

**BRAHAM CITY COUNCIL**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
Tuesday March 2, 2021  
6:00 P.M.

Acting Mayor Knowles called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Members present Ryan Davis, Seth Zeltinger, Vicky Ethen, and Robert Knowles.

Members absent: Mayor Carlson

Staff present: Administrator Angela Grafstrom, Chief Baumgart, and Victor Fanth.

Also, present: Sarv Mithaquiyan of the County News Review, Andrew Fontanille of WCMP Radio, City Lobbyist James Robins, Tyler Schmidt and Eric Hansen of EideBailly, Matt Yorks from Quality Flow, and new hire Mark Piper and Rochelle.

**ACCEPTING THE AGENDA**

***Councilor Ethen motioned to accept the agenda with the removal of New Business A: Annual Audit Report and the addition of approve reserve officer under Police and Approve Liquor License under New Business.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda only contains 3 items this time: Approval of the February minutes, payment of bills and payroll, and Resolution 21-13 accepting the donation of an EV charging station from East Central Energy for placement in Pleasantview Park. Bills and Payroll bills total \$195756.29 which includes check # 041897 to 041958, electronic transfers 32476EE to 32496E, and payroll transfers #502194E to 502216E totaling \$55,550.20.

***Councilor Zeltinger motioned to approve the consent agenda items as submitted: council minutes for 2-2-21, payment of bills and payroll and Resolution 12-13 accepting a donation.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

**ENGINEERING**

No report

**POLICE DEPT**

Written report was included in the packet. Baumgart read the report to council and answered a few questions about last weekend's carjacking/pursuit that ended in a fatality at the edge of Braham. The Chief emphasized the importance of locking houses and vehicles as theft crimes have increased in the area. The department is trying out a Dodge Charger and then a Durango as Dodge has changed their police package.

Baumgart is seeking council approval to make Addy Leaf a reserve officer. She is over 18 years old. They go through 4-6 hours of training.

***Councilor Ethen motioned to approve hiring Addy Leaf as a reserve officer.***

Motion seconded by Councilor Zeltinger and carried unanimously.

## **UTILITY REPORT**

Written report is in the packet.

Victor Fanth gave a short presentation on the immediate needs, and some costs, of our wastewater facility. The Horseshoe Lift station pumps/equipment is 19 years old and worn out. He brought a worn piece to show what it looks like and did a presentation show what it should look like compared to what it does look like. He showed how many flushable wipes they have had to pull out of the impeller, and this has been the 4<sup>th</sup> time in a month. The new pump would grind these up. He got an estimate from HydroTech for \$13,850 and one from Quality Flow for \$13,575. Next, Fanth addressed the SCADA Vulnerability. Our SCADA system operated on Windows 7 which is unsupported technology. He had been notified by our police investigator of a concern that hackers are compromising U.S. water and wastewater treatment facilities by hacking into these old systems. In our case, they cannot adjust the chemicals because these are manually applied, but they can wreak havoc on our system by shutting things down or changing levels in our tower. Additionally, even if we are not hacked, our system is vulnerable because if anything goes down, the software is unsupported and could still cause problems or damage. Fanth brought estimates for both the lift station upgrades and the SCADA upgrades. Total Controls is the company that does our existing SCADA system. The estimate for \$14,989.00 includes upgraded software and computer. For an additional \$5513.00 they could include alarm notification software and modem. Fanth said this is not necessary at this time and could be added later. Going forward Fanth will help with the budgeting for water and wastewater.

***Councilor Ethen motioned to accept the Quality Flow quotation # 22421 for \$13,575.00 to replace the pump and rehab the Horseshoe Lift station.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

***Councilor Knowles motioned to accept the Total Controls estimate of \$14,989.00 for the upgrade to the City's SCADA computer and software.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

Councilor Ethen would like to make Victor Fanth the supervisor of Water and Wastewater as a department separate from Streets and Parks. Grafstrom stated that last year the council had voted to pay him on the supervisor's scale, and he is basically doing the supervisor duties. Fanth has the appropriate licenses for water/wastewater. As it is no change to duties or pay, council decided to make the change.

***Councilor Ethen motioned to separate the Utility Department into Water/Wastewater with Victor Fanth as the Superintendent and Streets/Parks, still under Dan Eklund.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

## **FIRE DEPT**

Chief Jones has included a report.

Chief Jones would like to have council approve a salary for the treasurer of \$400 for 2020. This has been paid in the past but was missed on last year's fee schedule and Benzen performed the duties of the treasurer by reviewing bills and getting the mail for the dept. Going forward, the department understands the City is really the treasurer of the fire department and Chief Jones signs off on the bills, so this role can be eliminated in 2021.

***Councilor Zeltinger motioned to approve paying Ross Benzen as the fire department treasurer \$400 for his work done in 2020.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Ethen and carried unanimously.

