

**Minutes
Braham City Council
Regular Meeting
August 3, 2021 – 6 pm**

Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Members present Ryan Davis, Seth Zeltinger, Vicky Ethen, and Robert Knowles.

Staff present: Administrator Angela Grafstrom, Police Chief Eric Baumgart, and Officer Brandon Thompson

Also, present: Rachel Kytonen of the County News Review, Nick Sweeney of Stanchfield Township, Doug Leaf of Stanchfield Township, Lynette Thompson, and Jon Pauna of Moore Engineering.

Accepting the Agenda

Grafstrom requested to add the annual insurance liability waiver checked “do not waive” coverage to the consent agenda.

Councilor Ethen motioned to accept the agenda with the addition of the insurance liability under the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Councilor Knowles and carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda contains approval of minutes from 7/6/21 and 7/8/21, the payment of bills and payroll totalling \$2,409,900.66 which includes echecks #32773e-32929e, checks 42263-42330, the previously approved Landpride payment (check 42278) for \$194,331.34, and payroll electronic checks #502581e, 502592e, 502613e totalling \$54850.00, Resolution 21-27 Approving the Termination of JPA with Milaca as of July 25, Resolution 21-28 Approving Initiative Foundation Grant, Resolution 21-29 Approving Fireworks Donations, Fire Dept Gambling Permit for October Raffles, and the annual insurance waiver checked “do not waive.”

Councilor Ethen motioned to approve all items on the consent agenda as listed. Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

Engineering Report

Jon Pauna let the council know the 2nd Street project came in under budget by about \$30,000. He needs approval of pay order number 2 for \$165,877.84 and the Change order for the stop signs of \$925.75.

Councilor Zeltinger motioned to approve payment of pay order #2 for \$165,877.84. Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

Councilor Davis motioned to approve payment of the change order totalling \$925.75.

Motion seconded by Councilor Zeltinger and carried unanimously.

Police Report

Written report is in the packet. Chief Baumgart performed the ceremonial swearing in of Officer Brandon Thompson and presented him a lifesaving award for saving a man's life on his first solo shift. Thompson's mother, Lynette, was present to pin on Thompson's badge.

Councilor Knowles brought up the Building Official's car options at this time. It was discussed briefly. Grafstrom reminded the council at this time that the city has many needs besides the police department. She told council we also need to start planning for purchases, especially big purchases. Grafstrom stated the City will need a new dump truck, and new firetruck, and the City has ongoing water and sewer needs. Every car we have is not just the purchase price, its insurance, maintenance, gas, etc. She stated her and Baumgart have discussed reducing the police fleet by one car so she thought it would be a good idea to do that now and use one instead of purchasing the car from New Brighton. No further discussion at this point as this item is under "new business" on the agenda.

Utility Department

Written reports are in the packet. Grafstrom shared with council that the City received the 2020 Community Water Fluoridation 50-year Award. It is given to water systems that have consistently adjusted the fluoride concentration in drinking water for the past 50 years. It is awarded jointly from the Assoc. of State and Territorial Dental Directors, The American Dental Association, the Center for Disease Control and the Minnesota Dept of Health.

Fire Department

The written fire department report is in the packet.

Liquor Store

The liquor store has continued to struggle with staffing. Piper would like council to approve the hiring of Vicky Berry as a fulltime hire at Step 2, \$12.50/hour with a start date of August 10. This will fill the open full-time position and we will continue to search for additional parttime help.

Councilor Ethen motioned to approve hiring Vicky Berry as the fulltime liquor store clerk at Step 2, \$12.50/hour with a start date of August 10. Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance 293: Annexation of Property (Hanson)

There have been no objections lodged by Hanson or the township with the state. Grafstrom, at council request, checked with the attorney to see if the City could hold off on this annexation and do it when they annex the other 10 properties. The attorney said, yes, but at the one year mark 2022, the state will remind the city to take action, but she believed we could delay until March of 2023 if necessary.

Councilor Ethen motioned to table the adoption of Ordinance 293: Annexation of Property until we have the other 10 properties ready to annex. Motion seconded by Councilor Knowles and carried unanimously.

We are still not ready to proceed with the annexation of the other 10 properties. There are gaps in the property lines, so the attorneys are preparing a single description of the boundary for annexation. Once this is prepared, we will proceed.

