

*(The following is a synopsis of the minutes of the West Branch City Council meeting. A video recording is available for inspection on the City of West Branch Website at [westbranchiowa.org/city-of-west-branch/mayor-city-council/meetings/](http://westbranchiowa.org/city-of-west-branch/mayor-city-council/meetings/).*

*The minutes are not approved until the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.)*

**West Branch, Iowa  
Council Chambers**

**City Council  
Regular Meeting**

**May 18, 2020  
7:00 p.m.**

*An Electronic Meeting (pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.8) of the City Council of the City of West Branch, Cedar County, IA was held on Monday, May 18, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. because a meeting in person was impossible or impractical due to concerns for the health and safety of Council Members, Staff and the Public presented by COVID-19.*

*Until further notice, all of our Council Meetings will be held electronically only. Persons may still attend, observe and participate in the meeting at the Council Chambers, City Office, 110 N. Poplar St, West Branch, Iowa. Social distancing practices shall be observed for any persons attending the meeting in person at City Hall.*

Mayor Roger Laughlin called the West Branch City Council meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll call (via Zoom platform): Council members: Colton Miller, Jodee Stoolman, Nick Goodweiler, Jerry Sexton and Tom Dean were present. City Staff: City Administrator Redmond Jones II, City Attorney Kevin Olson, Police Chief Mike Horihan, Parks & Recreation Director Melissa Russell and Library/IT Director Nick Shimmin.

Laughlin welcomed the (in-person) audience and the following City staff: Deputy Clerk Leslie Brick and Finance Officer Gordon Edgar.

#### **GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS**

Ben Evans, of Relion Insurance Solutions (formerly Insurance Associates) presented the proposed employee benefit package which includes short term disability, long term disability and an increased life insurance benefit. Evans said he had been working with Finance Officer Edgar on several proposals from several carriers and UNUM was chosen as the best value for the benefit offering. Evans went on to explain each of the benefits elimination periods, benefit percentage and weekly and monthly maximums and noted that the proposal comes with a two year rate guarantee. Evans stated that these benefits are for non-work related illness or injuries. Edgar commented that the current sick leave policy would need to be reviewed in light of this benefit offering but stated that had not yet been done. Miller asked for clarification that the \$7500 premium cost was an annual cost for all employees. Edgar confirmed that it was an annual total for all eligible full-time employees. Miller then asked if there had been any consideration on how to offset the costs of the added benefits and referred to the current sick leave policy. Edgar said that this issue had been raised, but not yet fully investigated. Stoolman then asked if the department directors were consulted on this change and Jones reminded the Council that the proposed added benefits were a FY21 goal and that all directors were aware of proposals being solicited but that the details had not yet been distributed before this meeting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE**

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion to approve minutes for City Council meeting May 4, 2020.

Motion to Approve a Renewal Class C Beer Permit (BC) for Parkside Petroleum dba Parkside BP.

Motion to Approve West Branch Fire Department Appointments.

Motion to approve the Claims Report.

