

**Minutes
Braham City Council
Regular Meeting
September 7, 2021 – 6 pm**

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

Staff present: Administrator Angela Grafstrom, W/WW Superintendent Victor Fanth, Officer Keith Justen

Also, present: Nikki Hallman of the County News Review, Andrew Fontanelle of KBEK, EDA Member Becky Turnquist, and EDA Member/Aurelius Owner Loren Nelson

Accepting the Agenda

Councilor Ethen motioned to accept the agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Councilor Knowles and carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda contains approval of minutes 8/3/21, the payment of bills and payroll totaling \$725,507.17 which includes echecks #32933e-33020e, checks #42331-42423, and payroll electronic checks #502634e and 502684e, totaling \$50,416.83 and approve 3 annual event permits: Blue Star Moms Annual Event and Gaming for November 20, Girl Scout Event October 2, and Friendship Church September 15.

Councilor Knowles motioned to approve all items on the consent agenda as listed. Motion seconded by Councilor Ethen and carried with 4 votes to approve with Mayor Carlson abstaining.

Engineering Report

No report

Lobbyist Report

Written report is in the packet. Please note the bonding tour will be on October 5 from 9:50 to 10:45 pm. All council and citizens are strongly encouraged to attend to show support for the bill. The press is also invited. Mayor Carlson asked everyone attending to please wear a mask. Zeltinger noted there is also a Braham Outreach Team meeting on Sept 13, 2021, at 1 pm.

Police Report

Written report is in the packet.

Councilor Ethan requested that Chief Baumgart address ordinance enforcement at the October meeting. Councilor Knowles feels the police department's enforcement was affected by COVID and the riots, but they are doing more traffic control. Ethen would like to see them doing traffic control and ordinance enforcement.

Utility Department

Written reports are in the packet.

Zeltinger commented on how nice the new trash cans look in the City parks. He asked Grafstrom and Fanth for details on the last water main break on 2nd Street. Grafstrom stated it was 6 feet passed where we repaired the street, and Fanth added so it is on us, not the contractor. Fanth addressed the City's growth and how much difference it makes in the wastewater plant. He said Visu-sewer will begin lining next week. They spoke with business owners and will work to keep the impact at a minimum. They are trying not to inconvenience, but it can take more than 1 day. It takes 8 hours to blow, cure, finish, and reinstate the laterals. Victor noted we are using bond funds and ARP money for this project. Councilor Knowles asked how long the lining will last and Fanth responded that it should last 20 years. The tower mixer is in and Fanth will fire it up just before we start flushing so it doesn't stir junk into the lines.

High Copper Levels in City Water

Just an FYI to council about our copper levels exceeding action levels. We have an information page on the city website and people can pick up a printed copy at City Hall on both lead (which is fine) and copper. Fanth noted 3 of the 10 properties tested, tested high. They were throughout the City. Because of this, the City now has to test Copper annually instead of every 3 years. If it shows up more, we may have to start testing every 6 months. Zeltinger asked if lead/copper are an issue. Fanth noted it is becoming a problem and may get worse as the state is tightening up the rules on Lead and Copper.

Portable Used Generator

The City currently does not have a portable backup generator and should have one for use by water, wastewater, and the street department. The estimates from Victor are in the packet. The unit Victor wants to purchase is used from Baxter, MN. The need arose after the 8 hour power outage that affected the water and the Horseshoe lift station. Beechwood and Horseshoe are the most critical areas and the unit is on a trailer and mobile. It could also be used by other departments if needed.

Mayor Carlson motioned to approve the purchase of a used portable generator from Kodiak for \$13,500. Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

Approve New Hire of Water/Wastewater Specialist

We received 5 applications and did interviews with 3 of the candidates: Logan Lindquist, Jodi Couillard, and Samuel Kaderlick. Fanth and Grafstrom are recommending council hire Samuel Kaderlick as he already has class D certification in both water and wastewater. He comes from a family of operators and has been working at a facility in Grand Forks, ND. He is originally from the Mankato area. Fanth and Grafstrom are recommending starting him at Step 2,

\$23.22/hour with a start date of “as soon as available”, as he is struggling to find housing. He is working with a realtor, but if you know anyone who has available rentals, please give their contact information to Fanth. We do expect him to start by mid-October. Knowles asked if we thought we would have any trouble getting rid of PeopleService (PSI) when Gary Giltner retires. Fanth said he had talked to Paul Christiansen, and he felt the City would have no problems from Christiansen because they do not have any Class B operators when Giltner retires and they will not be able to provide us what we are paying for. Council said that maybe when we are done with PSI we could add another person if needed. Fanth said we may not need a 3rd person because when the funding comes through, the plant will be fully automated and will save time. Also when the city gets automation into the water plant to monitor, the technology will allow for accurate chemical application. This is where we need technology the most. If they do get a 3rd person, they can spend time getting the GIS set up and map the curb stops. Zeltinger asked how can we hire a new water/wastewater operator if we are concerned about the dollars in the police department. Grafstrom responded that water, wastewater and liquor are revenue accounts and completely separate pots of money. If the city takes money from water or wastewater, it needs to be in the form of a loan. Grafstrom also does not recommend taking money from water and wastewater. Our facility needs two operators and we need to have someone trained before Giltner leaves. Additionally, we have many repairs needed for water and wastewater. Good water is a basic need for the citizens of Braham.

