

(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**

**May 17, 2021
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 17, 2021 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 7:00 p.m. Roll call: Council members: Colton Miller, Jodee Stoolman, Tom Dean and Nick Goodweiler were present. Jerry Sexton arrived at 7:35 p.m. City Staff present: City Administrator Redmond Jones II, Deputy Clerk Leslie Brick, Finance Officer Gordon Edgar and City Attorney Kevin Olson. City Staff attending via Zoom: Park & Recreation Director Melissa Russell, Public Works Director Matt Goodale, Library/IT Director Nick Shimmin, Police Chief John Hanna and Police Officer Cathy Steen.

GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

Goodale had the newest Public Works truck purchased last winter on display at the City Office for the Council to view. Goodale said the 2009 Sterling was purchased from the City of Manchester at a cost of \$35,000. The truck had some maintenance done and was re-painted and will be used as a snow plow. Goodale said he is pleased with the purchase and intends to use it for many years.

Rod Ness, Director of Cedar County Economic Development and Cedar County Supervisor John Bell, presented a new Cedar County program named Home Base Iowa. Ness described the program is for veterans or transitioning service members to encourage making our communities the place to live and work. Home Base Iowa Cedar County is offered through the partnership of Cedar County, Cedar County Economic Development Commission, Veterans Affairs, local businesses and area communities in conjunction with the State of Iowa to attract veterans to live and work in Cedar County. Ness said that three local employers have joined the program; Lynch Excavating, Tidewater and US AutoForce. Ness said he could be contacted for more information on the program.

PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes for City Council Meeting May 3, 2021.

Motion to Approve Class C Liquor License (LC) with Outdoor Service and Sunday Sales privileges for Cedars Edge Golf Course Inc.

Motion to Approve the Claims Report.

EXPENDITURES

5/17/2021

ABOUT FACES ENTERTAINMENT	DEPOSIT - HHTD ENTERTAINMENT	900.00
AE OUTDOOR POWER	REPAIR PARTS	428.54
ALLIANT ENERGY	UTILITY SERVICE	10,440.58
AMAZON	BOOKS, PRGRAM & MAINT SUPPLIES	821.31
AT & T MOBILITY	WIRELESS SERVICE	344.80
BAKER & TAYLOR INC.	BOOKS	1,035.06
BARRON MOTOR SUPPLY	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES	126.77
BOWERS CUSTOM SERVICES LLC	CUBBY PARK - CAP IMP/ COLD MIX	520.00
BROWN'S WEST BRANCH	VEHICLE REPAIR	1,083.43

CEDAR COUNTY RECORDER	RECORDING FEES	21.00
CHAUNCEY BUTLER POST 514	FLAGS & ACCESSORIES	183.00
CJ COOPER & ASSOCIATES	PREEMPLOYMENT SERVICE	35.00
CULLIGAN WATER TECHNOLOGIES	WATER SOFTENER SERVICE	23.20
D&R PEST CONTROL	PEST CONTROL - LIBRARY	70.00
ELITE HOLDING COMPANY	YOUTH SPORT SHIRTS	1,430.25
EVER-GREEN LANDSCAPE NURSE	PLAYGROUND CHIPS	2,160.00
GLOBAL EQUIPMENT CO. INC.	LOCKERS	1,253.79
GOLD MEDAL CENTRAL IL	CONCESSION MDSE & EQUIPMENT	936.07
HI-LINE ELECTRIC COMPANY INC	SUPPLIES	37.11
HOLIDAY INN DES MOINES AIRPORT	LODGING - L BRICK	224.00
ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION	PROGRAM SUPPLIES	280.78
IOWA CODIFICATION INC	ORDINANCE CODIFICATION UPDATE	2,000.00
KANOPY	VIDEOS	31.00
KILER, KEVIN L OR KAY A	BUILDING INCENTIVE PAYMENT	1,182.95
LAKESHORE LEARNING MATERIALS	PROGRAM SUPPLIES	71.97
LAUGHLIN DESIGN LLC	REPAIR & DOOR & A/C INSTALLATION	16,500.00
LOGAN CONTRACTOR'S SUPPLY	CUBBY PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	2,712.89
LYNCH'S PLUMBING INC	CUBBY PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	580.80
MENARDS	WHEELBARROW, SCOOP SHOVELS	157.96
METROPOLITAN COMPOUNDS INC	CHEMICALS	1,742.46
OVERDRIVE INC	BOOK	2.49
PLUNKETT'S PEST CONTROL INC	PEST CONTROL - POLICE & FIRE	75.00
PORT 'O' JONNY INC.	SERVICE - WAPSI PARK	216.00
QC ANALYTICAL SERVICES LLC	LAB ANALYSIS	863.00
RPM REVIVAL	2009 STERLING DUMP/PLOW TRUCK	11,990.66
STATE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	CHEMICALS	244.00
THE HOME DEPOT PRO	SUPPLIES	25.10
TIPTON CONSERVATIVE	SUBSCRIPTION TO 05-01-2022	40.00
USA BLUE BOOK	SUPPLIES	1,228.28
WALMART COMMUNITY/RFCSLLC	SUPPLIES	301.24
WEST BRANCH TIMES	ADVERTISING, LEGAL PUBLICATION	601.11
WEX BANK	VEHICLE FUEL	1,652.40
TOTAL		64,574.00
PAYROLL	05/14/21	44,668.59
PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS		
CEDAR COUNTY COOP	FUEL	580.90
SCATTERGOOD FRIENDS SCHOOL & FARM	FARM TO FOOD BANK PROGRAM	3,500.00
WEST BRANCH COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	OPERATION BACKPACK, FOOD PANTRY	8,000.00
WEST BRANCH FOOD PANTRY	SUPPORT FOR FOOD PANTRY	7,500.00
GLOBAL PAYMENTS	CREDIT CARD FEES	998.82
LESLIE BRICK	TRAVEL EXPENSES	191.20
CROEL, INC.	CUBBY PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	20,950.00
HENDERSON PRODUCTS	SNOW PLOW REPAIR	265.68
REDMOND JONES II	TRAVEL EXPENSES	243.34
GLORIA HUBLER	UTILITY REFUND	42.12
REBECCA NAUGHTON	UTILITY REFUND	43.21
TOTAL		42,315.27
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES		151,557.86
FUND TOTALS		
001 GENERAL FUND	72,298.47	
022 CIVIC CENTER	449.74	
031 LIBRARY	9,538.08	
110 ROAD USE TAX	7,123.49	
112 TRUST AND AGENCY	4,733.24	
308 PARK IMP - PEDERSEN VALLEY	25,027.59	
600 WATER FUND	10,764.48	
610 SEWER FUND	21,622.77	
GRAND TOTAL	151,557.86	

