

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2019

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

Present: Mayor Paul Frechette and Council Members Joanne Bennett, William Ehinger, Mike Jackson, Ellen Pugh, Dan Weiler, and Cathy Zimmerman.

Absent: None

Other officers present: Interim Manager/Clerk/Treasurer John Dantzer, DPW Superintendent Mike Killackey, Police Chief Ken Walters, DDA Vice Chairperson Joe Clark, and Planning Vice Chairperson Bob David.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Autum Hunter addressed Council to ask about having some handicap parking spots added in the parking lot off of North Fourth St. Questions were raised on who owns the area in question. It was the consensus of Council to have Mayor Frechette and City staff look at the location in question and work with Ms. Hunter on coming up with a plan that would be suitable and then Council would reconsider the issue at that time.

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Ron Selley from Selley Cleaners addressed Council on the new utility rates and noted that the new rates would cause his business an extreme hardship and the possibility of forcing him to close. He noted that he invested over \$100,000 in machines that were as water efficient as possible. He also noted that under the previous rate structure laundromats received a discount on the sewer rates due to the large amounts of water that evaporates in the dryers and do not reach the sewer system. He asked if Council would consider adjusting his laundromat rates back to the rates they were in 2018 because he does offer a service to the area that would not be available if he were to close. Mr. Selley also noted that he was not asking for a permanent decrease in rates

Member Ehinger asked if the rates were able to be adjusted without changing the entire ordinance. Interim Manager Dantzer noted that the current ordinance did allow for Council to make special rates for services by the way of resolution.

Mayor Frechette noted that Council is planning a special meeting to discuss the City Manager opening and could look into this issue and present a resolution at that special meeting for Council to consider. Mayor Frechette noted that he would work with City staff to look further into options and be more informed on the decision.

Mr. Selley also asked about the current bill and if he needed to pay it or wait till Council decides on something. Mayor Frechette noted that Council has already approved the waiving of all late fees for this bill cycle.

Member Zimmerman recommended not having him pay until a decision is made because if he was awarded a refund then it would most likely be retroactive to the current bill. It was the consensus of Council to have him hold off on payments until a decision was made.

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Grange Bell, on behalf of the Downtown Retail Merchants, presented the schedule for the downtown rodeo that they are planning for this summer. He noted that he did meet with Chief Walters and he did not have any issues with the plans. He also noted that similar to the past rodeo, they would need a road closure approval. Chief Walters and Interim Dantzer went over the MDOT road closure process.

**MOTION BY ZIMMERMAN, SECOND BY PUGH, TO APPROVE THE ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE DOWNTOWN RODEO AS PRESENTED.**

**Yes — Bennett, Ehinger, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Weiler, Zimmerman**

**No – None    Absent – None    Motion carried**

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**MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO PAY BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$87,821.74.**

**Yes — Bennett, Ehinger, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Weiler, Zimmerman**

**No – None    Absent – None    Motion carried**

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Chief Walters updated Council on a USDA grant and noted that typically he would apply for the grant in the fall but due to vehicle issues, he was asking Council to accelerate the timetable and apply for the grant now. He noted that the next vehicle in line for replacement is in need of some costly repairs and they would not get their money back when they sell that vehicle. Chief Walters noted he has done some initial estimates and that the cost is hopefully going to come in a little under the cost of the last vehicle purchased. He further noted that the first step of the process is to get Council approval to apply for the grant.

Member Ehinger asked if that price and grant would cover the equipment for the vehicle as well as the vehicle itself. Chief Walters noted that the total cost did include equipment and that everything in the car can be included in the grant.

Member Weiler asked on the make of the vehicle and Chief Walters noted that he was looking at both Chevy and Ford vehicles and that in the past the Fords have been the less expensive of the two but currently the Chevy Tahoe looks to be a little less so he would be looking at that model.

Member Zimmerman asked about the bid process and Chief Walters noted that they do not put the bids out locally because they use the State of Michigan bid program due to the police vehicle required specifications.

**MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY JACKSON, TO APPROVE CHIEF KEN WALTERS TO APPLY FOR A USDA GRANT FOR A NEW POLICE VEHICLE.**

**Yes — Bennett, Ehinger, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Weiler, Zimmerman**

**No – None**

**Absent – None**

**Motion carried**

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Superintendent Killackey updated Council on a grant available for non-federally aided roads. He noted that the grant would cover 50% of the cost up to \$250,000. He noted that after reviewing the requirements of the grant, he was recommending applying for the resurfacing of Columbus and Progress St. He noted that the total estimated costs was \$215,000 and it would cost the City \$107,500 plus engineering costs. He further noted that he chose these two roads because they did not need infrastructure replacements underneath them and they did not have sidewalks that may need handicap ramp work done to them which was another requirement on the grant and would not be covered by grant funds. He further noted that he would be looking at more roads for future grant cycles.

Interim Manager Dantzer noted that these roads were part of the Industrial Park West development and that the IDC Board has contributed money in the past for this type of improvement.