May Claims and April Revenues

EXPENDITURES	5/18/2020	
ALLIANT ENERGY	ALLIANT ENERGY	12,052.02
ALPHA GRAPHICS	SUPPLIES	80.00
AMAZON	BOOKS, OFFICE SUPPLIES	199.99
BAKER & TAYLOR INC.	BOOKS	558.05
CEDAR COUNTY COOPERATIVE	EQUIPMENT REPAIR	140.17
CEDAR COUNTY RECORDER	RECORDING FEES	37.00
CEDAR RAPIDS PHOTO COPY INC	MAINTENANCE	13.47
DEWEYS JACK & JILL	SUPPLIES	16.80
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING & E	EVIDENCE FACILITY	427.36
GREAT AMERICAN BUSINESS PR	DOG POOP BAG STATIONS	671.62
HOLLYWOOD GRAPHICS	SUPPLIES	108.20
JOHNSON COUNTY REFUSE INC.	RECYCLING - APRIL, 2020	4,013.75
KANOPY	VIDEO	5.00
KIRKWOOD COMM. COLLEGE	TRAINING	203.00
LINN COUNTY R.E.C.	STREET LIGHTS	190.30
LYNCH'S PLUMBING INC	REPAIR PARTS	373.50
MATT PARROTT/STOREY KENWORTHY	REGULAR ENVELOPES	312.50
MENARDS	EVIDENCE FACILITY	69.65
OVERDRIVE INC	BOOKS	409.12
PLUNKETT'S PEST CONTROL INC	PEST CONTROL	95.18
PYRAMID SERVICES INC.	SUPPLIES	40.05
QC ANALYTICAL SERVICES LLC	LAB ANALYSIS	1,043.00
QUILL CORP	OFFICE SUPPLIES	573.19
SEYDEL, RANDY AND LINDSAY	BUILDING INCENTIVE PAYMENT	942.23
STATE HYGIENIC LAB	LAB ANALYSIS	77.50
STATE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	SUPPLIES	951.41
WEST BRANCH REPAIRS	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	117.46
WEST BRANCH TIMES	ADVERTISING, LEGAL NOTICES	977.11
WEX BANK	WEX BANK	1,055.01
TOTAL		25,753.64
PAYROLL	5/15/2020	56,451.82
PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS		
HILLS BANK	CD PURCHASE	95,772.75
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES		177,978.21
FUND TOTALS		
001 GENERAL FUND	36,864.15	
022 CIVIC CENTER	598.89	
031 LIBRARY	7,771.63	
110 ROAD USE TAX	3,552.89	
112 TRUST AND AGENCY	11,751.25	
308 PARK IMP - PEDERSEN VALLEY	86.53	
310 COLLEGE STREET BRIDGE	37.00	
500 INVESTMENTS	95,772.75	
600 WATER FUND	11,113.82	
610 SEWER FUND	10,429.30	
GRAND TOTAL	177,978.21	
REVENUE-FISCAL YEAR 2020		
FUND APRIL		
001 GENERAL FUND	241,351.77	
022 CIVIC CENTER	4,488.15	
031 LIBRARY	98,443.22	
036 TORT LIABILITY	11,181.70	
110 ROAD USE TAX	32,042.30	
112 TRUST & AGENCY	63,774.40	
119 EMERGENCY TAX FUND	8,977.04	

121 LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX	15,823.21
125 TIF	136,275.94
226 DEBT SERVICE	84,851.07
312 DOWNTOWN EAST REDEVELOPMENT	5,000.00
500 CEMETERY PERPETUAL FUND	300.10
502 KROUTH INTEREST FUND	0.03
600 WATER FUND	41,602.67
610 SEWER FUND	42,564.64
740 STORM WATER UTILITY	5,305.20
TOTAL	791,981.44

Laughlin asked about the certificate of deposit (CD) purchase and what it was for. Edgar explained that a CD for the cemetery perpetual fund expired and Edgar was able to find a better interest rate with another bank.

**Motion by Sexton, second by Goodweiler approve agenda/consent agenda items. AYES: Sexton, Goodweiler, Miller, Stoolman, Dean. NAYS: None. Motion carried.**

## **PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA**

**Public Hearing:** Regarding amending the current budget for fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.

Laughlin opened the public hearing at 7:27 p.m. There were no public comments. Laughlin closed the public hearing at 7:28 p.m.

**Resolution 1898 – Amending the Current Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020. / Move to action.**

Edgar reminded the Council that the amendment is intended to prevent a budget shortfall in a few funds that may go over budget. Edgar explained that when a budget goes over, the City will receive a comment on their audit report which is not in the city’s best interest.

