

REGULAR MEETING OF THE WEST BRANCH CITY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL, 121 NORTH FOURTH STREET, MONDAY OCTOBER 17, 2016.

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

Present: Mayor William Ehinger and Council Members Kim Ervans, Jim Hasty, Denise Lawrence, Dave Lucas, Tim Schaiberger, and Rusty Showalter.

Absent: None

Other officers present: City Manager Heather Grace, Treasurer/Clerk John Dantzer, Police Chief Ken Walters, and DPW Superintendent Dennis Jameson.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Mayor William Ehinger presented former Mayor Todd Thompson with the following proclamation and thanked him for his many years of service. Mayor Ehinger also retired the gavel used by former Mayor Thompson and presented it to him as well.

PROCLAMATION #16-02

WHEREAS, Todd Thompson was very dedicated to the citizens of the City of West Branch, and

WHEREAS, Todd served diligently on the West Branch City Council as Council Member At Large from January 2, 1983 through December 31, 1987 and then as Mayor from January 1, 1988 through August 31, 2014, and

WHEREAS, the City could always depend on Todd to give of his time for the citizens of the City of West Branch, and

WHEREAS, Todd thought of the City's needs before he thought of his own, and

WHEREAS, the West Branch City Council would like to recognize the Honorable former Mayor Todd Thompson and his many years of untiring and dedicated service to the City of West Branch,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the West Branch City Council hereby recognizes the Honorable former Mayor Todd Thompson and his many years of untiring and dedicated service to the City of West Branch on this Seventeenth day of October, 2016 and,

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the West Branch City Council hereby wishes him well in his future endeavors.

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As an addition to the agenda, Terry Dowd addressed Council about her water/sewer bill and noted that her bill was higher than normal due to a large amount of outdoor water usage. She noted that she was not aware that outside water usage ran through the meter and that they would be charged. She further noted that she just found out that they can purchase an outside meter to monitor this usage. She submitted copies of her previous bills and asked if Council would consider adjusting her bill to match what her normal bill typically is. It was the consensus of Council to have Manager Grace look into it. Manager Grace said that she would look into advertising more the water policy for sprinkling meters in the spring.

Member Hasty asked if she had any idea on how much she thought was used on outside watering but Mrs. Dowd was unsure how much it would have been.

Mayor Ehinger noted that this billing policy has been in effect for a long time and that all watering will result in charges for both sewer and water without the outside sprinkling meter reading.

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Heather Neuhaus from the Chamber of Commerce presented Council with a copy of the most recent Pure Michigan magazine and showed them an ad for West Branch in it. She thanked Council for allowing the Chamber to put on the pole decorating contest and that she has received lots of positives comments from people about how nice the downtown area looked. She thanked DPW Superintendent Jameson and his staff for all their help. She noted that they put up some new brochure racks at the Outlets of West Branch and that the City was welcome to put up anything to do with tourism to the West Branch area in it. She updated Council that the West Branch Rec Center would be having their grand opening on October 29th and the next business after hours would be at Mercantile Bank. She noted that she has worked with Manager Grace on the initial stages to try and bring a children's museum and activity learning center to town. She also noted that the Chamber would like to help promote the Smiley Helpers Program. Member Showalter noted that he received word from two separate individuals from out of town that were in our City about how much they enjoyed the town and how festive and nice looking it was. Manager Grace thanked Chamber Director Neuhaus for all of her work in putting on the contest.

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Leah Pauley, treasurer of the Surline PTO, asked Council for permission to have the Surline School color run fundraiser next year on June 10, 2017 at 9:00 am and presented Council with the routes that they would like to use. She noted that they did work with Chief Walters on coming up with the routes for the run.

Member Lucas noted his concern for the traffic control and that he experienced some issues last year.

Ms. Pauley noted that their main concern was safety and they were making some changes from last year and would be willing to do whatever needed to help make it better.

Member Schaiberger noted he also had some issues and asked if they had enough helpers to provide the safety.

Chief Walters noted that they did have some small issues last year but with the new routes and some changes to the way they plan to do things, it should run better.

Member Showalter asked if there was a way to possibly notify the residents before the day to remind them and make them aware. Manager Grace noted that they could use the City’s media outlets to remind everyone when it takes place.

Chief Walters also noted the fact that the City wide garage sales were scheduled for the same day last year made it more difficult, but that that should not be a problem this year.