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**MOTION BY JACKSON, SECOND BY EHINGER, TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 19-05 AND 19-06.**

**RESOLUTION 19-05**

A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A REQUEST FOR FUNDING, DESIGNATE AN AGENT, ATTEST TO THE EXISTENCE OF FUNDS AND COMMIT TO IMPLEMENTING A MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR MILLING AND RESURFACING OF PROGRESS DRIVE FUNDED BY THE TRANSPORTATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND CATEGORY B PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the City of West Branch is applying for \$140,000.00 in funding through MDOT from the Transportation Economic Development Category B Program to construct milling and resurfacing on Progress Drive.

WHEREAS, MDOT requires a formal commitment from the public agency that will be receiving these funds and will be implementing and maintaining these infrastructure projects.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the City has authorized Mike Killackey, Superintendent, to act as agent on behalf of the City to request Transportation Economic Development Fund Category B Program funding, to act as the applicant’s agent during the project development, and to sign a project agreement upon receipt of a funding award.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the City attests to the existence of, and commits to, providing at least \$70,000.00 toward the construction costs of the project(s), and all costs for design, permit fees, administration costs, and cost overruns.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the City commits to owning operating, funding and implementing a maintenance program over the design life of the facilities constructed with

Transportation Economic Development Fund Category B Program funding.

**RESOLUTION 19-06**

A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A REQUEST FOR FUNDING, DESIGNATE AN AGENT, ATTEST TO THE EXISTENCE OF FUNDS AND COMMIT TO IMPLEMENTING A MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR MILLING AND RESURFACING OF COLUMBUS DRIVE FUNDED BY THE TRANSPORTATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND CATEGORY B PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the City of West Branch is applying for \$75,000.00 in funding through MDOT from the Transportation Economic Development Category B Program to construct milling and resurfacing on Columbus Drive.

WHEREAS, MDOT requires a formal commitment from the public agency that will be receiving these funds and will be implementing and maintaining these infrastructure projects.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the City has authorized Mike Killackey, Superintendent, to act as agent on behalf of the City to request Transportation Economic Development Fund Category B Program funding, to act as the applicant's agent during the project development, and to sign a project agreement upon receipt of a funding award.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the City attests to the existence of, and commits to, providing at least \$37,500.00 toward the construction costs of the project(s), and all costs for design, permit fees, administration costs, and cost overruns.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the City commits to owning operating, funding and implementing a maintenance program over the design life of the facilities constructed with Transportation Economic Development Fund Category B Program funding.

**Yes — Bennett, Ehinger, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Weiler, Zimmerman**

**No – None                                  Absent – None                                  Motion carried**

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**MOTION BY BENNETT, SECOND BY PUGH, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND SUMMARY FROM THE MEETING HELD MARCH 18, 2019, AS WELL AS THE CLOSED SESSION MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 18 MEETING, AND THE MINUTES FROM THE WORKS SESSION HELD MARCH 20, 2019.**

**Yes — Bennett, Ehinger, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Weiler, Zimmerman**

**No – None                                  Absent – None                                  Motion carried**

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**MOTION BY EHINGER, SECOND BY PUGH, TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE TREASURER'S REPORT AND INVESTMENT SUMMARY, THE MINUTES FROM THE AIRPORT BOARD MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 20, 2019, AND THE MINUTES FROM THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT AUTHORITY MEETING HELD JANUARY 16, 2019.**

**Yes — Bennett, Ehinger, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Weiler, Zimmerman**

**No – None**

**Absent – None**

**Motion carried**

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Mayor Frechette provided an update on the City Manager hiring process and noted that they have narrowed the applications down to seven applicants and that since then two have withdrawn their applications. He noted that they were checking on references and back grounds checks for the remaining five. He further noted the next step was to schedule a special meeting to go over those findings.

Member Zimmerman asked about the confidentiality requirements due to the fact that references have already been contacted. Mayor Frechette noted that he would like to error on the side of caution and it was his understanding that it would become public information once the interviews are scheduled.

**MOTION BY PUGH, SECOND BY EHINGER, TO SCHEDULE A SPECIAL MEETING ON MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2019 AT 6:00PM.**

**Yes — Bennett, Ehinger, Frechette, Jackson, Pugh, Weiler, Zimmerman**

**No – None**

**Absent – None**

**Motion carried**

Chief Walters noted that he had not done all of his background checks as he was waiting for Council approval. It was the consensus of Council to have Chief Walters finish background checks on the five applicants.

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Interim Manager Dantzer notified Council that a purchase agreement for the old laundromat on Houghton Ave was finalized and was purchased by the City. In addition, he notified Council that the City was awarded the demolition grant it applied for from the Michigan Land Bank which will pay up to \$50,000 for the tear down of that building.

Chief Walters noted that PRT Fellow Mary Bickell is now working on grants for the redevelopment of the laundromat property.

Member Ehinger asked if the City had heard from anyone on the reopening of Greenland St. Interim Manager Dantzer noted that they did hear from a neighboring land owner.

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Mayor Frechette adjourned the meeting at 6:52 pm.

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Paul Frechette, Mayor

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John Dantzer, Clerk