

## **Bronson City Council**

### **Minutes**

Regular Meeting

May 13, 2024

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:** Councilmember Bill Rinehart, Vice Mayor Bill Earl, Mayor Matt Watkins, Councilmember Larry McConn, and Councilmember Rick Johannes

**Council Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** City Manager Brandon Mersman, City Attorney Charles Lillis, Clerk/Treasurer Tricia Rzepka, Water/Wastewater Supervisor Jerry Rinehart, Chief of Police Steve Johnson, and Fellowship Patrick Bird

**Public Present:** Bill Etzler with Abonmarsche, John & Billie Pollack, Caite Klinessmith, Travis Klinger, Nathan & Kandace O'Rourke, Rick Hollister, and Casey Swinson.

#### **3. Public Comments**

Public comments shall be limited to 3 minutes for items not listed on the agenda.

Casey , with Tim Wahlbergs office, gave information regarding work that has been done regarding education, workforce, energy and commerce, and stated they are working on the enforcement of Title 6. Casey also stated the Wahlberg questioned energy and commerce with the lack of electric vehicle chargers and not having gas exports to assist with offsetting cost. Tim Wahlberg was in the area to survey tornado damage.

Sheriff John Pollack stated that they have a RFP in place for the old jail to be taken down. They have gone to Green class B uniforms and as of April 24th are assisting the Village of Quincy until their new department is up and running. Boater safety classes are available, information is available on Facebook and the RV ordinance has passed. Sheriff Pollack also spoke of the amount of drugs that were turned in last month.

Member Rick Johannes stated that he stopped in in the new jail is very impressive.

Travis Klinger asked about the types of drugs that were taken in?

Sheriff. Pollock explained that they were general drugs and did not have specifics.

Rick Hollister stated that he is running for district commissioner. Rick grew up in the area and has held a state office in FFA. Growing up on a farm, he has worked in the grain business and in agriculture most of his life. Previously he was a part of the planning commission for Bronson has moved around due to employment opportunities. Rick has recently come back to the area he feels that he is right for the position as he is an FFA alumni founder and of a member of the Bethel Community Church.

#### **4. Consent Agenda**

- A. Approval of Minutes- April 8, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. Acceptance of Monthly Reports- Police, DPW, Utilities Report
- C. Approval of monthly bills in the amount of \$150,082.08
- D. Affirm the prepayment of bills in the amount of \$45,294.21
- E. Approval of City's Investments
- F. Approval of 2023 Annual Council Report

Motion to approve the consent agenda made by councilmember Bill Rinehart with support with councilmember Rick Johannes.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

## **5. New Business**

### **A. 2024-25 FY Budget Presentation**

City Manager Brandon Mersman presented the 24-25 projected budget with a deficit of approximately \$304,600. Requested staff additions would include an assistant to the city manager and a fifth police officer. The upcoming year would also include the Compton Street Road project along with the MDOT grant approval. City manager Brandon Mersman is proposing a 3 1/2% wage increase for employees.

### **B. Sanitary Sewer State Revolving Loan Fund Discussion**

Bill Etzler stated plans were submitted to EGLE and were approved. Bid processes would end in May and acceptance would be in June. They are waiting for EGLE for approximately 60 days to review and accept all plans. Bill stated it has been a difficult process, but with the work the previous engineer had done, they have made progress. A lot of work was done to lay the groundwork, they are projecting may take a year and end approximately October 2025.

### **C. Lawn Mowing Bids**

City manager Brandon Mersman discussed the lawn mowing bids with the city council stating that the current contract is expiring at the end of June. The new contract will take place beginning July 1, 2024 and would run through June 30 of 2027. Lowest bid came in at \$86,610 next bid came in at \$90,000, bid tabulations were included in the packet. Mayor Matt Watkins likes the experience with the cemetery service, considering the fact that we have had issues in the past.

City manager, Brandon Mersman stated that the second low bidder would do well also.

Motion to approve Triple E made by vice mayor, Bill Earl with support from councilmember Bill Rinehart

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

### **D. MSHDA Grant- (Resolution #24-5-4)**

City manager, Brandon Mersman stated that Patrick has been working with MSHDA To bring life to the underutilized park with a grant in funds up to \$75,000 with no local match required. Patrick stated that this would update and provide new structure and a dedicated play area.

Motion to approve made by councilmember Bill Rinehart with support from Vice Mayor, Bill Earl.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

### **E. Marijuana Regulations Discussion**

City Manager, Brandon Mersman brought to the council as previously discussed, more information regarding marijuana. Information included what type of licenses could be allowed, where they could go, and how many. Brandon stated the best approach could be to limit with zoning.

