

CITY OF BEULAH

July 26, 2023, 6:00 pm

Beulah City Hall Council Chambers

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Beulah City Council was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mayor Jeff Gooss with Council Members Ben Lenzen, Gary Miller, Auston Biles, Dave Czywczynski and Sean Cheatley present. Amanda Mohl, Jason Isaak and Eric Hoffer absent.

Also Present: City Attorney Scott Solem, Public Works Superintendent Kenny Yeager, Water Dept. Superintendent Gary Bovkoon, Economic Development Beaver Brinkman, City Assessor/Planner Heidi Hamelton, City Engineer Charlie Hankins, City Auditor Heather Ferebee, Jessie Mann, John Phillips, Kevin Flaagan, Ted Chick, Kevin Herrmann, Jessica Beck, Gina Campbell, Roger and Mary Kay Gazur, Clyde Schulz, Editor Alyssa Meier.

Lenzen moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last regular meeting on July 12 and approve as furnished to the Council by email. Miller seconded. Roll call vote found Lenzen, Miller, Czywczynski, Biles and Cheatley in favor.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET 2024

The preliminary budget was sent to Council and it will need to be determined what the mill levy increase will be for 2024. Gooss commented on the review of the budget by the committee. The expenses are higher than the revenue and a tax increase is necessary. The increase options sent out would cover a portion of the increased expenses next year. Gooss stated the bike path and equipment expenses will need to be looked at. Czywczynski questioned if there is a budget for street repairs or if there will be an overlay project in the future. Gooss stated he requested CVB to defer this year's loan payment so the city could use that money on roads. The city is not going to receive Prairie Dog funds for next year, but hopefully in 2025. Czywczynski stated the reserves were spent down and now the city must increase the mill levy to keep up with inflation. He recommends the 14.5% increase and Miller agreed. Discussion followed. It was stated that the city will still need to cut spending. Czywczynski commented that the city should increase mills a little each year to stay ahead of inflation. Special projects will need to be discussed and a plan will need to be made. It was commented that the city could raise the Sales Tax to assist with infrastructure.

Gina Campbell addressed Council regarding streets that need to be repaired. She questioned if there will be another officer hired as she sees a drug problem in Beulah. Gooss stated there is a position for another officer currently approved by Council. Campbell commented that there should be a fundraiser for expenses for the swimming pool. Gooss commented on a planned fundraiser for the pool. Campbell commented that she attended a meeting because she was tired of Facebook and wanted to go straight to the source to get some answers.

Czywczynski moved to increase the mill levy by 20%. Cheatley seconded. Discussion followed. The mill levy can be reduced before the final budget, but it cannot be increased. Lenzen commented that the city needs to support employees by covering increased expenses for health insurance and retirement, and the city needs to improve the roads. Roll call vote found Czywczynski, Cheatley, Lenzen, Miller and Biles in favor.

Czywczynski questioned if the final budget will be reviewed at the next meeting. Ferebee stated the final budget will need to be approved at the last council meeting in September. Czywczynski moved to approve the 2024 Preliminary Budget as presented. Lenzen seconded. Roll call vote found Czywczynski, Lenzen, Cheatley, Miller and Biles in favor.

PUBLIC INPUT

The Main Bar would like to have a street dance on August 18 which would partially block off the street on Central Ave. Cheatley moved to approve the Special Event Permit for the Main Bar to sell alcohol outside the bar on August 18, 2023, and approve the street closure for the street dance. Biles seconded. Roll call vote found Cheatley, Biles, Czywczynski, Lenzen and Miller in favor.

Jessie Mann presented the Beulah Public Library annual report and allocation request. There have been 41 more library cards added and 7,284 visits to the library so far this year. Statistics on increased use of the library were presented. The summer reading program continues to grow. Story Hour has an average of 30 children each time. They have been including the Knife River Care Center in events such as story hour. She listed other activities so far this year. Mann requested the city allocation of \$20,000 be transferred to the Library fund for 2023. She also requested the four mills be added to the 2024 budget and the \$20,000 allocation be added. Lenzen moved to disperse \$20,000 to the library for 2023. Cheatley seconded. Roll call vote found Lenzen, Cheatley, Czywczynski, Miller and Biles in favor. The 2024 requests will be reviewed before the final budget is approved.

Kevin Flaagan presented the Beulah Municipal Airport report and allocation request. An engineering survey was completed at the Airport. They have had four seal coats and ten crack seals. They are putting money aside regularly to fund an overlay in the future. Right now, they have approximately \$170,000. The Airport is requesting to continue to receive the four mills and state aid revenue sharing amount they have been receiving. Flaagan shared information on the economic benefits of the airport to Beulah.