Councilor Ethen motioned to approve hiring Samuel Kaderlick at Step 2, \$23.22/hour with a start date of “as soon as available” or October 15, whichever comes first. Motion seconded by Councilor Knowles and carried unanimously.

Approve Intern from St. Cloud Tech

The City has the opportunity to get an intern in Water/Wastewater from St. Cloud Tech. Interns are free. Our first intern will be Victor’s daughter, Kendra. She would work every Friday for 10 months, plus one 2-week period, and a 1-week period. This is a great opportunity for us to get an “in” at St. Cloud Tech and get more interns going forward. Fanth will get the paperwork, so we can get funds going forward for Interns.

Councilor Knowles motioned to approve free intern Kendra Fanth from St. Cloud Tech to work with our water/wastewater dept. Motion seconded by Councilor Ethen and carried unanimously.

Fire Dept

Written report in the packet.

Liquor Store

Written report in the packet.

Resignations

Council needs to formally accept the resignations of Niska and Thompson.

Councilor Ethen motioned to accept the resignation of Carly Niska as of 7/7/21 and TJ Thompson as of 6/24/21. Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

New Hires

Council needs to approve New Part-time Hires. This should complete the need for liquor store staff. The new hires are Curtis Marcott (start date of September 8) and Carol Ann Manteuffel (Start date of September 9) as part-time liquor store clerks at Step 1, \$12.12/hour.

Councilor Carlson motioned to approve hiring Curtis Marcott with a start date of 9/8/21 and Carol Ann Manteuffel with a start date of 9/9/21 both at Step 1, \$12.12/hour. Motion seconded by Councilor Ethen and carried unanimously.

Old Business

Ordinance 154.280 Tarp Structures

Planning commission held the public hearing. No one attended. Their recommendation to council is to make no changes to the ordinance. If council agrees, I would like a motion to accept planning commission recommendations to leave the ordinance as is. This will show it was revisited by council and give closure to the review requested by Iverson. Council gave Iverson until October 1 to comply, so the same consideration will have to be given to all violators.

Councilor Ethen motioned to accept the Planning Commission recommendation and make no changes to Ordinance 154.280. Motion seconded by Councilor Knowles and carried unanimously.

Building Official Contracts with Royalton and Chengwatana

These are the same agreements we had as a joint power with Milaca. Both townships would like to renew the contracts with the City of Braham. Thorp has already been serving both areas and we received a signed contract already from Royalton.

Councilor Davis motioned to sign a one-year contract with both Chengwatana and Royalton Townships to provide a Building Official. Motion seconded by Councilor Knowles and carried unanimously.

Vehicle Update

This was in your packet.

New Business

Resolution 21-30 Approve the Preliminary Budget

Council reviewed and discussed the 2022 budget. Grafstrom expressed concern over the 43% of the general fund budget designated for police. Most cities operate at 35% or less. Reducing the police budget from 43% down to 35% would give the city \$127,454 to put back into streets or parks. Grafstrom recommended council approve the budget as submitted, then she, the

Mayor and Councilor Davis will meet with Chief Baumgart to look for where we might save money. The money saved on policing would be reallocated to streets and parks.

Councilor Knowles motioned to approve the 2022 Preliminary Budget as presented.

Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

Resolution 21-31 Approve Preliminary Levy Amount

Council reviewed the proposed Levy amount and the City's debt service. Grafstrom noted that she had reduced the bond amount on 2016A to account for the funds received from the township. She has asked the county to redo the certified amount to reflect that going forward. This reduction put approximately another \$13,000 back into the general fund levy. The City's proposed tax levy is 2% for 2022.

Councilor Knowles motioned to approve the 2022 Preliminary Budget as presented.

Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

Free: Life 360 App on all City owned phones

For Safety and Security reasons, Mayor Carlson suggested this, and I agree. This is a FREE app, and we should require it on all city phones. It would add to the security of our employees and allow us to find phones more easily when they are lost (we do have an issue with lost phones).

Councilor Zeltinger motioned to approve installing Life 360 on all city owned phones

Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously.

Purchase of Lepinski Property

Zeltinger stated he has been talking about this for a while. He stated it is 17 acres and Chuck Lepinski got it appraised and wants to gift a portion to the city. It appraised at \$544,000 and the cost to the city would be \$200,000. Lots of potential for the city. He wanted to have this go to the EDA to have more time to prepare documents for council. Grafstrom stated this was bumped straight to council as per the City Attorney who felt the city should not be spending money on this but make Lepinski produce the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Environmental Study first. She did not recommend signing a purchase agreement until Mr. Lepinski had done this. Ethen is wondering where the money will come from. Grafstrom did not know but figured the city would need to bond to purchase this. Fanth wondered how many buildable lots are there. He feels the city would be better off purchasing property outside of town where they could grow into the future, maybe installing a pond system and a housing development. Council felt Loren Nelson had an interest in the property. He said his only interest is to help the city offset costs. Becky Turnquist said if the city does not do a purchase agreement now it won't happen. Nelson interjected the city cannot wait for Lepinski to do the studies first and he wants it to happen by the end of 2021. Council made no decision and tabled the discussion until October 5, 2021. Grafstrom was directed to try and find out the costs to the city of drafting and signing a purchase agreement.

Midterm Audit Report

Council reviewed the mid-term report.

Councilor Ethen motioned to accept the midterm audit report as presented. Motion seconded by Councilor Knowles and carried unanimously.

Adjourn

There being no further business of the Braham City Council, Councilor Knowles moved to adjourn the regular meeting of August 3, 2021. Motion seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.