

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL - REGULAR MEETING  
OCTOBER 19, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Kittelson. Members present: Paul Kittelson, Jack Evenson, Sue Fitz, Mike Fugleberg & Stephanie Heinzig. Members Absent: None. Also present: City Manager Rob Wolfington, Director of Finance Glen Pederson, Director of Public Works Dan Gens, Police Chief Ian Hodge, Fire Chief Mark Schreck, City Attorney Don Wilcox, Swift County-Benson Hospital Manager Kurt Waldbillig, Swift County-Benson Hospital Board Chairman Kory Johnson, Golf Club Board Members Jerry Peterson and Ron Vadnais, Golf Course Groundskeeper Sally Jones, Gary Landmark, Larry Smith, Jonathon Pogge-Weaver, Tara Ulmaniec, Terri Collins, Dennis Minor, Todd and Mark Pillatzki.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Kittelson asked for any additions or changes to the agenda

Councilmember Fitz moved to rescind her motion from the October 14, 2015 meeting to proceed with creating a TIF district in Hawleywood 4<sup>th</sup> Addition, on the north side of town, and asked to readdress the TIF district at the November 2, 2015 City Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Fugleberg and carried unanimously.

Wolfington asked to add Electric Utility to the agenda, which was recognized by Mayor Kittelson. It was moved by Fitz, seconded by Fugleberg and carried unanimously to approve the changes to the agenda.

The Mayor called for anyone with unscheduled business. Todd and Mark Pillatzki approached the Council to appeal the Council's decision to honor the fire call charge billed to their brother on August 29, 2015. Mark asked the Council for a partial or total cost deferral on the charges. After discussion, it was the consensus of the Council the fire call charge of \$750 will stand.

It was moved by Fitz, seconded by Heinzig and carried unanimously to approve the following minutes with this correction:

- October 5, 2015 City Council Minutes
- September 8, 2015 Planning Commission Minutes

Wolfington shared a letter from CenterPoint Energy stating the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) approved a 5.65% interim rate increase as of October 2, 2015 until they can issue a final order and new rates implementation in the summer of 2016.

Fire Chief Schreck approached the Council. He discussed a grant Benson, Clontarf, DeGraff and Danvers Fire Departments would like to apply for. It is through the State Fire Marshal, for the MN Fire Department Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor Award program. Firefighters experience a higher rate of cancer than those in the communities they serve, due in part to the carcinogens they are exposed to while on the job. Cleaning their turn-out gear is impossible in the household washer they currently have as it is unable to spin the gear out due to the weight of the gear when wet. This grant would allow four fire departments to clean their gear properly. After discussion, Fugleberg made a motion to support the application to the MN Fire Department Turnout Gear Washer/Extractor Award Program as a concern for our Firemen's health and safety. The motion was seconded by Fitz and carried unanimously.

Mayor Kittelson opened the Public Hearing for the Helipad Safety Ordinance at 5:45 p.m. Wolfington updated the Council on the progress of the helipad construction. He said the City has met with the State, FAA and engineers to make sure the specs are correct. Wolfington stated the ordinance is meant to protect the airspace from future expansion. He presented a map of the airspace affected. Wolfington stated he has received no public comment. All of the airspace affected is within the City limits except for a 50 X 150' piece of land outside the City limits in Torning Township. Wolfington is meeting with Torning Township to discuss the possibility of a joint ordinance. It was the consensus of the Council to leave the Public Hearing open until the November 2, 2015 meeting.

Next the Council discussed the Golf Club financial situation. There was discussion on possible relief for the Golf Club. It was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to devise 2-3 options taking into consideration the 2016 budget and have a proposal, with a decision to be made by the first week in December.

Wolfington presented a request of support from Swift County Administrator Mike Pogge-Weaver to the State of Minnesota showing support for considering the Appleton Prison as an alternative to building a new prison in Minnesota. Councilmember Evenson offered the following resolution:

**CITY OF BENSON RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT  
(RESOLUTION 2015-19)**

**WHEREAS**, according to the Minnesota Department of Corrections, the State of Minnesota's prison population exceeds capacity; and

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Department of Corrections is housing 560 inmates in county jails where they cannot receive critical rehabilitation services available in State correctional facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Department of Corrections projects the State of Minnesota's prison population will grow by at least 500 inmates by the year 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Department of Corrections is seeking \$141.5 million in general obligation bonds to finance the construction of a 500-bed expansion at Minnesota Correctional Facility – Rush City to accommodate projected prison population growth; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Minnesota would incur additional costs such as interest, debt service, maintenance, and annual operating costs associated with expanding Minnesota Correctional Facility – Rush City; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Appleton is home to a vacant and well-maintained 1,600-bed prison; and

**WHEREAS**, 350 people from 24 surrounding counties worked at the Appleton prison when it was in use, generating an estimated \$15.2 million for the regional economy; and

**WHEREAS**, many ancillary businesses in the region and their workers benefitted when the Appleton prison was in use; and

**WHEREAS**, the region offers robust infrastructure to provide rehabilitation services for State of Minnesota inmates and a great quality of life for working families; and

**WHEREAS**, the cost to the State of Minnesota to lease the Appleton prison is estimated to be \$6-8 million per year, plus annual operating costs – substantially lower than constructing and maintaining new, permanent correctional facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, it is practical that the State of Minnesota do its due diligence to fairly consider the costs associated with leasing and operating the Appleton prison before constructing new, permanent correctional facilities;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that on October 19, 2015 the City of Benson City Council declared its support for a proposal for the State of Minnesota to lease and operate the Appleton prison with State of Minnesota public employees to provide much-needed jobs and economic development for the people of West Central Minnesota and to provide effective rehabilitation services for inmates needed to reduce recidivism.

Council Member Heinzig seconded the foregoing Resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Kittelson, Heinzig, Fugleberg, Fitz, Evenson. NAYS: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2015-19 duly passed and adopted.

Police Chief Hodge presented the September 2015 Police Report. He also acknowledged Officer Burton's letter of resignation and transfer of ownership of K9 Officer Riddle over to Officer Burton.

The Council reviewed the September 2015 Budget report.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Fitz and carried unanimously to approve the bills and warrants in the amount of \$791,727.49.

Wolfington informed the Council the City received a switching order from Great River Energy (GRE) located by the Fibrominn plant. The City will be generating at 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 22, 2015, and continue to generate anywhere from four to twelve hours. GRE will also be looking at our switching receivers while they are already working on the system.

There being no other business, a motion was made by Heinzig, seconded by Fugleberg and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

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Mayor

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City Manager