

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

**West Branch, Iowa
Council Chambers**

**City Council
Regular Meeting**

**December 21, 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, December 21, 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. 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 regular meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll call: Council members: Colton Miller, Jodee Stoolman, Jerry Sexton and Tom Dean were present. Nick Goodweiler was absent. City Staff present: City Administrator, Deputy Clerk Leslie Brick, Finance Officer Gordon Edgar, Sergeant John Hanna and City Attorney Kevin Olson. City Staff attending via Zoom: Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman, City Engineer Dave Schechinger, Public Works Director Matt Goodale, Park & Recreation Director Melissa Russell and Library/IT Director Nick Shimmin.

GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

Jessi Simon, CDG Executive Director presented their quarterly report and announced that they were awarded the \$75,000 Challenge Grant for renovating the Opera Block building in downtown. Simon said the grant was a matching grant with the property owner, Brooke Ventures. Simon said the building will have updates to the electrical, new roof, and a complete façade update. Simon recapped the Christmas Past activities that was held December 3rd – 6th. Simon said due to the spike in COVID cases in late November, the event was scaled back significantly in the final hours leading up to the event. The main attraction held as scheduled was the Santa cruise. Simon said more than 500 cars lined up to see Santa. Simon said the downtown businesses saw the most traffic on the last day of the event. In addition, Simon said they raised \$7000 in donations from local businesses for the event. Simon said she hoped that the group could reschedule a celebration late spring, early summer of 2021.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to Approve Special Meeting Minutes for City Council Meeting November 9, 2020.

Motion to Approve Special Meeting Minutes for City Council Meeting December 2, 2020.

Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes for City Council Meeting December 7, 2020.

Motion to Approve Herb & Lou's Liquor License Renewal.

Motion to Approve Board and Commission Appointments / Reappointments.

Motion to Approve Setting the Date of December 23rd 2020 for Consultation and Setting the Date of January 4th for a Public Hearing on the Adoption of the Amendment Number 3 to the Amended and Restated Urban Renewal Plan for the West Branch Urban Renewal Area.

Motion to Approve the Claims Report.

