

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL
SEPTEMBER 28, 2021**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Collins. Members present: Terri Collins, Mark Schreck, Jack Evenson, Lucas Olson and Jon Buyck. Members Absent: None. Also Present: City Manager Rob Wolfington, Director of Finance Glen Pederson, Police Chief Ian Hodge, CEDA Representative Hillary Tweed and City Attorney Ben Wilcox.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked for any changes to the agenda. Federal EDA Grant was added to the agenda. It was moved by Evenson seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

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

- September 7, 2021 City Council Minutes
- August 16, 2021 EDA Minutes
- September 2, 2021 Safety Committee Meeting
- Gambling Permit-Raffle on Nov. 15, 2021 for the Benson Golf Club
- Gambling Permit-Raffle on March 28, 2022 Benson Baseball Assn.
- Letter From MRES Lowering Power Supply Rate for it Communities
- Electronic Transfers:
 - Payroll September 9, 2021 - \$97,771.73
 - Payroll September 23, 2021 - \$89,653.26
 - Journal Entry for July 2021 - \$2,262.256.99

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

First was the Conditional Use Permit for a shed in a B-2 District at 1529 Oregon Avenue for a shed. Councilmember Evenson who serves on the Planning Commission said the Planning Commission reviewed the application at their meeting today which he shared with the Council. He said the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit. It was moved by Evenson to approve Conditional Use Permit #2021-01 for a storage shed for Steve Ricard with the following list of conditions:

- 1) Coordinate with the Public Works Director for all utility connections.
- 2) The north and south setbacks need to be even with the car wash to the west.
- 3) The building needs to be centered east to west between setbacks, with no less than 10' between the new building and the car wash building to allow for fire truck access.
- 4) Locate the MnDOT setbacks to the south
- 5) Meet all easement setbacks

The motion was seconded by Olson and the motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Buyck, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the pay request from B.G. Amundson for cement work for 2021 in the amount of \$56,664.08.

It was moved by Schreck, seconded by Evenson and carried unanimously to approve a membership to the League of Minnesota Cities for 2021-2022 in the amount of \$4,006.00.

Councilmember Evenson offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF XCEL ENERGY GRANT DOLLARS FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES
(RESOLUTION 2021-28)**

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 water treatment improvements qualify as an economic development purpose, and;

WHEREAS, the following projects are authorized use of grant dollars:

Name	Budget	Transfer Out
2020 Clear Well Project	\$1,119,500.00	\$96,416.02

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that \$96,416.02 as itemized on the attached invoices to be transferred from the NSP Grant Fund to the Water Fund.

Councilmember Olson seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Schreck, Buyck, Collins, Olson, Evenson. NAYS: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2021-28 duly passed and adopted.

Councilmember Olson offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF XCEL ENERGY GRANT DOLLARS FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES
(RESOLUTION 2021-29)**

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	\$150,283.80

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that \$150,283.80 as itemized on the attached invoices to be transferred from the NSP Grant Fund to the Sewer Fund.

Councilmember Buyck seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Schreck, Buyck, Collins, Olson, Evenson. NAYS: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2021-29 duly passed and adopted.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Olson and carried unanimously to approve a pay request to Stantec Engineering for work on the wastewater treatment flood grant in the amount of \$14,598.63.

Pederson presented the August 2021 budget report.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Schreck and carried unanimously to approve the bills and warrants in the amount of \$800,768.46.

Tweed discussed a new Federal EDA Economic Adjustment Grant Opportunity. About 1 month ago the UMRDC compiled a list of potential projects the grant could be used for. The City has identified a project the City needs to do, which is 16-20 blocks of sewer, water and street reconstruction. The wastewater treatment plant has been reaching peak inflow because of infiltration of a deteriorating sewer system. According the Federal EDA office, this type of grant application qualifies, but they would not comment on our chances of getting it. One of the qualifiers is foreign green energy investment which applies to Nature Energy. Former employee to the UMRDC Jackie Anderson is teaming up with the UMRDC along with CEDA, for a good grant writing team. These types of grants are tedious and costly. This new grant differs from the WWTF berm grant we are still working on. Tweed said CEDA can do the federal procurement in finding the proper engineering firm to steer us in the right direction. We will bring more information back in October. Wolfington said other qualifiers to the grant are preserving the capacity at the wastewater plant, direct foreign investment, green energy and infrastructure in the streets.

Wilcox approached the Council to discuss the real estate option agreement with Nature Energy. This agreement is for one year. They will purchase the land for \$1. If they execute the terms, the closing will be in 60-90 days. Nature Energy does the title work and the City of Benson will convey the property after execution of the agreement. Nature Energy will pay all property taxes and utilities. This is for your review and there will be a formal version presented at the next City Council meeting for action.

Tweed gave a presentation of the trip to Denmark. Councilmembers Collins and Evenson along with herself and Laura Ostlie from Swift County Rural Development Authority traveled to Denmark where they visited dairy farms, plants that covert manure and bedding into natural gas as well as the corporate offices. They feel this company is a good fit for Benson and the surrounding area. Schreck asked if Nature Energy could utilize the buildings left at the old Fibrominn site. The Council didn't know if much would be re-used. It was noted there is a possibility the United States Corporate offices could be located here. The other locations for plants being looked at are located in Roberts, Wisconsin and Winnona, Minnesota. They are looking to invest \$70 million in the Benson plant construction. Nature Energy feels very confident in the feedstock agreements and they may be in the States next week.

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 6:50 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk