

MINUTES – BENSON CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 23, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Paul Kittelson. Members present: Sue Fitz, Lee Westrum, Bob Claussen, Gary Landmark, and Paul Kittelson. Members absent: None. Also present: City Manager Rob Wolfington, Director of Public Works Elliot Nelson, Director of Finance Glen Pederson, Edward Pederson, Wayne Knutson, Jay Alsaker, Pat Hawley, Ray Millett, Mark Burns, and Jordan Burns.

There was no one present with unscheduled business to come before the Council.

It was moved by Landmark, seconded by Westrum and carried unanimously to approve the following minutes on the consent agenda:

- a. April 9, 2007 City Council Meeting
- b. March 15, 2007 Pioneerland Library System Board Meeting
- c. March 14, 2007 Benson HRA Meeting
- d. February 19, 2007 UMRDC Meeting
- e. April 2, 2007 Benson Planning Commission Meeting

It was moved by Fitz, seconded by Westrum and carried unanimously to appoint Jack Wagner to fill a vacancy on the Benson HRA Board with his term expiring December 31, 2008.

Jay Alsaker, owner of Swift County Abstract at 1120 Atlantic Avenue, informed the Council that he has applied for a commercial small cities grant. Because his wife Valerie is co-owner of the business and is also an employee of the City of Benson he wanted to make the City aware that a possible conflict of interest exists. The commercial portion of the small cities grant is administered by Prairie V in Montevideo and not by City Hall.

The next item on the agenda was the Minnesota Department of Commerce Conservation Program Report. The Finance Director reviewed the Conclusions and Recommendations regarding Benson's 2006 CIP Plan.

It was moved by Westrum, seconded by Landmark and carried unanimously to approve the second reading of An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 36, Emergency Management.

It was moved by Fitz, seconded by Westrum and carried unanimously to approve a pay request from Swenson Motor Co. for a 2007 Chevrolet Silverado Pickup in the amount of \$29,316.38.

It was moved by Landmark, seconded by Claussen and carried unanimously to approve a pay request from DGR for the Electric System Improvements in the amount of \$14,962 for professional services through March 31, 2007.

It was moved by Westrum, seconded by Claussen and carried unanimously to approve a pay request from Bonestroo in the amount of \$3,380.44 (\$2,730.44 for the WWTP Improvements and \$650 for the East Pacific Avenue Reconstruct).

The Fire Department Wages and Exempt Salaries were tabled to the next meeting.

The Finance Director presented bills and warrants for approval. It was moved by Landmark, seconded by Westrum and carried unanimously to approve bills and warrants in the amount of \$352,224.40.

At 6:00 p.m. the Mayor opened the Board of Equalization Hearing. Edward Pederson from the County Assessor's Office came before the Council to review and discuss property sales within Benson over the past year. At this time, the meeting was opened up for public comment.

Pat Hawley has about 15 rental properties in Benson and expressed concern with competing against the County HRA rental units. He was not concerned with valuation but more concerned with fairness of competing with an agency that is not subject to property taxes.

Ray Millett owns a 4-plex at 618 – 12th Street South. His value from 2006 to 2007 went up 12% (\$85,000 to \$95,000). He didn't feel that was a fair value.

The County Assessor's will re-evaluate the Millett property and prepare a recommendation for the next City Council meeting. The County Assessors planned to stay until 7:00 p.m. as advertised.

Reed Anfinson brought up that with Snap Fitness opening this weekend that the Council needs to look at the future of the Benson Racket and Fitness Center. Staff will schedule a meeting later this week to begin discussions regarding this facility.

The Public Works Director informed the Council that the construction season has begun. Staff is working at the hospital parking lot. He informed the Council that an elm tree in Railroad Park will be coming down later this week as it has been identified with Dutch Elm Disease.

Member Fitz has a concern on 11th Street South. There is a cone identifying an area that pavement has been removed and she asked if some gravel could be brought. Staff informed her that gravel can be brought in and paving around town is planned for the week of May 7th.

There was a discussion on the May Council meetings. After discussion, there was a consensus to schedule the May Council meetings on May 7 and 21 at 5:30 p.m. There was a consensus to schedule a spring projects tour and tour of Fibrominn after the May 7 meeting.

It was moved by Fitz, seconded by Claussen and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

Mayor

Attest: _____
City Clerk