

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL HELD JOINTLY WITH THE DDA AND PLANNING COMMISSION VIRTUALLY AT THE WEST BRANCH CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT, 130 PAGE STREET ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2021.

Mayor Frechette called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Paul Frechette, Council Members Joanne Bennett and Cathy Zimmerman. Via Zoom, located in West Branch due to Covid 19: Council Members Mike Jackson, Chris Powley, Ellen Pugh and Tiffany Schmieder-Kups.

Absent: None

Other officers present: City Manager John Dantzer, Clerk Amanda Stang, Public Works Superintendent Mike Killackey, Police Chief Ken Walters, Planning Chair Corrine Lucynski, and DDA Chair Samantha Fabbri.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Phil Shaw presented a petition to reaffirm the City’s commitment as the Bigfoot Capital of Michigan. It was the consensus of Council to reaffirm the City’s commitment as the Bigfoot Capital of Michigan.

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Planning Chair, Corrine Lucynski presented the Planning Commission annual report which included the completion of the Zoning Maps and Master Plan. It was noted that for 2021 they will focus much of their time on the new Housing Development.

DDA Chair, Samantha Fabbri presented the DDA annual report which included updates regarding the plan to move forward with the Gathering Place and noted that there will likely be some adjustments from the original plan and timeline but they are positive in it going through. She also reported the DDA is looking forward to working with all the sub-committees regarding the new approved goals. In addition, Chair Fabbri noted that she will be working with the City on the new MDOT road diet and is looking forward to that as well. She reported that new Garland and a 20-foot Christmas Tree had been purchased for downtown this year and hopes it will lighten the residents spirits when they see it.

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County Commissioner Mark Surbrook updated everyone about the EMS audit report and the future purchase of some new EMS rigs. Commissioner Surbrook also updated Council on the Covid vaccines through the Health Department.

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MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY ZIMMERMAN, TO PAY BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$57,659.73.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Powley, Pugh, Schmieder-Kups, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 21-06 POVERTY EXEMPTION INCOME GUIDELINES AND ASSET TEST.

Resolution # 21-06
City of West Branch, Ogemaw County, Michigan
Resolution to Adopt Poverty Exemption Income Guidelines and Asset Test

WHEREAS, the homestead of persons who, in the judgment of the board of review, by reason of poverty, are unable to contribute to the public charges is eligible for exemption in whole or part from taxation under the General Property Tax Act; and

WHEREAS, the City of West Branch is required by Section 7u of the General Property Tax Act, Public Act 206 of 1893 (MCL 211 7u), to adopt guidelines for poverty exemptions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, pursuant to MCL 211.7u, that City of West Branch, Ogemaw County, adopts the following guidelines for the manager and board of review to implement

The guidelines shall include but not be limited to the specific income and asset levels of the claimant and all persons residing in the household, including any property tax credit returns, filed in the current or immediately preceding year.

To be eligible, a person shall do all the following on an annual basis:

- 1) Be an owner of and occupy as a homestead the property for which an exemption is requested.
- 2) File a claim with the board of review. Accompanied by federal and state income tax returns (if filed) for all persons residing in the homestead, including any property tax credit returns filed in the immediately preceding year or in the current year.
- 3) Produce a valid drivers' license or other form of identification if requested.
- 4) Produce a deed, land contract, or other evidence of ownership of the property for which an exemption is requested if requested.
- 5) Meet federal poverty income guidelines as defined and determined annually by the United States Office of Management and Budget as adopted annually by the Board.
- 6) Meet additional eligibility requirements as determined by the City Council.
- 7) Have assets not including the primary residence less than \$25,000.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the board of review shall follow the above stated policy and federal guidelines in granting or denying an exemption.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Powley, Pugh, Schmieder-Kups, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY PUGH, SECOND BY ZIMMERMAN, TO APPROVE THE VICTORIAN ART FAIR BANNER PERMIT AND USE OF IRONS PARK, CONTINGENT ON STATE COVID REQUIREMENTS.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Powley, Pugh, Schmieder-Kups, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY ZIMMERMAN, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO APPROVE THE BANNER PERMIT FOR THE COALITION OF HOPE.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Powley, Pugh, Schmieder-Kups, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY FRECHETTE, SECOND BY BENNETT, TO POSTPONE THE COVID DECLINATION FORM UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Powley, Pugh, Schmieder-Kups, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY ZIMMERMAN, SECOND BY PUGH, TO APPROVE THE LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT, WATER SYSTEMS AND C2R2 GRANTS.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Powley, Pugh, Schmieder-Kups, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY POWLEY, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND SUMMARY OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD JANUARY 18, 2021.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Powley, Pugh, Schmieder-Kups, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY PUGH, SECOND BY BENNETT, TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE TREASURER’S REPORT AND INVESTMENT SUMMARY; THE MINUTES FROM THE DDA BOARD MEETING AND INFORMATION MEETING HELD DECEMBER 22, 2020; THE MINUTES FROM THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 15, 2020; AND THE MINUTES FROM THE AIRPORT BOARD MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 16, 2020.

Yes — Bennett, Frechette, Jackson, Powley, Pugh, Schmieder-Kups, Zimmerman

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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Mayor Frechette gave updates on the Fire Board announcing that Brent Banning was appointed fire chief for another year. He also reported the airport board meetings have been running smoothly.

Council Member Bennett noted that the Irons Park hill and hockey rink are being used frequently and the kids seem to be enjoying them.

Council Member Pugh noted a location change with the Salvation Army offices and that they have re-opened and are ready to help residents with utility bills.

Council Member Schmieder-Kups noted her concern with the MDOT road diet and requested another traffic study be done after the new Meijer is open for business.

City Manager Dantzer reported that he plans to re-open City Hall Wednesday to the public. He also noted the MDOT resolution will be on the agenda for next meeting. Manager Dantzer also noted the importance of getting together to discuss council goals as soon as Covid restrictions lighten up.

Police Chief Walters informed Council that next budget year there is a need for a new police vehicle so he will be coming for approval within the next month.

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Mayor Frechette adjourned the meeting at 7:20 pm.

Paul Frechette, Mayor

Amanda Stang, Clerk