December Claims & November Revenues

EXPENDITURES

12/21/2020

AERO RENTAL INC
ALLIANT ENERGY
ALTORFER INC

EQUIPMENT RENTAL INSTALL CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
ALLIANT ENERGY
REPAIR PARTS

705.75
8,896.85
147.42

AMAZON		734.48
BAKER & TAYLOR INC.	BOOKS AND SUPPLIES	685.22
BARNHART'S CUSTOM SERVICES	BOOKS	1,000.00
BARRON MOTOR SUPPLY	BLACK DIRT & DELIVERY	448.56
BOWERS CUSTOM SERVICES LLC	SUPPLIES	170.00
BROWN'S WEST BRANCH	HAULING	183.95
CDW GOVERNMENT INC.	VEHICLE REPAIR	197.92
CEDAR COUNTY RECORDER	APC BACK-UPS	48.00
CJ COOPER & ASSOCIATES	RECORDING FEES	235.00
CULLIGAN WATER TECHNOLOGIES	ADMIN & CLEARING HOUSE FEES	77.10
EARL JAMES PIERCE-AQUASHINE	WATER SOFTENER SERVICE	4,800.00
HAWKINS INC	NORTH WATER TOWER EXTERIOR CLEANING	579.79
HEIMAN FIRE EQUIPMENT	AZONE	314.00
HI-LINE ELECTRIC COMPANY INC	BOOTS	383.06
HOLLYWOOD GRAPHICS	SUPPLIES	115.00
KANOPI	MAGNETIC SIGN	32.00
LINN COUNTY R.E.C.	VIDEOS	185.40
MARCO TECHNOLOGIES LLC	STREET LIGHTS	3,500.00
MARTIN P GILLESPIE	CONSULTING-TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT	1,658.98
MATT PARROTT/STOREY KENWORTHY	BUILDING INCENTIVE PAYMENT	957.50
MENARDS	LASER UTILITY BILLS	163.64
NEEDHAM EXCAVATING, INC.	SUPPLIES	5,643.00
OVERDRIVE INC	RELOCATE WATER MAIN	2.49
PITNEY BOWES INC	BOOKS	267.97
PITNEY BOWES PURCHASE POWER	OFFICE SUPPLIES	500.00
PLUNKETT'S PEST CONTROL INC	REPLENISH POSTAGE MACHINE	51.92
PORT 'O' JONNY INC.	PEST CONTROL CITY OFFICE	228.00
QC ANALYTICAL SERVICES LLC	SERVICE-WAPSI PARK	759.00
QUILL CORP	LAB ANALYSIS	9.32
RIVER PRODUCTS COMPANY INC	OFFICE SUPPLIES	420.97
ROCK VALLEY PHYSICAL THERAPY	ROAD STONE	43.00
STATE HYGIENIC LAB	DRUG TEST	27.00
THE HOME DEPOT PRO	LAB ANALYSIS	29.82
US BANK CORPORATE CARD	HAND SANITIZER GEL	1,810.48
US BANK EQUIPMENT FINANCE	REC, TRAINING, PROGRAM SUPPLIES	106.25
VEENSTRA & KIMM INC.	LIBRARY COPIER LEASE	8,745.00
WEST BRANCH ANIMAL CLINIC	WW TREATMENT FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS 2021	395.00
WEST BRANCH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	TRAP/NEUTER/PROFESSIONAL SERVICE	306.00
WEST BRANCH TIMES	CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS	763.23
WEX BANK	LEGAL PUBLICATIONS	941.27
	WEX BANK	
TOTAL		47,269.34
PAYROLL	12/11/2020	55,391.01
COUNCIL PAYROLL		12,646.07
FIRE DEPARTMENT PAYROLL		42,149.76
PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS		
IOWA FINANCE AUTHORITY	INTEREST	3,188.75
MISCELLANEOUS VENDORS	UTILITY REFUNDS	155.63
MEGAN HOFFMAN	CLEANING SERVICE	495.00
ROGER LAUGHLIN	MILEAGE, SUPPLIES	246.36
PARKSIDE SERVICE	TIRES	1,291.32
ROBERT'S TOWING & RECOVERY	NUISANCE CLEANUP	195.00
MERCHANT SERVICES	CREDIT CARD FEES	166.93
TOTAL		5,738.99
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES		163,195.17
FUND TOTALS		
001 GENERAL FUND	95,446.90	
022 CIVIC CENTER	411.77	
031 LIBRARY	7,568.69	
110 ROAD USE TAX	7,290.10	
112 TRUST AND AGENCY	9,640.87	
324 WW TREATMENT FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS 2021	8,745.00	
600 WATER FUND	21,322.04	
603 WATER SINKING FUND	3,236.45	
610 SEWER FUND	9,533.35	
GRAND TOTAL	163,195.17	

001 GENERAL FUND	194,007.56
022 CIVIC CENTER	706.54
027 MEMORIAL GARDEN PROJECT	
031 LIBRARY	50.07
036 TORT LIABILITY	1,662.98
110 ROAD USE TAX	28,915.70
112 TRUST & AGENCY	10,542.10
119 EMERGENCY TAX FUND	1,452.25
121 LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX	54,821.96
125 TIF	5,565.17
226 DEBT SERVICE	12,604.80
312 DOWNTOWN EAST REDEVELOPMENT	79,900.00
500 CEMETERY PERPETUAL FUND	300.27
600 WATER FUND	53,874.66
610 SEWER FUND	56,946.63
740 STORM WATER UTILITY	5,229.50
TOTAL	506,580.19

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

PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution 1962 – Approving Promoting John K. Hanna to the Position of Police Chief for the City of West Branch, and Setting the Annual Salary for the Position of Police Chief. /Move to action.

Laughlin said Hanna was the only candidate interviewed for the chief position. Hanna was interviewed by Laughlin, Jones, Councilperson Dean and Goodweiler and private citizen Justin Watson. In addition, a public meeting (via Zoom) was held to allow residents to ask questions of the candidate. Laughlin said the interview committee voted unanimously to promote Sargent Hanna to police Chief and recommended Hanna for the chief's job.

Motion by Dean, second by Miller to approve Resolution 1962. AYES: Dean, Miller, Sexton, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Absent: Goodweiler. Motion carried.

**Laughlin administered the oath of office for Chief John Hanna. **

Second Reading of Ordinance 779 – An Ordinance amending Chapter 165; entitled Zoning Regulations. /Move to action.

Motion by Sexton, second by Miller to approve the second reading of Ordinance 779. AYES: Sexton, Miller, Stoolman, Dean. NAYS: None. Absent: Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Resolution 1963 – Approve an Agreement with the United States Geological Survey for the operation and maintenance of the streamflow- gaging station located on West Branch Wapsinonoc Creek on College Street for the amount of \$8,640. / Move to action.

Laughlin said he would support the continuation of the stream gaging for another year or until the downstream widening project had been completed. Laughlin said that continuing with stream monitoring helps with grant funding opportunities.

