

City of Bronson  
Regular Council Meeting  
April 10, 2023

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

Roll Call: Present: Watkins, Earl, Johannes, McConn, Rinehart  
Absent: None

Public Comment – None

Presentation – Mayor Watkins and Vice-Mayor Earl presented Utilities Supervisor Chuck Buckley with a plaque recognizing his 43 years of service with the city. Supervisor Buckley will be retiring on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Council expressed their gratitude to him for his years of dedicated service and congratulated him on his retirement.

Consent Agenda – Councilman McConn moved to approve the consent agenda including payment of invoices totaling \$86,149.48. Seconded by Councilman Rinehart. Motion carried.

New Business – Water & Sewer Updates Presentation – Michael Schwartz from Prein & Newhof presented an outline of the proposed water and sewer upgrades for the city. For the sewer system he outlined the existing sewer system needs, outlined the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, talked about the proposed work for FY 2024, and the possible ways to finance the work and the potential cost to users. He said the estimated cost for the sewer improvements was \$24,006,000. He said Bronson has been designated a significant overburden community which may get the city 20 million in principle forgiveness. Without any principal forgiveness the cost per REU for FY 2024 would be \$85.99 per month. Mr. Schwartz then outlined the proposed work for the water system. He said by 2041 replacement of all lead and galvanized water services has been mandated by the State of Michigan. He said there are also many waters main pipes that were installed in the 1930's and were in need of replacement. He outlined the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and again said with the city being a significant overburden community principal forgiveness may be possible. The total cost of the water project would be \$24,911,000. Without any loan forgiveness the cost per REU for 2024 would be \$67.70 per month. He said both projects would improve water quality and improve the reliability of the system.

Public Hearing for Potential Water & Sewer Funding – Councilman Johannes moved to recess the meeting to a public hearing to hear comments on the potential funding for the proposed water and sewer projects. Seconded by Vice-Mayor Earl. Motion carried. Dave Barone, business owner, asked how long in the future would the improvements carry the city and how long would the repayment of the funding be. Mike Schwartz told him the improvements would handle growth in the city many years into the future. He said the life of the loans would be 40 years. He said the loans would be separate for each project. Mr. Barone asked when the projects would be started and how much disruption there would be to traffic and to residents. Mr. Schwartz said the sewer work would be mainly underground and at the treatment plant so residents would see little of the work going on. He said work on the water system would be mainly under the sidewalks and replacing the water lines would be between the sidewalk and the home or business. Mr. Schwartz said the work for the sewer project would be started in 2024 and completed in 2026. The water projects would be started in 2025 and completed in 2027. Kelly Oliver, homeowner, asked about the cost on the water/sewer bills. Mr. Schwartz said without any principal forgiveness the water portion would be about \$67.70 a month and the sewer portion would be about \$85.99 to a typical residence. He said it would be very hard to estimate until the city finds out if they would be getting any principal forgiveness. There were no further comments or questions. Vice-Mayor Earl moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Councilman Johannes. Motion carried.

Adopt Resolution #23-04-02 Wastewater Funding – Councilman Johannes moved to adopt Resolution #23-04-03. Seconded by Councilman McConn. Motion carried.

Adopt Resolution #23-04-03 Water Funding – Vice-Mayor McConn moved to adopt Resolution #23-04-03. Seconded by Councilman Johannes. Motion carried.

Public Hearing – Recreational Marijuana Facilities – Vice-Mayor Earl moved to recess the meeting to a public hearing to hear comments on recreational marijuana facilities. Seconded by Councilman Johannes. Motion carried. Cayne Lindsey, city resident spoke in favor of allowing marijuana facilities. He said allowing them would create new businesses and be a source of income for the city. Chad Everett, Mary Evans, Kim Erwin and Lee Evans, township residents, said they were not in favor of marijuana facilities and said Coldwater and Sturgis had several and people could go there to buy what they wanted. Dave Barone, business owner, said he was concerned about parking and the location of the facilities if allowed. Jim Mahaffa, city resident, asked why the subject was being brought up now. Mayor Watkins said after seeing the income the facilities were bringing into other communities, he suggested having a public hearing to hear city resident's views on the subject. He said there would be no action taken on the subject and that this hearing was just to gather information and suggestions from city residents. Kelli Oliver, city resident, said she was not opposed but asked if they were allowed, where would the money go that was generated. Vice-Mayor Earl said that had not been discussed and this hearing was just to get input from city residents on how they felt about the facilities, one way or another. Dave Hughes said he was owner of two dispensaries in other communities and he explained how they worked and the money generated. He said they are very specific regulations for dispensaries. City Attorney Lillis said the city could allow grow facilities or dispensaries. He said it would be a long process and the city could put restrictions on where they were located and how many were allowed. Councilman Johannes moved to close the public hearing. Seconded by Councilman Rinehart. Motion carried.

Approve Purchase of Police Firearms – Councilman Johannes moved to approve the purchase from CMP Distributors Inc. for a price of \$8,280.75. The monies would come out of salvage funds not out of the police budget. Seconded by Councilman Rinehart. Motion carried.

City Staff Comments – Police Chief Johnson reminded everyone with the warm weather to watch for children out playing. Fire Chief Wilber said the fire academy had wrapped up and one of Bronson's firemen was the top scorer on the final exam. He said the satellite station was moving forward.

Manager Comments – Manager Mersman said the generator has been installed at City Hall. He congratulated Chuck Buckley on his retirement.

Council Comments – Council thanked everyone in attendance for their comments during the public hearings. Council congratulated the fireman who completed the fire academy.

Closed Session for Discussion of Purchase, Sale or Lease of Real Property – Councilman Johannes moved to recess the meeting to closed session. Seconded by Vice-Mayor Earl. Motion carried.

Council returned to regular session with no further action.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Smith, City Clerk/Treas.