## **LIQUOR STORE**

### **New Manager**

The city received over 60 applicants for the job. The Personnel Committee conducted interviews with the top 8 candidates. The committee took an entire day to interview Cristina Pankonin, Cameron Williams, Holly Cedarblade, Amy Luark, Ashley Stodolka, Talon Zasada-Crew, Rebecca Hehn and Mark Piper. We had many good applications, but these 8 most closely matched the criteria we were looking for.

The committee recommends council hire Mark Piper as the new manager at Step 8, with a start date of March 22, 2021. Mark Piper attended the meeting and was introduced to the council.

***Councilor Zeltinger motioned to approve hiring Mark Piper as the Liquor Store Manager at Step 8 with a start date of March 22, 2021.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Ethen and carried unanimously.

### **Internal Controls Audit**

Tyler Schmidt and Eric Hansen of EideBailly presented the findings of the Internal Controls Audit conducted at the municipal liquor store. They compared sales to other cities, reviewed daily transactions, ATM transactions primarily for January through October 2020. They also looked at documents back to 2017 but had difficulty because the computer system at the liquor store now is basically a glorified cash register with limited abilities. Currently the liquor store has about 17 good controls in place, but they have about 10 recommendations for areas that need improvement. One main recommendation is that we do random checks by someone independent of the liquor store, like maybe someone from City Hall to verify transactions, inventory, etc. Hansen and Grafstrom noted the city has already implemented some changes to improve operations like upgrading the POS software system, staff logging in under their own name, better tracking of ATM cash, etc. Eidebailly clearly stated there are indications of fraud, but they would not recommend pursuing further as the cost would outweigh the results.

***Councilor Davis motioned to accept the findings of the Internal Controls Audit of the Municipal Liquor Store as presented.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Zeltinger and carried unanimously.

Grafstrom and Piper will ensure the measures are implemented going forward.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

James Robins, the City's newly hired Lobbyist, attended the meeting to introduce himself and update the council on his progress so far. The bill has been sponsored in the house by Representative Brian Johnson and in the senate, Senator Mark Koran plans to sponsor the bill. Robins has included a written report.

Robins noted it is "dizzying" what the city has to work on, but we have gotten an early start. He has emailed with Loren Nelson (Aurelius) who has expressed interest in helping with the process. Robins emphasized the need for community members and leaders to contact legislators to explain the need for our project. Robins said the house bill is HF 1447 and he said the senate bill should be introduced by Thursday.

Robins explained the City will need volunteers to go down and present the city's case and there will be bonding tours in the fall: one for house and one for senate.

No action at this time.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Annual Audit**

The annual audit report has been postponed until the April meeting.

### **Industrial Park Lots**

The EDA met and discussed reducing the price of the lots back 4 lots to \$30k and offering the same deals we did for the front lots. It is the recommendation of the EDA and the City Administrator, that council should reduce the price of these lots to \$30k and offer the deferred loan. Development equals tax dollars. Currently the city does pay property taxes on these lots as they have sat undeveloped for over 10 year. This includes the new compost site, just in case we decide to move it again and sell the lot. Moore is working on the cost of infrastructure to these lots, at that time, we may need to revisit the pricing.

***Councilor Davis motioned to approve reducing the sales price on the remaining lots in the Industrial Park, Lots 3-6, from \$200,000 to \$30,000 and allowing qualifying developers to participate in the deferred loan program.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Zeltinger and carried unanimously.

Also, have scheduled a special meeting for **March 23 at 5 pm** to approve the sale of Lot 10 to Universal Printing, LLC. Additionally, I am working with another business on Lot 3 for 2022. We are looking at applying for DEED money to help with infrastructure costs.

### **Beautification Committee**

Councilmember Zeltinger would like to discuss as a council the idea of a Beautification Committee. Zeltinger did wonder if it was a better fit with the Chamber, Grafstrom said if it was

more about fixing up businesses, it would be better for the chamber and they could consider using one of the city's EDA loans. She said as a city committee they would be advisory to the council. Council members discussed the things that need to be done by the city crew including limbing trees, moving barricades, straightening street signs, sweeping streets, patching streets, etc. Grafstrom said she knows they will be working on some of this in the next few weeks when the weather is warmer. Zeltinger would like to run with the committee.

***Councilor Ethen motioned to approve forming a 5 member Beautification Committee with Councilor Zeltinger as the Council Representative.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

### **Approval of Liquor License**

The Sullivans plan to reopen the listening room and bar under their Happy Productions LLC. He needs approval of the liquor license, the fee has been prorated to April, when he plans to open, and paid.

***Councilor Knowles moved to approve an on-sale liquor license with Sunday liquor for Happy Productions LLC.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Ethen and carried unanimously.

Acting Mayor Knowles congratulated the Braham School District and teacher Luke Becker for being 1 of 13 schools nationally to receive a 2021 Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam grant from the Lemelson-MIT Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

### **Adjourn**

There being no further business of the Braham City Council, ***Councilor Ethen moved to adjourn the meeting of March 2, 2021.*** Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Next meeting of the council will be a special meeting held on March 23, 2021 at 5 pm.  
The next regular council meeting will be held April 6, 2021 at 6 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Angela M. Grafstrom