

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL
OCTOBER 18, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Collins. Members present: Terri Collins, Mark Schreck, Jack Evenson and Lucas Olson. Members Absent: Jon Buyck. Also Present: Director of Finance Glen Pederson, Public Works Director Dan Gens, CEDA Representative Hillary Tweed and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) Vice President of Member Services & Communications Joni Livingston.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked for any changes to the agenda. A retail license to sell tobacco products and a gambling permit for the Chippewa Valley Deer Hunters was added. It was moved by Evenson seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

- September 28, 2021 City Council Minutes
- October 4, 2021 City Council Minutes
- Our Redeemers Block the Street Request – Smorgasbord October 27, 2021

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

First was a request from the Benson Police Department to execute an agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for increased traffic enforcement through September 30, 2022.

Councilmember Olson offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT
(RESOLUTION 2021-31)**

Be it resolved that the Benson Police Department enter into a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, for traffic safety enforcement projects during the period from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

The Benson Police Chief is hereby authorized to execute such agreements and amendments as are necessary to implement the project on behalf of the Benson Police Department and to be the fiscal agent and administer the grant.

Councilmember Evenson seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Schreck, Collins, Olson, Evenson. NAYS: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2021-31 duly passed and adopted.

Joni Livingston with MRES approached the Council. She said MRES is a Joint Action Power Supply Agency with 61-member communities. Twenty-five of them are in Minnesota with other members in Iowa, North & South Dakota. Our Maintenance and Operation relationship began in 1997, which was the very first of such programs. MRES serves communities with full service linemen as well as communities with supplemental services. She reviewed their employee job duties, benefits of MRES affiliation and the resources they can provide to include mutual aid with other MRES member cities. She

said our current 5-year agreement with MRES expires on December 31, 2022. The contract states we have a one-year termination clause so that is why there is a request for renewal a year out. It was then moved by Olson and seconded by Evenson to approve the MRES Distribution Maintenance Services Agreement dated January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2028. Schreck asked Gens for any comments on the agreement. Gens stated he feels we could explore other options to the MRES agreement, and that we should explore costs of other options. After discussion the motion passed unanimously.

Next Livingston discussed the Reserved Capacity Agreement (RCA) between the City of Benson and MRES for our generators. We have had an RCA with MRES since 2013. She said 38 of all MRES member cities have generators. MRES contracts with the City for generation capacity and in turn Benson provides dispatchable generation. She reviewed our annual payment for generation capacity, and shared how generation fits into the overall call for power in the grid. Our current agreement expires in 2029, while our power supply agreement runs through 2057. Renewing the agreement now allows for planning for the future. After discussion, it was moved by Olson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve extending the Reserved Capacity Agreement with MRES through May 31, 2052.

Next Livingston discussed Benson’s desire to look to the future for advanced meter infrastructure (AMI) or a more sophisticated metering system which would allow more user feedback which helps with electrical load analysis, the ability to disconnect a delinquent account from the office which is a safer procedure than sending a lineman over to the house. The City of Benson’s current system cannot accommodate modern grid technologies. MRES has a current electric and water metering system the City has looked at. She also discussed more electric vehicles are entering the market and charging these vehicles can put a demand on the electrical load which will need to be accounted for. She went on to say the MRES system is a turn key installation which means they have contractors come and install all the meters. She asked the Council to consider MRES when the decision is made to upgrade the City’s system. Schreck asked about cost. Pederson said the estimate is around \$240 for electric and water meters and an estimated \$120 for the control box. The Mayor thanked Livingston for coming.

Gens presented a preliminary engineering cost from Rodeberg & Berryman, Inc. for street work on two streets for 2022 in the amount of \$3,500. He said the Utility Board discussed using this firm for the aforementioned projects. This amount is within the City Manager’s purchasing authority.

Councilmember Schreck offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION SETTING ASSESSMENTS FOR FIRE SERVICE CHARGES
BY THE CITY OF BENSON, MINNESOTA FOR 2021 PAYABLE 2022
(RESOLUTION NO. 2021-32)**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Benson City Council that the following assessments for 2021 Fire Service Charges as prepared by the City Manager are hereby approved and made a part thereof; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the assessments hereinafter noted shall be submitted to the County Auditor on or before October 15, 2021 and placed on the tax roll for collection with the taxes Collectable in 2022.