**Motion by Dean, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 1898. AYES: Dean, Sexton, Miller, Stoolman, Goodweiler. NAYS: None. Motion carried.**

**First Reading of Ordinance 776 – Amending Chapters 105 and 106 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of West Branch, Iowa Regarding Solid Waste Control and Rates. / Move to action.**

Laughlin explained that the proposed ordinance included a paragraph that would allow a resident to “opt-out” of the trash service if they own a business in West Branch, and can provide proof of having access to a business dumpster. The language was included by the request of the Council at the last meeting so the Council could consider the option of ‘exemptions’. Laughlin asked Johnson County Refuse’s, Steve Smith for his opinion on the subject. Smith said that in all of the cities that he provides services for, this has only been requested one other time and it was decided that all residents should be required to participate in the city contracted service. Smith said his concern would be that once exemptions were allowed, more would be requested and that would result in a loss of revenue and affect city staff who has to track those ‘exemptions’ to ensure accurately billing. City Attorney Olson added that per state code section 388.6 Discrimination of Rates, ‘that a city utility may not provide use or service at a discriminatory rate’, meaning all residents must be charged equally. Olson noted that the City of Marion was dinged in their audit for providing a discounted rate to seniors, which is a violation of the state code.

Dean, who made the motion to approve the ordinance to include the exemption, requested to amend his motion to strike Amendment #4-C, to exclude the exemption language.

**Motion by Dean, second by Stoolman to approve the amended motion. AYES: Dean, Stoolman, Miller, Goodweiler. NAYS: Sexton. Motion carried.**

Miller then asked to discuss the solid waste disposal fee that is paid out of the general fund annually to the Cedar County Solid Waste Commission and said he would be voting “no” on the ordinance if that language is going to be added to the second reading. Miller stated the general fund has always covered that expense for the residents and felt that adding an additional fee to offset that expense was not appropriate at this time.

Miller suggested that the Council revisit the subject in a couple of years, but now was not the time. The other members agreed and Jones said he considered the discussion closed.

**Motion by Dean, second by Stoolman to approve the 1st reading of Ordinance 776 (excluding Amendment 4C – “exemption”). AYES: Dean, Stoolman, Goodweiler, Miller, Sexton. NAYS: None. Motion carried.**

**Discussion: Relating to Cubby Park Signage.**

Russell presented signage options to the Council for feedback. They discussed sizes and possible design additions. The council said they preferred the 6’x4’ sign and thought that former Mayor Mark Worrell’s Big Timber logo on the sign might be a nice touch. Russell said she would bring back some other options for the council to consider.

**Discussion: Considering wavier for Local Teams Using Cubby Park Ball Fields.**

Russell asked the council to consider waiving ball field use fees for local teams who are interested in using the fields. She said she would prefer that the fields get some use in spite of the current events and said that fees would still be charged for non-residents and that she is receiving lots of interest. The council agreed that fees could be waived for local teams for 2020.

**Discussion: Regarding Financial Strategies for retiring debt related to the College Street Bridge / 2nd Street Projects.**

Edgar explained that he will move \$50,000 from each of the water, sewer and storm water funds (for a total of \$150,000) toward the College Street/2<sup>nd</sup> Street project and approximately \$120,000 from the College Street Bridge project (remaining grant proceeds) which leave a balance of approximately \$60-70,000 on the entire project. This balance should be paid by TIF funds in FY21.

**Resolution 1899 – Approving the Employee Benefit Package Including Short-term Disability, Long-term Disability, and Life Insurance. / Move to action.**

Miller and Stoolman stated that this item should be tabled until a resolution has been determined on what changes are needed to the current sick leave accrual policy. The council agreed with offering the benefits but felt that the sick leave policy should be addressed first. Laughlin directed Jones to come up with some alternatives for the Council to discuss at the next meeting.

**Motion by Miller, second by Dean to postpone Resolution 1899 to a future meeting.**

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

Jones reported on the waste water treatment plant stating that V&K will continue to work on the design and Baldrige will continue working on his process as well. Jones said that Procter & Gamble announced they will be staying in West Branch. Jones also said that local businesses and groups are continuing to receive grants due in part to COVID-19.

**CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

No report.

**STAFF REPORTS**

No report.

**COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Discussion was held on whether to meet in person at the next meeting. It was decided that if people felt comfortable attending, they could do so and the chambers could be set accordingly and social distancing would be practiced.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Miller, second by Sexton. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

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Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leslie Brick, Deputy City Clerk