Laughlin noted an error on the Consent Agenda that the meeting minutes being approved this evening were for May 3, 2021, not April 19, 2021. Laughlin said the correct minutes were in the Council packet. The Council acknowledged the correction.

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

PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Public Hearing: To Discuss the Status of Funded Activities and Final Statement for the West Branch Food Pantry CDBG Grant Project.

Laughlin opened the public hearing at 7:13. Barb Wilcox, member of the West Branch Area Religious Council (WBARC) thanked the Mayor, City Council and Jones for the grant opportunity. Mark Quee and John Zimmerman of Scattergood Friends School said they were happy to help grow and distribute food in 2020 which helped feed community members in need. There was no other public comment. Laughlin closed the public hearing at 7:17 p.m.

Resolution 2005 – Approving and Accepting the Status of Funded Activities and Final Statement for the West Branch Food Pantry CDBG Grant Project. / Move to action.

Jones explained how the \$25,000 CDBG Grant proceeds were distributed in the community to help with West Branch's most vulnerable with nutritious food by pooling resources to meet the objective and goals of the grant. Jones stated that the grant budget was distributed as follows: \$7500 toward re-stocking the West Branch Food Pantry, \$2,000 to the Downtown Hot Meal Voucher program, \$3500 toward Operation Backpack, \$4,500 toward the West Branch Community School Food Pantry, \$3,500 toward the Farm to Food Bank program (Scattergood) and the remaining \$4000 to update the West Branch Food Pantry and make it in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Jones said that all funds were all now expended and requirements of the grant had been met.

Motion by Goodweiler, second by Stoolman to approve Resolution 2005. AYES: Goodweiler, Stoolman, Dean, Miller. NAYS: None. Absent: Sexton. Motion carried.

Public Hearing: To Discuss Amending the Current Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2021.

Laughlin opened the public hearing at 7:19 p.m. Finance Officer explained that a budget amendment for \$25,000 is for the CDBG Grant since the grant required the City to expend the funds and then be reimbursed if all requirements were met. Edgar said the expense was not budgeted, therefore an amendment was warranted. There were no other public comments. Laughlin closed the public hearing at 7:20.

Resolution 2006 – Amending the Current Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2021. / Move to action.

Motion by Goodweiler, second by Stoolman to approve Resolution 2006. AYES: Goodweiler, Stoolman, Miller, Dean. NAYS: None. Absent Sexton. Motion carried.

First Reading of Ordinance 781 – Amending Chapter 165; Entitled, “Zoning Regulations” to add section 51 “Annexed Territory”. / Motion to approve.

Jones said the current City Code was lacking a clear annexation policy and provided proposed ordinance language for Council consideration. Miller noted that the proposed language allows input by the Planning & Zoning Commission and asked if they had seen the proposed ordinance language. Jones said they had not yet reviewed the proposed language. Brick informed the Council that the Commission is scheduled to meet on May 25th and could add it to the agenda for their review and/or comments. Laughlin felt that additional language should be added and suggested the Council at least approve the first reading pending any changes by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Motion by Miller second by Goodweiler to approve the first reading of Ordinance 781. AYES: Miller, Goodweiler, Stoolman, Dean. NAYS: None. Absent: Sexton. Motion carried.

