

Bronson City Council
Agenda

Regular Meeting

October 9, 2023

City Hall- 141 S. Matteson Street, Bronson MI 49028

5:00 pm

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Meeting called to order at 5:00 PM

2. Roll Call

Council Members Present: Mayor Matt Watkins, Vice Mayor Bill Earl, Councilmember Bill Rinehart, Councilmember Larry McConn, and Councilmember Rick Johannes

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: City Manager Brandon Mersman, City Attorney Charles Lillis, Clerk/Treasurer Tricia Rzepka, Chief Steve Johnson, Jerry Rinehart, Patrick Bird, and Fire Chief Scott Wilber, Deputy Chief Frank Barker, and Joe Swain

Public Present: Amanda Monroe, Dave Barone, Jenny Stritzinger, Tyler Stritzinger, Matt Stritzinger, Kate Wall, Dennis Sikorski, Kathy Mandoka, Brian Hagen, Ferrell Mayes, John & Billie Pollack, Damon Shaffer, Deb Salek, Karen Smith, SamWidkey, Cindy Johannes

3. Public Comments – Sheriff John Pollack reported to the council regarding the report that was included in the council packet. Pollack emphasized that the old jail is to be torn down, booked 311, 158 overtime hours, complaints for the month, 3 high speed chases, 6 night patrol deputies, marine patrol noticed damage to bayous, and the fact that cell phones must be hand free.

Council Member Rick Johannes questioned how the drug drop off box works?

Sheriff John Pollack stated that it is a mil container in the lobby and they request that it be in a bag and not loose.

Cayne Lindsey questioned the council about the rental inspections and stated that with this, it takes away his 4th amendment rights.

Attorney Charles Lillis addressed that this is in place for the protection of the renter and that they are not concerned with what the renter is doing, but rather that the rental is has proper smoke detectors, gfi outlets, and is safe for the renter.

Cayne Lindsey argued that it is not written to say that they are not there to inspect what the renter is doing in their home.

4. Presentations- Kate Wall, interim superintendent for Bronson Community Schools, discussed the upcoming vote for the sinking fund for the school, stating that this is not an increase in taxes, but rather a continuance from the previous sinking fund that was voted on.

5. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes- September 11, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes; September 11, 2023 Closed Session Minutes

B. Acceptance of Monthly Reports- Police, DPW, Utilities Report, Fire Department Report

C. Approval of monthly bills in the amount of \$136,761.13

D. Affirm the prepayment of bills in the amount of \$295,768.57

E. Approval of City's Investments

Motion to approve consent agenda made by Council Member Larry McConn with support from Council Member Bill Rinehart.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

6. New Business

A. Approve/Deny Rezoning Request for 150 Wayne Street (200-004-000-073-98) Rezoning Resolution #23-10-13

City Manager Brandon Mersman stated that this will be a public hearing to address rezoning from R3 to B3, as it has been stated the intent would be to build a self storage, 16,000 square foot unit on the 6.9 acre. This is currently zoned R3 and the request would be to rezone to B3. The Planning Commission did hold a public hearing and voted not to approve.

1. Public Hearing
2. Discussion/Action

Motion to open public hearing at 5:17 PM made by Council Member Rick Johannes with support from Council Member Bill Earl.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried.

City Manager Brandon Mersman stated that Tyler Stritzinger is seeking to re-zone parcel 200-004-000-073-98 from R3 to B3, with the intent of placing storage units on the property.

Tyler Stritzinger addressed the council stating that this would be almost 7 acres of property that would increase tax revenue for the city. There were concerns brought up at the Planning Commission meeting regarding a grocery store to be on the property too. Tyler clarified that this would be an existing store in the community, moving to the property, not an additional store coming in to take business away. Additional concerns were addressed because it had been stated that there was enough storage in the area. Upon researching this, most storage units were completely full and only one had a few units available. Tyler stated that this facility would be equipped with lights and cameras, and would be available seven days a week. As there are only a few R3 properties remaining in the city, Tyler also address that the other parcel is larger than the one in question and would still be close to McDonalds and Dollar General so that foot traffic would not be impeded.

Council Member Larry McConn questioned if this would be an all steel building and if there would be fencing?

Tyler stated that it would be an all steel building and that they would like to get to the point of fencing around the facility. In the meantime, there would be a gate with a code for the customers to have access, but not accessible by vehicle unless they have a code.

Council Member Rick Johannes questioned the cleanliness of the facility and if there would be items piled around the buildings?

Matt Stritzinger addressed this question stating that they do have people that leave items at their existing locations and that they are diligent on being at the facilities daily to address those issues as they arise.

Dave Barone spoke, stating that he is familiar with the Stritzingers and that they are very professional and that he is in support of the rezoning.

Ferrell Mays stated that the Planning Commissions biggest concern was that this did not fit in the master plan and if there were other R3 parcels, this would have been looked at differently. Since there are only two currently, they did not want to see this used for storage. Ferrell also stated that as a homeowner, he wouldn't want a storage unit as a neighbor.

