payments on the Point & Pay system but to continue to take utility bill payments. Seconded by Councilman Johannes. Motion carried.

Approve Purchase & Development Agreement with Cronkhite Vault – Councilman Rinehart moved to approve the purchase and development agreement with Cronkhite Vault for 2.8 acres for \$2,750.00. Seconded by Councilman McConn. Motion carried.

Approve Prein & Newhof Professional Services Agreement for Engineering – Manager Mersman asked Council to renew Prein & Newhof Professional Services Agreement for 2023. He Attorney Lillis reviewed the contract and approved it. Councilman Johannes moved to approve the agreement. Seconded by Councilman Rinehart. Motion carried.

Additional Pension Contribution to MERS - Manager Mersman said staff is recommending adding \$50,000.00 to the MERS surplus fund. This would further reduce the City's long-term liability and increase the long-term funding. Councilman McConn moved to make the additional contribution of \$50,000.00 to the MERS surplus fund. Seconded by Councilman Johannes. Motion carried.

City Staff Comments – None

Manager Comments – Manager Mersman said he had promoted Joe Swain to DPW foreman. He said Joe has been with the city 7 years and will do a good job in the position. He said the City got word from the Michigan Council of Economic Development that the City was awarded funds to hire a fellow to help the City with areas of planning and economic development. The cost to the city would be \$10,000.00 with a grant paying for the rest of the cost of the hire. He said he hoped to have this person help with the City's master plan, economic development and a parks and recreation plan.

Council Comments – Council thanked those who attended the meeting for discussion on chickens for their input. Councilman Johannes said in the future he felt the Council should be informed about what vehicles are being used and how. He said last month when they were asked to repair police vehicle that council thought had been sold was not how things should be run. Vice-Mayor Earl thanked Clerk/Treasurer Smith for the work she did on the audit. He also congratulated Joe Swain on his promotion. Mayor Watkins thanked Commission Matthews for attending the meeting.

Closed Session – Councilman McConn moved to recess the meeting to closed session for discussion on sale or lease of City property. Seconded by Councilman Rinehart. Motion carried.

Council returned to Open Session with no further action.

Adjourn – Councilman Johannes moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Vice-Mayor Earl. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Smith, City Clerk/Treas.