LED Sign in Freedom Park – Updated Estimate

Last year Genesis gave the City an estimate to put a digital sign in Freedom Park and at the Liquor Store. I did build the purchase of the 2 signs at a total cost of \$27,980, into the 2021 budget. In discussing with Liquor Manager Piper, he does not feel the liquor store needs a sign like this because the liquor store has a captive market here and this will not drive additional sales.

The Digital Sign would be an enhancement for Freedom Park and enable the city to better post community information. City Hall would have the ability to change the sign and we could have multiple community messages at one time. Right now, George Rowe must go out and put the letters on and we are limited by the number of things we can relay. Mayor Carlson also noted with the current system the letters break and we don't have a lot of letters. They also fall off. The new sign would be a quick way to notify the public of construction plans, water breaks, etc., as well as updating on community activities.

The new estimates are figured with a 5-year warranty and a 3-year warranty. Either one will fit into the budget under what was allocated in 2021. The sign would be 4 x 8 p10 LED, 2-sided, full color, outdoor. For the sign with a 5-year warranty, the cost is \$19,812.00. The sign with a 3-year warranty is \$17,499.00. It would be the same size as the sign we have now and they would fit it into the existing wood structure. Genesis is providing the sign at no additional cost and will include the fiber circuit to control the sign remotely (from City Hall). They are wondering what is covered by the warranty.

Councilor Ethen motioned to approve the purchase and installation of the 2-sided LED sign for \$19,812.00 with a 5-year warranty in Freedom Park to replace the existing sign once administration has reviewed the warranty information. Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Schedule Budget Committee Meeting

This was on the agenda to remind us to do this and remind council the preliminary budget will need approval next month. The committee can set a time. Mayor Carlson reminded the council that the truth-in-taxation meeting is always held at the December meeting. Grafstrom stated the December meeting will be December 7th. Truth in Taxation cannot begin before 6 pm, so we will have to start with TNT at 6 pm followed by the meeting.

Approve drafting Contracts with Chengwatana and Royalton Township to Provide Building Official Services

Grafstrom wanted it on the record that council would like to proceed with drafting contracts with Chengwatana and Royalton, like what we did with joint powers to help offset the City's costs. Council authorized Grafstrom to proceed with drafting the contracts.

Building Official Vehicle Options

The 2 options for a vehicle for the building official were discussed previously under the police department report. The building official would be traveling outside of Braham to cover the contract areas and take the vehicle for inspections in town. Grafstrom wants to be sure he has a reliable vehicle and will not be stranded. Zeltinger asked if we could just keep the joint powers car. Grafstrom stated no, it is not the City's to keep and we would have to buy out Milaca. The opening bid price is \$15,500.

Option 1: Reduce the police department fleet by one car. We have 6 officers: 2 have take home vehicles, 2 share a vehicle, and 2 have their "own" vehicles. I propose that the officers working opposite each other could share one vehicle. This would reduce our fleet from 5 to 4 and we could use the "extra" vehicle for the building official at no extra cost except to change the logo.

Option 2: Eric found a used squad from another department for \$4,700.00. It is a 2016 black Ford SUV with 87,000. Plus, insurance and changing the logo.

Councilor Knowles motioned to approve purchasing the squad car from New Brighton, MN for \$4700 and letting Chief Baumgart decide if it should be added to the police fleet or given to the building official for his use. Motion seconded by Councilor Zeltinger. Motion carried with only Councilor Ethen voting against.

Zeltinger asked what progress was made on the Tarp issue. Grafstrom reiterated her note in the Administrator's Report, stating the Planning Commission will hold the public hearing at the end of the month and will make recommendations to the City Council. She noted our Building Official, Steve Thorp, literally just started today, but she took him out to meet Loren Davis, Planning Commission Chair, and they will schedule a meeting. Zeltinger asked when she thought that meeting would be. She thought they met the last Tuesday of the month, August 31, but maybe the 24. It will be published as it is a public meeting.

Adjourn

There being no further business of the Braham City Council, Councilor Ethen moved to adjourn the regular meeting of August 3, 2021. Motion seconded by Councilor Knowles and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully,

Angela M. Grafstrom