Dennis Sikorski spoke, stating that he feels it would be a good fit for the community.

Tyler Stritzinger stated that the other R3 parcel is six times bigger than the one being spoke of and is within walking distance of McDonalds and Dollar General.

Ferrell Mays stated that the original application only addressed the storage unit and did not include moving the grocery store to this location.

City Manager Brandon Mersman stated that a written request was sent to the office stating that they were against the request with it being too close to residents.

Motion to approve closing the public hearing made by Council Member Larry McConn with support from Council Member Rick Johannes.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

Attorney Charles Lillis reminded the council that they are voting to rezone and not to approve the storage units/grocery store, that would need to be voted on at a later time.

Council Member Larry McConn stated that the property has been vacant for years and that maybe the master plan needs to be updated.

Council Member Bill Rinehart stated that he liked the idea of keeping the commercial property together.

Motion to approve the rezoning of parcel 200-004-000-073-98 from R3 to B3 made by Council Member Bill Rinehart with support from Council Member Rick Johannes.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

B. Golf Cart Ordinance Public Hearing & Discussion

Motion to go into public hearing at 5:43 PM made by Council Member Rick Johannes with support from Council Member Bill Earl.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

Damon Shaffer addressed the council stating that he was for golf carts in the city. He has a business that sells and outfits golf carts in Union City who currently allows golf carts. Damon would like to see about opening a location in Bronson as well and stated that he could outfit golf carts with any requirements the city would impose. Damon stated that it would be convenient for Polish Festival and could draw additional people for events.

Dennis Sikorski stated that he is for it and it could help residents and seniors.

Kathy Madoka stated that she is also for golf carts and that her husband Homer Mandoka sent a letter for written support of golf carts.

Cindy Johannes questioned the laws that would be required for golf carts?

Attorney Charles Lillis stated that they must meet state requirements for vehicles on the road.

City Manager Brandon Mersman addressed that they would have to have a drivers license, be 16 years of age or older, be equipped with signals, travel on the far right of the road, and no ORV or ATV's would be allowed.

Brian Hagen stated that he had seen a golf cart with eight kids, and no lights. Brian stated that he is not for or against golf carts, but is concerned for safety.

Fire Chief Scott Wilber stated that he is good with them being on side streets, but is concerned for them crossing US 12.

Clerk/Treasurer Tricia Rzepka stated that she believes you can restrict it so that golf carts can only cross the intersection of US 12 at a traffic light and this may address the concerns of crossing US 12.

Motion to come out of public hearing at 5:55 PM made by Council Member Rick Johannes with support from Council Member Bill Rinehart.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

Council Member Larry McConn stated that he is not in favor of golf carts.

Council Member Rick Johannes would be interested in having rules written up for review and charging a registration fee so you could track who the owners are for follow up if the rules are not followed.

Council Member Bill Rinehart stated his biggest concern is safety, and he has not received any negative comments from the community. Bill also stated that he likes the idea of only crossing US 12 at a traffic light.

Mayor Matt Watkins stated that if this is passed, it will not affect hundreds of people, but maybe 25-30 people.

Council Member Bill Earl stated that he was approached by three people to bring this to council and that he doesn't see an issue with it.

Mayor Matt Watkins stated that they really wanted to have this public hearing to get an idea if the public would be for or against this.

Attorney Charles Lillis recommended that they discuss the Michigan rules that are required and see if there are additional rules they would like in place.

General consensus is for City Manager Brandon Mersman to put together rules and regulations to be reviewed by council.

C. Award Assessing Services Contract

City Manager Brandon Mersman addressed the council stating that four bids were received for the assessor position and the top two were received from R & R Assessing and Karen Smith. Brandon stated that both are qualified for the position and that Karen has forty years of experience as the clerk and treasurer for the City of Bronson. Brandon did compare the two proposals stating that over a three year period R & R would be \$44,951.04 and Karens would be \$48,480.00.

Mayor Matt Watkins stated that Karen was a little higher, but has much experience with the City of Bronson.

Council Member Larry McConn stated that he followed up with the communities using R & R and that they are happy with their service and are very professional.

Council Member Rick Johannes questioned what the difference in price was?

City Manager Brandon Mersman stated it was approximately \$3,500.00.

Motion by Council Member Larry McConn to move forward with R & R for the assessor position.

Council Member Bill Earl questioned if the assessor would work remotely and be available by appointment?

Council Member Rick Johannes questioned if Karen would be working from home?

Karen Smith stated that she could work from home of the office, adding that she knows the properties better than anyone, having 30 plus years as the assessor.

Support from Council Member Rick Johannes for R & R to be the assessor.