Motion by Dean, second by Miller to approve Resolution 1963. AYES: Dean, Miller, Stoolman, Sexton. NAYS: None. Absent: Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Resolution 1964 – Adopting Goals and Objectives for the City of West Branch, Iowa for 2021-2022. / Move to action.

Jones said this resolution lists the goals from the December 7th Council meeting and would be used by staff as a guide to find funding and work into the FY21 and FY22 budget. Jones noted that not all goals had dollars attached to them but were indicated as Council priorities for staff to work on. Sexton suggested that the goal setting process be refined to only allow a maximum number of votes per item in order to be prioritized by Council and staff. Sexton said that he noted a few of the high vote 'goals' were not voted on by a majority of the Council which meant if it didn't received support from other members, it could

potentially fail. Miller suggested that each person be given a certain color sticker used to vote with so it was more apparent that projects getting attention represented the majority for council support.

Motion by Sexton, second by Miller to approve Resolution 1964. AYES: Sexton, Miller, Stoolman, Dean. NAYS: None. Absent: Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Resolution 1965 – Adopting the Priorities for the City of West Branch, Iowa Capital Improvement Plan. / Move to action.

Motion by Dean, second by Miller to approve Resolution 1965. AYES: Dean, Miller, Stoolman, Sexton. NAYS: None. Absent: Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Resolution 1966 – Approving a Partial Acquisition and Easement Agreements with Rummells Farms Related to the Interstate 80 Widening Project. / Move to action.

Laughlin explained that the city is required to move a water main which would conflict with the future I-80 widening project. The easement and acquisition agreement was negotiated by the city attorney, city engineer and property owners affected by the project. Schechinger added that the city will be reimbursed by the DOT for all costs related to this project.

Motion by Miller, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 1966. AYES: Miller, Sexton, Dean, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Absent: Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Resolution 1967 – Accepting Public Improvements Constructed in Cedar’s Edge (Part 1), West Branch, Iowa. / Move to action.

Laughlin stated that the City Engineer and Public Works Director agreed that the developer had satisfied the requirements of the site plan with the exception of one sidewalk on the north side of Ember Lane which is to be completed in the spring. Laughlin recommended that the Council accept the public improvements.

Motion by Dean, second by Miller to approve Resolution 1967. AYES: Dean, Miller, Stoolman. Abstain: Sexton. NAYS: None. Absent: Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Resolution 1968 – Revising Legal Descriptions for Resolution 1740 to Clarify the Boundaries of the West Branch Urban Renewal Areas. / Move to action.

Olson said the county auditor requested a clarification on the legal description of The Meadows Part 4B be updated on the Urban Renewal Plan. Olson said this resolution would satisfy their requirements.

Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve Resolution 1968. AYES: Miller, Dean, Sexton, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Absent: Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Discussion: Review the draft 28E agreement with Johnson County and the preliminary Main Street Roundabout Project for discussion and response.

The council discussed the price tag of the proposed round-a-bout at the intersection of Herbert Hoover Highway and Cedar-Johnson Road as part of Johnson County’s road improvement project. The estimated total cost of the remaining portion of the project, including the round-a-bout is just under \$900,000. Schechinger explained that Johnson County is paying for 63% of the project amounting to \$562,500 and the remaining 37% (or \$327,500) would be the City’s portion. The agreement has Johnson County paying for the entire project up front and allows the City to pay their portion to Johnson County in four equal payments over a four year period. Stoolman was concerned how the City could afford this project with so many other priorities previously identified. Schechinger said he felt some changes to the proposed design could be scaled back to allow for some additional savings to the City. Schechinger asked for Council direction to move forward in providing guidance to Johnson County Engineers on the project. He added that the City has the right to reject bids if they came in higher than expected. The Council directed Schechinger to request his proposed revisions to the project so as to keep the project moving forward.

Discussion: Consider a Not to Exceed \$20,000 Proposal for a Potential \$700,000 Forgivable Loan Application to be used for Water Quality and Storm Water Projects.

Schechinger explained that the IDNR has a program that allows the City to pursue a loan for water quality and storm water projects that is up to 10% of the SRF construction loan for a wastewater project. The City would be eligible for \$718,700 towards a water quality improvement project or projects. If the City is selected for the program, the interest rate on the waste water plant loan would be reduced and the two loans

would be combined to result in the same payment as the original loan for the waste water plant. Veenstra & Kimm and Impact 7G are proposing that the City prepare an application through this program to fund a portion of the Wapsinonic Creek channel work on the Gaskill property and Hoover Creek overbank area between Cubby Park and Main Street. Schechinger said the \$20,000 would go toward the completion of the application. The Council discussed the needed projects and decided it was worth pursuing. Laughlin directed Jones to bring back a resolution for Council consideration.

