

City of Bronson
Regular Council Meeting
March 13,2023

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

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

Absent: None

Public Comment – None

Consent Agenda – Councilman Johannes moved to approve the consent agenda including payment of invoices totaling \$58,203.44. Seconded by Councilman Rinehart. Motion carried.

New Business – Close Out Public Hearing – S. Ruggles/Compton Street Infrastructure Improvement – Councilman Rinehart moved to recess the regular meeting to a public hearing. Seconded by Councilman Johannes. Motion carried. Teresa Smoker, who lives on S. Douglas Street approximately one block from where the construction was done, told Council during the compaction of the street her whole house shook. She said to the point things fell off her walls. She said it caused cracks in the plaster in her walls. She said at the time she talked to one of the construction workers and they said it was probably due to the depth of her basement. He told the deeper the basement the more a resident is likely to feel the house vibrate during road compaction. She said she did have a deep basement but expressed concerns that if the work was ever done on her street compaction would cause significant damage to her home. Council thanked her for coming and expressing her concerns and would talk to the engineer on the project and make sure that in any future projects this type of concern was addressed before construction was started. There were no other public comments and Councilman Rinehart moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Councilman Johannes. Motion carried.

Approve Purchase of Trailer for Department of Public Works – After reviewing the bids Vice-Mayor McConn moved to accept the low bid of \$6,933.00 from DR Trailers. Seconded by Councilman Rinehart. Motion carried.

214 E. Chicago Street – Parking (Discussion) – Manager Mersman said Councilman Rinehart asked this item be put on the agenda for discussion. He reminded Council that in 2022 the house at 214 E. Chicago Street was demolished after it had a fire and was abandoned. Councilman Rinehart was wondering about the possibility of the lot being used for parking for the post office and the theatre. Clerk/Treasurer Smith said the property would not go up for tax sale this but would next year. Back taxes currently were \$12,415.87. She said if the city would purchase it at tax sale about \$3905.00 of that amount would come back to the city. Council then inquired about what it would take to make the surface of the lot viable for parking. They asked Manager Mersman to investigate the options for different types of surfacing for the lot. No further action was taken.

Adopt Michigan Gas Utilities Franchise Ordinance #218 – Councilman Johannes moved to adopt Ordinance #218, Michigan Gas Utilities Franchise. Seconded by Vice-Mayor Earl. Motion carried.

Marijuana Discussion – City Attorney Lillis gave some background on the topic of allowing marijuana facilities in the city. He explained there were four kinds of businesses that could be allowed. He said the

city could allow all or none or however many they wished. He said the dispensaries for medical or recreational marijuana are the most common. He said they are strictly regulated by the State of Michigan. The facilities are very well run and very well maintain. They are regularly inspected by the State. He said they can be a big money maker for the community and usually these companies make big investments in the buildings being used. He said it would take Council amending the City's zoning code to allow the facilities. He suggested having a public hearing to get public comments to see how the community felt one way or another about allowing the facilities in the city. After further discussion Council asked to have a public hearing at the next council meeting to take public comment on the subject. No other action was taken.

Approve Additional Department of Public Works Position – Manager Mersman said for the past several years the DPW has been operating with 3 employees with two other employees at the wastewater treatment plant. He said there was as many as 5 employees ten years ago. He was suggesting adding back a fourth position to get more accomplished. Mayor Watkins said he was in favor of this for safety reasons. He felt it would be better for employees to work in pairs in case there was an instance of a health issue or an accident especially at the treatment plant. Council concurred. Vice-Mayor Earl moved to add the additional employee for the DPW. Seconded by Councilman Johannes. Motion carried.

Approve Proposal for Spark Grant – Manager Mersman said Prein & Newhof has submitted a proposal for assisting the city in designing a project and assist in applying for a 2023 Spark Grant through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. He said this a one time federally funded program with three rounds of funding. He said the chances of the city getting the grant were low because there was a massive number of applicants. He said if the city didn't get it the site design it could be used for the Natural Resources' Trust grant the CEDAM fellow would be assisting on next spring. He said the cost estimates would have to be updated next spring. After some discussion Council agreed they were not in favor of spending \$7,500 on the Spark Grant when there was so little chance it would be awarded to the city and would wait until next spring and possibly apply for the Natural Resources Trust grant. No further action was taken.

City Staff Comments – None

Manager Comments – Manager Mersman said he was working on the budget and it was on track. He said Clerk/Treasurer Smith was retiring in May and a posting for her job has been done.

Council Comments – Council congratulated Clerk/Treasurer Smith on her retirement. Councilman Johannes wanted Manager Mersman to speak with DPW Foreman Swain and make sure he had the tools and equipment needed to run the department efficiently. Mayor Watkins reminded everyone with time change to be aware of children in the morning in the dark. He also thanked Council for their support of him as Mayor. Vice-Mayor McConn congratulated the Bronson High School winter sports teams on their outstanding season.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Smith, City Clerk/Treas.