Clyde Schulz presented an update on West River Transit over the last year. Buses are still backordered. West River Transit covers seven counties. In Beulah there are seven employees. The building is owned in Beulah and taxes and specials are paid to the city. They are requesting the 2024 match of \$14,000, and they are also requesting \$21,000: \$19,000 for a bus, \$1,000 for a sprinkler system and \$1,000 for a pressure washer. These are all cost share amounts for Beulah.

Auston Biles presented the JDA report to the Council to review. JDA is requesting the continuation of four mills.

COUNCIL PORTFOLIOS

Council Member Lenzen

Jessica Beck requested to be appointed to the Job Development Authority (JDA) Board and commented on what she would like to see happen in Beulah. Lenzen commented that Beck has a marketing background. Gooss appointed Jessica Beck to the JDA Board. Lenzen moved to approve the appointment of Jessica Beck to the JDA Board. Biles seconded. Roll call vote found Czywczynski, Cheatley, Lenzen, Miller and Biles in favor.

Council Member Miller

Miller requested some movement on the two dilapidated properties that have been on the list for years. Solem commented that they looked at the Main Street property and will review if it has been inspected previously. Miller stated the apartment building was supposed to have a hearing on July 12. Solem stated there was an agreement in place that they needed to bring the property into compliance and they had until July 12 to file a written objection or attend the July 12 hearing and they did not do either. A findings of fact and conclusions of law document was prepared which states because of the violations, they are in violation of the ordinance. The Order for Judgement would allow the City Council to state they are hereby ordered to bring the property into compliance within a certain amount of time. Miller stated this has been ongoing for three years and they have had enough time. Hamelton commented that they were already given an extension. If the city abates the property, it will be assessed against the property. Discussion followed on testing the house and apartment building for asbestos and mold. Gazur commented the city should have an answer from the owner as to whether they want to demolish the apartment building or restore the property. Solem stated that a letter could be sent to the owner of the apartment building stating that they must attend the next council meeting, or the city will move forward with demolishment and assess the expense to the owner's various properties. Solem confirmed that it is a lien that will be certified to the county on all the properties.

Mayor Gooss

Gooss recommended that the city funds be used in a way to generate the best interest possible. Gooss commented that the Dakota Walleye Classic Tournament is this weekend and they have had a great response from businesses. The banquet will be in Beulah.

CITY PERSONNEL

City Auditor

Appointment of Election Officials for the August 15 Special Election: Clerks are Laurie Entze and Lori Hruby, Judges are Gordon Hoffner and Kevin Herrmann, and the Inspector is Fred Stern. Czywczynski moved to approve the appointment of Election Officials as presented. Lenzen seconded. Roll call vote found Czywczynski, Lenzen, Biles and Miller in favor. Cheatley and Gooss abstained. Motion passed.

Public Works Superintendent

The new garbage truck went to Fargo to get a kick bar installed.

Water Dept. Superintendent

Bovkoon presented a water pipe from a water break and stated it shattered easily. There was also a water main break on Friday and the contractor couldn't come until Monday. Residents were very understanding. Also, while trying to repair a hydrant, two gate valves broke. Beulah infrastructure is in serious need of repair.

Economic Development Director

Only 30% of surveys have been returned. The surveys are needed to qualify for infrastructure grants so special assessments won't be so high. Brinkman questioned how to motivate residents to respond. There is a spot to mark if their income is above or below an amount, but they do not need to provide their income.

Fred Stern is offering \$3,000 plus legal fees for the purchase of a vacant lot: parcel BB14488670207. Cheatley moved to sell the lot to Fred Stern as presented. Biles seconded. Roll call vote found Cheatley, Biles, Czywczynski, Lenzen and Miller in favor.

City Assessor/Planner

Jason Kilde is offering \$5,000 for the lot on the south side of the New Energy apartments, north of 11th St. NE and East of New Energy Drive: parcel BB14488460101. The plan is to build a 40x60 shop. Czywczynski commented that the council depends on what city employees recommend. Miller commented that the city is short on commercial property in town and may need this land for a business and not a personal shop. Discussion followed. There is a lack of motion for the offer, so the offer is rejected.

City Engineer

Hankins will update the infrastructure improvements presentation he previously presented to Council.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.



Ben Lenzen, Council President



Heather Ferebee, City Auditor