Discussion Item: Baseline Extension(s) at Cubby: 1 Field, 2 Fields, or 3 Fields.

Russell presented costs for expanding the baselines at Cubby Park and said currently there is money in the Cubby Park budget to do all three fields at a cost of approximately \$42,900. Russell said the contractor suggested waiting until July to make the adjustments to the fields and that the project would take approximately three weeks to complete. The Council agreed that all three fields should be done, but said they would re-evaluate the budget in the spring if any changes had occurred and the project would need to be scaled back.

Discussion: A Consideration Regarding Town Hall Covid-19 Protocols.

Jones said staff had discussed how to safely re-open Town Hall for residents and groups wanting to use the facility. Jones said staff recommended a 'COVID' cleaning which would include cleaning and sanitizing high touch areas (restrooms, door handles, tabletops and chairs) of the building in between uses. Jones said a \$10 cleaning fee would be added to all Town Hall reservations for all rentals, including non-profit groups. Jones reminded the Council that the City currently pays for a bi-weekly cleaning of the facility and those costs are not reflected in the current rental fees. The Council was agreeable with staffs' recommendation.

Discussion: Merit Pay Proposal – Tom Dean

Dean presented his merit pay proposal to the Council explaining that his approach would provide staff guidance on giving salary increases in an appropriate and fair manner. Dean said his approach was similar to the federal government's methodology and added that he didn't like the way staff raises were currently being handled. Dean said his proposal was a starting point at revamping the current process. Jones also prepared and presented two other approaches, a base pay merit model which provides a merit increase, plus cost of living and variable pay merit model which provided an annual bonus (plus COLA), but did not continually increase employee pay based on their performance. The Council discussed all proposals and chose Dean's method as one to pursue.

Discussion: Early Thoughts Regarding the 2021 Hoover Hometown Days Event.

Jones asked the Council for direction on Hoover's Hometown Days 2021 planning and said that this is the normal time of year when the events entertainment contracts are solicited. Laughlin said he held hope that by next August things will be back to 'normal' and said he felt planning should begin. Russell who leads the event planning said she would schedule a meeting in January with the other event participants and start moving forward.

Discussion: Consider adding the Old Casey's Parking Lot Project with the list of Potential Operational Project in FY 2021 -2022. If added at what priority level should it be presented? (Top, High, or Moderate)

Jones said that one project was erroneously omitted from the goal setting process and requested that the Council. Jones reminded the Council that a parking lot was to be constructed on the former site and asked how the Council wanted to move forward. Miller said that when the Council originally decided to accept the site, there was a thriving business next door which made sense to provide additional parking, but now that is not the case. Another member commented that now the site is being used by another business for overflow parking, which is not the intent of the space. The Council agreed that this project should be given a 'moderate' priority and further discussions held at a later time on what type of surface should be placed on the site.

Discussion: Request from Gordon Edgar for Special Consideration for a Pay Increase of \$5,000.

Edgar addressed the Council and requested a reduction in hours rather than more compensation. Edgar requested to reduce his hours to 32 but retain the same pay. Edgar indicated that he works long hours due to his workload and is needing much needed time off. The Council acknowledge Edgar's dedication to the City

and suggested that Edgar take his earned vacation time as needed. The Council also suggested that he speak with City Administrator Jones to see if some of his workload could be shifted allowing Edgar to utilize time off. Edgar responded that he would seek help in order to take time off.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Jones reported that the SRF loan application for the waste water treatment plant had been submitted and was awaiting approval and next steps. He said FY22 budget discussions will begin this week with staff while the City waits on valuations from the county. Jones asked for the council to provide direction on which Greenview connection scenario they preferred so funding could be secured to complete the project in 2021.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

No report.

STAFF REPORTS

No reports.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Miller asked the status on the repairs needed for the food pantry. Damage was done to the building in mid-August by a Werner semi driver and questioned what was taking so long for repairs to be made. Edgar responded that the insurance adjuster was notified in October and that he was unable to find a contractor to provide an estimate to get repairs scheduled. Dean said the West Branch Police and Fire Department volunteers would be receiving the Moderna COVID vaccine this week. Dean said that he was one of three to administer the vaccinations.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the regular meeting by Miller, second by Sexton. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Leslie Brick, Deputy City Clerk