Resolution 2007 – Updating Town Hall Rates for Non-Residents. / Move to action.

Russell said she revised the Town Hall non-resident rates based on prior Council comments at the May 3rd meeting. Laughlin and agreed with the changes with the exception the weekday additional hour fee and suggested it be changed from \$2.50 to \$5.00, the Council had no objection to the suggested change by Laughlin. All other rate changes were accepted as presented.

Motion by Goodweiler, second by Miller to approve Resolution 2005. AYES: Goodweiler, Miller, Dean, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Absent: Sexton. Motion carried.

Discussion: Former Casey’s Parking Lot.

(Sexton arrived at 7:35 p.m.) This topic was discussed at earlier Council meetings but no official decision was made as what to do with the property. Goodale prepared three options for the Council to consider along with estimated costs for each with Public Works employees doing the labor on the project. The Council quickly eliminated the parking lot options as they felt parking was not necessary. Miller reminded the Council that this location was selected to have the West Branch mural located on it. Miller said the mural is intended to make West Branch a ‘destination’ and thought the mural should be located in a pocket-park where people could come to enjoy the mural. Miller went to say that maybe non-profit groups such as the Boy Scouts or others could use the space to make future improvements (benches, planters, tables, etc.) The others Council members agreed that green space would be preferred but wondered how the City would be able to prevent parking on the grass. The Council asked for clarification from Goodale if the third option included curbs at the sidewalk. Goodale said his quote did not include curbs. It was also mentioned that the City now owns a curb machine and asked Goodale what the additional cost would be to have curbs to prevent unwanted parking. Goodale suggested that bollards or some other barrier could be place along the perimeter of the site to prevent that from occurring. After further discussion, the Council eventually agreed on a pocket park and Miller directed staff to bring back a start date for the project adding that he would also like to see the mural in place by Hoover’s Hometown Days.

Discussion: Lift and/or Limit Mask Requirements at city facilities.

Jones said that with the recent of the CDC announcement that masks will no longer be required for people who are fully vaccinated, he asked the Council for their feelings on lifting the mask requirement for the City Office. The council decided it was time to lift the mask order, but said residents and visitors could self-monitor as needed. The Council who are all now fully vaccinated also stated that they would go back to the regular seating assignment in the Chambers. Miller asked that Zoom continued to be offered so that residents could still attend virtually and staff who work out of town could participate without travel and time expense. The Council stated that the mask order would end immediately.

Discussion: Consider Closing the Main Street entrance /access to the alley between 4th and 5th Street.

This item was brought up my Councilperson Stoolman. Stoolman said that the south alley entrance poses a safety issue and suggested that the City permanently close the south entrance. Stoolman said that when exiting the alley to the south, stopping is difficult due to grade and the gravel and concrete surface. Miller said he drove down the alley and said “he wouldn’t do it again”. Stoolman said that Public Works spends a lot of time cleaning up East Main Street after rains due to gravel washing down the steep alley apron. Stoolman continued and said this alley has been a trouble spot for years and now is the time to do something about it. The Council all agreed that closing the alley (at the south entrance) was the best choice at the time. Miller asked what the process was for closing the alley and asked if the adjacent property owners had been notified. Jones said property owners had not been notified at this time. City Attorney Olson said he would investigate the process for closing the alley and recommended that the City not vacate it.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Jones reported that a CDBG Grant the City is considering seeking for the West Branch Village to connect to the city’s wastewater treatment facility will cost approximately \$2000 and Jones will need confirmation that they will be willing to cover the expense. Jones said he was trying to reach out to the correct person who would be able to authorize the expense. Jones also said the Goodale was getting quotes for the cost of moving the emergency siren. Jones also said he had a meeting with the Parkside Hills developer on the status of the storm water issues as well as discussions regarding a possible TIF asking to help cover some of the expense to address the storm water issues.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Olson reported that he had emailed the affected residents regarding construction easements needed for the Greenview Connection.

STAFF REPORTS

Brick informed the Council that the draft City Code had been received and was being reviewed by herself and other staff members. Brick said she hoped to the Code reviewed and changes sent back to Iowa Codification by June 1st.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Laughlin said he asked Public Works to spend some time trimming at the cemetery this week due a shortage of spring/summer mowers.

Sexton noted that Public Works is responsible for checking streets for pot holes and fixing them, but stated that Cedar- Johnson Road had been overlooked. Sexton said that the section from Serenity Circle (Greenview Drive) and points north was in terrible condition and said something needed to be done immediately.

Goodweiler asked if the police department would be issuing ice cream certificates for kids wearing helmets as they had started in 2019. Hanna said they had not done any in 2020 due the pandemic but could definitely start up again this year.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the regular meeting by Miller, second by Dean. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Leslie Brick, Deputy City Clerk