MOTION BY SCHAIBERGER, SECOND SHOWALTER, TO APPROVE THE SURLINE COLOR RUN FOR JUNE 10, 2017 AT 9:00 AM AS PRESENTED.

Yes –Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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Marcia Young and Ken Neubecker from the West Branch Creative Arts Association thanked Council for allowing them to use Irons Park for this year’s Victorian Art Fair and noted that next year the fair would be August 12-13 and asked Council for permission to use the park again. Ms. Young also thanked DPW Superintendent Jameson and his staff for all of their help as well as Chief Walters and his staff for all of their help.

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND SCHAIBERGER, TO APPROVE THE USE OF IRONS PARK FOR THE VICTORIAN ART FAIR ON AUGUST 12-13, 2017

Yes –Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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Manager Grace went over the City wide photography contest and Clerk Dantzer tabulated the votes submitted by Council. Clerk Dantzer noted the top three vote getters in order from first to third where picture #21, picture #22, and picture #3. It was noted that picture #21 was submitted by Andrew Walker, picture #22 was also submitted by Andrew Walker, and picture #3 was submitted by Allie Wanek.

MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND SCHAIBERGER, TO APPROVE ANDREW WALKER (PICTURE #21) AS FIRST THE FIRST PLACE WINNER, ANDREW WALKER (PICTURE #22) AS THE SECOND PLACE WINNER, AND ALLIE WANER (PICTURE #3) AS THE THIRD PLACE WINNER.

Yes –Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY LUCAS, TO PAY THE BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$63,281.66

Yes –Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY LUCAS, SECOND BY ERVANS, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND SUMMARY OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD OCTOBER 3, 2016.

Yes –Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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MOTION BY SHOWALTER, SECOND BY SCHAIBERGER, TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE ELECTION BOARD MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON OCTOBER 6, 2016, AS WELL AS THE SEPTEMBER POLICE REPORT AND THE OCTOBER TREASURERS REPORT

Yes –Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

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A Charter cable lineup change was shared with Council.

A letter from Mark Vick was read thanking Council for the use of the Irons Park basketball courts to hold youth basketball camps.

A report was submitted to Council showing them the City website analytics.

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Mayor Ehinger noted how nice the downtown area looked with the decorations and that there seemed to be an increased interest in businesses moving downtown.

Member Schaiberger noted that Jordan Stancil would be hosting a presentation in the City’s Council Chambers on Family Medical Leave issues.

Member Ervans noted his concern for a house on Houghton Ave that had a bunch of garbage and junk laying around the yard. He noted that another building on Houghton Avenue had a window that has needed to be replaced for some time. He noted that there were some trees fallen along the river walk south of Houghton Ave by the Episcopal Church and that there were several more that were looking bad. He was concerned that they may fall in the river causing damming which could possibly cause some flooding issues. He also noted that there were some trash boxes in the park that looked like they needed to be repainted.

Member Lawrence noted that the next EMS meeting is on Thursday October 20 and that the new EMS director that was hired a couple months ago has already resigned. She noted that they are looking at a replacement but she shared her concern that the person they were looking appears from his resume to live somewhere that would require quite a long commute, which was the reason given for the last EMS director’s resignation. Member Showalter asked if the Board was involved in the hiring process for the EMS director. Member Lawrence noted that the hiring process was handled by a couple of Board Members and a hiring agency and that when they find someone, the candidate is presented to the full Board for approval. Mayor Ehinger asked if they could require that the applicant is from Ogemaw County and Member Lawrence noted that they could not. Member Lucas asked if the new applicant is going to be at the next meeting and Member Lawrence noted that she was not sure.

Member Lawrence also noted that she was at the last West Branch Merchants and Fabulous Fridays meeting and that some businesses will be open for trick or treating and they are hoping to get more businesses involved. She also noted that the First United Methodist Church is hosting a dinner before trick or treating. Member Schaiberger also noted his approval for the program, as it provides a more substantial meal for children before they fill up on candy.

Member Lawrence noted some trash behind the laundromat that has not been picked up and noted that it looks bad. Superintendent Jameson noted that he did talk with the owner and he is waiting to have it picked up by a garbage company.

Member Lawrence asked about the recycle center and the acceptance of CVTRS's. Clerk Dantzer noted that he has tried to set up a meeting with the other townships but has not received much interest from any of them other than West Branch Township and Ogemaw Township.