3 ayes/2 nays Motion Carried

D. Approve Master Plan & Zoning Code Update Consultant

City Manager Brandon Mersman addressed the council regarding the two candidates for the Master Plan & Zoning Code update consultant. Brandon stated that the bid from Wade Trim was for \$40,400 with an estimated time of 18 months and the bid from Marsh is for \$40,000 with an estimated time of 12 months. Brandon suggested to the council the bid from Marsh.

Mayor Matt Watkins questioned what stood out for Marsh over Wade Trim?

Council Member Bill Earl said that they took the time to come to Bronson and take pictures of the community, met with Patrick, and he likes what they have to offer.

City Manager Brandon Mersman stated that Wade Trim was not ideal for the timeline to finish this project.

Motion to approve Master Plan & Zoning Code Update Consultant Marsh made by Council Member Bill Earl with support from Council Member Bill Rinehart.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

E. Approve Additional Full-Time Police Officer

City Manager Brandon Mersman stated that a 5th officer would reduce overtime and reduce the amount of part time officers needed to cover shifts. The current budget is set for \$87,000 to cover for both over time and part time, but this could be spent on an additional full time officer to cover as a floater for both day and night shifts. Brandon is checking on the exemption for layoff contingent on approval with the union.

Motion to approve a 5th full time officer contingent of union approval and adequate space made by Council Member Larry McConn with support from Council Member Bill Earl.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

F. Purchase Idexx Wastewater Treatment Laboratory Equipment

City Manager Brandon Mersman stated that Michigan Rural Water and staff are requesting the purchase of the Idexx wastewater treatment laboratory equipment as it would be the same cost to purchase as it would be to repair the existing equipment. New equipment would be in compliance with requirements and would cost approximately \$8,556.15.

Motion to approve the purchase of the Idexx wastewater treatment laboratory equipment made by Council Member Bill Earl with support from Council Member Rick Johannes.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

7. **City Staff Comments**

Jerry Rinehart thanked the council for touring the wastewater treatment plant.

Joe Swain informed the council that they have been moving a lot of heavy material, but there is currently not a safe way to do this and he would like to see about a forklift for this. Joe was able to make a lot of indoor space, but in order to move these materials again, a forklift would be needed for safety purposes.

Council members discussed and would like to see if a used forklift would suffice.

Joe also stated that he checked into the replacement of street signs and although they do not have a warranty for them, they can do a 3M treatment for the face plates.

Chief Steve Johnson reminded the council that Halloween is approaching, there will be the SPOOKS event at the pavilion, trick or treat, and trunk or treats will be taking place, so be on the lookout for kids darting in and out of traffic. Chief also stated the Deputy Chief Frank Barker just finished attending new chiefs training and came back with a lot of knowledge.

Fire Chief Scott Wilber informed council that the satellite location is moving along nicely. The firefighters and Dan Hershberger will be putting up steel and the walls soon.

8. **City Manager Comments**

City Manager Brandon Mersman thanked Joe for the hard work of cleaning up and making indoor storage space. Brandon stated that Patrick has been working on a food truck rally for October 27th and hopes to see a lot of participation. Brandon also stated that Michigan Rural Water will continue assisting us complimentary until January.

9. **Council Comments**

Council Member Rick Johannes thanked Scott for the excellent communication of all that is going on, stated that Joe did a great job on the building, congratulated Steve for having a full staff, thanked Frank and expressed his appreciation, acknowledged that Jerry has his hands full with the wastewater treatment plant, and thanked Chuck and Brandon for their hard work. Rick also thanked Dave Barone for everything he has done for the community.

Council Member Larry McConn gave kudos to Scott for the \$70,000 grant received, told Steve that the department was doing well, informed Patrick that things are going in the right direction, thanked Jerry for the tour of the wastewater treatment plant, and thanked Joe for thinking outside the box for storage space.

Council Member Bill Rinehart expressed to Tricia that he was happy to see the front counter computer up and running to streamline the process, expressed his appreciation to Scott for his hard work, thanked Patrick for his good ideas and hard work, appreciated Jerry and Joe for the job they are doing, stated that Brian was a great asset for the city, and thanked Chuck, Brandon and the council for their hard work.

Council Member Bill Earl stated that the city has a great team, expressing to Scott to keep moving forward, and his appreciation to Brandon and Patrick for their work on all the proposals.

Mayor Matt Watkins expressed his appreciation to all present and the community, stating that good input makes their job much easier.

10. Closed Session: Discussion of Purchase, Sale, or Lease of Real Property (PA 267 of 1976 15.268 Sec. 8 (d))

Motion to enter in closed session at 6:43 PM made by Council Member Rick Johannes and supported by Council Member Bill Rinehart.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

Motion to end closed session at 7:15 PM made by Council Member Bill Rinehart with support from Council Member Rick Johannes.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

11. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Council Member Bill Rinehart with support from Council Member Bill Earl.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

Adjourned at 7:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Rzepka
Clerk/Treasurer
City of Bronson