It was stated that it could be limited with zoning, the joint planning commission, and the council to determine these things. Also discussed, were distances that were required regarding the state minimum from school and churches.

Councilmember Rick Johannes questioned where to even begin?

Mayor Matt Watkins stated that real estate has been saturated in other areas so we should take care as to how many we should allow. Matt also stated that the city of Coldwater had previously had a deficit in their budget but now has a surplus. Matt also feels it needs to come back to the community to determine what their thoughts are.

City Manager Brandon Mersman stated first that we need to determine if we even want to allow marijuana, and then what type of facilities.

Mayor Matt Watkins questioned whether we should decide what we want to see before bringing it to the public.

Councilmember Larry McConn feels that it should start with the public.

Vice Mayor Bill Earl suggested to first determine what is wanted and then present information in a pamphlet as to the potential revenue, and the benefits to the city.

Attorney Charles Lillis stated that the city can have a workshop as long as the agenda says that it is a discussion to be made and information only.

Mayor Matt Watkins stated that the next action should be to set up a workshop.

General consensus in regarding that city manager Brandon Mersman will schedule a workshop meeting.

#### **F. Mural Artist Contract**

City manager Brandon Mersman stated that a grant was received for \$10,000 for a public arts project. Patrick has located a local artist. The mural would take place next to the current mural located at the corner of US 12 and N. Matteson Street.

Local artist, Travis Klinger has checked what would be good to include in the mural. Suggestions have been taken and the artist are considering utilizing advertisements for Douglas Sockets, and Bronson Reels.

The design was taken from a downtown picture that is located in the office and gladiolas from the art teacher, Eleanor Shaw, that is from the area. A presentation was given as to show what the artist would like to see, and they will have information available on Friday to get feedback from the residents at the food truck rally.

It was suggested to seal the wall, paint, and then seal it again to preserve the mural when it is done.

Motion to approve the Mural Artist Contract made by Councilmember Larry McConn with support from Councilmember Bill Rinehart.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

#### **G. Bronson Area Youth Program Request**

City Manager Brandon Mersman presented to the city Council that in the past the city has donated \$3400 to the youth program. It is program that takes place from 3:30 PM to 5 PM at no cost Monday through Friday during the school year and during the summer from 12:00 to 3:00 PM.

Mayor Matt Watkins hates to have them count on this and then have to cancel. They do things such as field trips, bowling and crafts. Matt questioned whether or not the school would work with us to decrease the amount they are charging the group for school rent. Direction to reach out to the school and determine what they are willing to do was given.

**6. City Staff Comments**

Chief of police Steve Johnson said that they made it through the severe weather. The high school murals that have taken place in the police department look great and there will be an open house on June 14 from 3 to 6 PM.

Jerry Rinehart stated that Adam has recently received his D3 license. There are repairs at the plant that have been taking place.

Local artist, Travis stated that he is a former city Council member for Sturgis. There have been financial benefits to having marijuana. There have also been some headaches. The safe is secure transport zoning may be the best way to limit sites that are available.

**7. City Manager Comments**

City Manager, Brandon Mersman stated at the open house, along with the food trucks this Friday, they will be discussing the master plan from 4 to 8 PM. Brandon also stated that Joe Swain was able to find a forklift for \$14,150.

**8. Council Comments**

Councilmember Rick Johannes stated that the American Legion put flags out for the veterans last year. There were some issues with those flags, although they were able to get them out for the veterans they are looking to possibly receive some type of donation for purchase of new flags. Rick also stated that the Ryan School baseball diamonds have ruts, and wondered if there was something that could be done to assist with this?

Chief Steve Johnson stated that the road commission might be able to assist with this.

Councilmember Larry McConn congratulated the seniors graduating this week and stating that the kids will be out of school beginning of June. Larry also thanked the department heads and wished Steve good luck with the open house for the police department. Larry stated that the forklift for Joe was a good choice and stated Jerry and Adam are doing well.

Council member Bill Rinehart echoed the sentiments given.

Vice Mayor, Bill Earl, thanked the entire team for what they do.

Mayor Matt Watkins appreciates all the hard work and thanked Patrick for his assistance with the park and the mural.

**9. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn made by Vice Mayor Bill Earl with support from Councilmember Rick Johannes.

5 ayes/0 nays Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 6:32 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Rzepka  
City of Bronson  
Clerk/Treasurer