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Manager Grace shared some opportunities for Redevelopment Ready Communities Best Practice Training. She noted that the more people they could get trained and certified, the more it would help as they move through that process.

Manager Grace updated Council on the DDA facade grant process. She noted that she did a walk around with EDC Director Dan Leonard and that they would be submitting the plans to SHIPO for approval soon. Once they get approval from SHIPO, they can then submit the RFP for a contractor to do the work. She further noted that the DDA would be discussing the option of having one company do all the work or if they wanted each business to find their own contractor. Manager Grace noted that they were hoping to have construction start the spring of 2017 and finish in the summer of 2017.

Member Schaiberger asked if this is something that would happen yearly and, if so, when could they start the next round. He also asked if they could use the grants to improve the back entrances of the buildings. Member Showalter noted that it was undetermined when they could start the next round but that they would probably not start until this round is done. He noted that this round took approximately two years as they worked through the grant process and hoped it would be more streamlined in the future. He noted that all sides of the building could apply and it was not just for the front. He further noted that it would be very positive for the downtown area and that they currently have 8 participants.

Manager Grace updated Council that they plan to initiate a new Patronicity Grant which will be a grant process that will offer opportunities for people to donate money for selected projects and then the City would receive matching funds. The first selected project would be to improve Irons Park including the addition of some Expression swings which allows the parent to swing facing their child so they could see the child's facial expressions while swinging. She noted that they would be redoing the surface of the basketball court which would make for a nice court and will allow them to turn it into an ice skating rink in the winter.

Manager Grace also updated Council on the Smiley Helpers Program and submitted the Smiley Helpers pledge for approval. Manager Grace also asked Council about starting a second Facebook page that would allow the public make posts and comments in an effort to grow the Smiley Helpers program. She noted that this would create some risk and require monitoring, but that it would allow people to share pictures of work they did for the program or for people to ask for assistance if needed.

Member Showalter shared his concern that they have a way to deal with vulgarity that may be posted on the Facebook page. Manager Grace noted that they could delete any post and would develop blocking mechanisms.

Member Schaiberger asked if the T-shirts are being made local and it was noted that they are being purchased locally.

MOTION BY ERVANS, SECOND BY LAWRENCE, TO APPROVE THE SMILEY HELPERS PLEDGE AS SUBMITTED, AS WELL AS THE CREATION OF A SMILEY HELPERS FACEBOOK PAGE.

Yes –Ehinger, Ervans, Hasty, Lawrence, Lucas, Schaiberger, Showalter

No – None

Absent – None

Motion carried

Manager Grace shared that the City did finalize the easement with Trinity Episcopal Church to allow the Riverwalk to extend to that area.

Manager Grace thanked Chemical Bank for their help in cleaning up around City Hall and thanked the National Honor Society students that helped pack bags for the trick or treating safety bags put out by the City Police.

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DPW Superintendent Jameson showed pieces of the pipe where the last water main was fixed. He also showed Council a sewer camera that he was using on a trial basis.

Member Ervans asked if there were any grants to apply for that may help with the purchase of one because it would be very useful.

Member Showalter noted that businesses do rent them and that the City could look into renting it out and making money to help pay for it.

Manager Grace noted that she would have GPSCR Coordinator Kelli Collins look into any possible grants.

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Manager Grace shared that the City employees recently went through a CPR and AED training and were looking into offering another training day for City Council or anyone in the City if Council approved of it. Manager Grace thanked Mike and Shaun Bauer for providing the training. Manager Grace also thanked former EMS director Shirley Buck for helping the City receive the AED machine at no cost.

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Chief Walter noted that the new car was on the road. He noted that the Homeland Grant was finalized and new radios were ordered which will equip all the officers with new radios at no cost to the City. He noted that he received a 50% match grant on bullet proof vests from the Federal BBP Program. He also

noted that he was awarded a grant from Walmart for \$2,500 in which he would use \$2,000 for the shop with a cop program and \$500 for some needed equipment.

Member Lawrence asked if people wanted to donate to the shop with a cop program could they contact Chief Walters, and Chief Walters noted that they could contact him.

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Ken Neubecker and Marcia Young asked Council about a memorial site for Paul Longstreet because he was such a big part of the community and the Victorian Art Fair. Manager Grace noted that as of now no specific site had been proposed.

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Mayor Ehinger adjourned the meeting at 7:40

William Ehinger, Mayor

John Dantzer, Clerk