	Name & Mailing Address	Legal Description & Parcel No.	Amount Due
Fire Call	Riley Brothers Property Inc P.O, Box 535 Morris, MN 56267	Lots 1-4, Block 31 City of Benson 23-0527-000	\$750.00
TOTAL			\$750.00

Councilmember Evenson seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Schreck, Collins, Olson, Evenson. NAYS: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2021-32 duly passed and adopted.

Tweed updated the Council on the Armory Grant. She said the environmental review is moving forward. The application is at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHIPO) for review. They are experiencing delays in review and expect to approve or deny the application in 60 days.

Next was a request to pay the Benson Music Boosters for watering all the City flowers in 2021. Pederson said this will be the third of three payments. It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to approve a payment to the Benson Music Boosters in the amount of \$10,000.

Pederson presented a Capital Authorization Request to the Council for the purchase of a new computer server. Pederson said he would like to place an order now for the server to allow lead time for 2022 delivery. The quote included hardware, software and installation of new storage. The new server will have more memory, storage and speed than the current server. The server provides file storage & sharing, email & calendar, computer backup and document imaging. After discussion, it was moved by Schreck, seconded by Evenson and carried unanimously approve the capital outlay request for a server from Morris Electronics in the amount of \$17,965.94.

Councilmember Schreck offered the following resolution:

**CITY OF BENSON
RESOLUTION ACCEPTING DONATIONS
(RESOLUTION NO. 2021-33)**

WHEREAS, The City of Benson is generally authorized to accept gifts and bequests pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 465.03 and Minnesota Statutes Section 471.17 for the benefit of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the following persons and entities have offered to contribute the cash amounts set forth below to the city:

Benson Residents \$2,435.00 – Mayor’s Mingle
Benson Residents - \$761.00 - Beautify Benson Shirts
Sonsteng Foundation - \$5,000.00 – Kid Day
Glacial Plains - \$500.00 – Mayor’s Mingle
Benson Hockey Assn. – \$4,000 – Mayor’s Mingle – McKinney’s
Silent Auction - \$3,450 – Mayor’s Mingle
VFW - \$200.00 – Kid Day
Blue Stem Dental - \$50.00 – Mayor’s Mingle
Melissa Hampton - \$100.00 – Mayor’s Mingle
Richard Horecka - \$700.00 – Mayor’s Mingle
Bob Mikkelson - \$100.00 – Mayor’s Mingle
Benson Patrons - \$75.00 – Kid Day
Benson Hockey Association - \$2,000.00 Fire Department – McKinney’s

WHEREAS, all such donations have been contributed to assist the various city departments and programs as allowed by law; and

WHEREAS, The City Council finds that it is appropriate to accept the donations offered.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BENSON, MINNESOTA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. The donations described above are accepted and shall be used to benefit the departments listed above, as allowed by law.

Councilmember Olson seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Schreck, Collins, Olson, Evenson. NAYS: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2021-32 duly passed and adopted.

Councilmember Evenson offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF XCEL ENERGY GRANT DOLLARS FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES
(RESOLUTION 2021-34)**

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Benson, County of Swift, State of Minnesota, received grant dollars from Northern State Power (Xcel Energy) as part of the Benson Power LLC biomass plant closing, and;

WHEREAS, these grant dollars are limited in use for the purposes of economic development, and;

WHEREAS, the Council has determined that Sanitary Sewer Collection and treatment improvements qualify as an economic development purpose, and;

WHEREAS, the following project is authorized use of grant dollars:

Name	Budget	Transfer Out
2020 Deferred Maintenance	\$985,210.00	\$188,918.63

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that \$188,918.63 as itemized on the attached invoices to be transferred from the NSP Grant Fund to the Sewer Fund.

Councilmember Olson seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Schreck, Collins, Olson, Evenson. NAYS: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2021-33 duly passed and adopted.

The September 2021 budget report was reviewed.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the bills and warrants in the amount of \$949,378.06.

Next was a gambling permit for the Chippewa Valley Deer Hunters Association. It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the gambling permit for February 4, 2022.

Next was a tobacco license application for a vape shop at 1313 Utah Ave. The Mayor asked to make a recommendation we table the request until the City Attorney reviews the application. It was moved by Schreck, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to table the retail of tobacco license for Up-N-Smoke until the November 1, 2021 City Council Meeting, and we have a legal opinion.

There being no further business to come before the Council a motion was made by Evenson seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to adjourn the Council meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk