

(The following is a synopsis of the minutes of the West Branch City Council meeting. A video recording is available for inspection at westbranchiowa.org. The minutes are not approved until the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.)

**West Branch, Iowa
Council Chambers**

**City Council
Regular Meeting**

**March 6, 2023
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Roger Laughlin called the West Branch City Council regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call: Council members present: Colton Miller, Jerry Sexton, Tom Dean and Nick Goodweiler. Absent: Jodee Stoolman. City Staff present: City Administrator Adam Kofoed, City Clerk Leslie Brick, Police Chief John Hanna, Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman and City Attorney Kevin Olson. Staff attending via Zoom: Heidi Van Auken, Nick Shimmin and City Engineer Dave Schechinger. Absent: Matt Goodale and Matt Condon.

APPROVE THE AGENDA

Motion by Sexton, second by Miller to approve the agenda.

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Approve minutes from the February 6, 2023 Special City Council meeting.

Approve minutes from the February 21, 2023 City Council meeting.

Motion to approve a Class E (LE) Retail Alcohol license for Casey’s General Stores #3463, 615 S. Downey St., West Branch, Iowa.

Motion to approve the Annual Service Proposal and Contract for Whelen Outdoor Warning Sirens with Frontline Warning Systems.

Approve Claims for 3/6/2023

EXPENDITURES	3/6/2023	
ALTORFER INC	SKIDLOADER REPAIRS	10,433.44
AMAZON.COM	OFFICE SUPPLIES-P&R	69.96
AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOC	DUES GOODALE 5-1-23 TO 4-30-24	90.00
CROELL	SAND FOR SALT/SAND MIX	109.31
GIESE, JACOB	BLDG INCENTIVE PAYMENT	790.43
GRIEBAHN INDUSTRIES	NAME PLATE- P&R CONDON	66.00
HENNINGSEN DANIEL	BLDG INCENTIVE PAYMENT	162.19
HI-LINE	SHOP SUPPLIES	227.84
IOWA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION	KNOCHE ILA DUES 2023	95.00
IOWA ONE CALL	UTILITY LOCATION SERVICE	21.60
JOHNSON COUNTY AUDITOR	USGS STUDY SILURIAN AQUIFER	849.00
MONICA TYLEE	CLEANING SERVICES-TH	140.00
MPEC	SHOP SUPPLIES	78.95
OLSON, KEVIN D	LEGAL SERVICES MARCH 2023	1,500.00
OVERDRIVE	DIGITAL & AUDIO BOOKS	47.50
QUILL CORP	OFFICE SUPPLIES-PW, CITY	1,185.31
UNIFORM DEN	UNIFORMS - POLICE	93.12
VEENSTRA & KIMM	VARIOUS PROJECTS	18,335.14
WEST BRANCH COMM SCHOOLS	YOUTH BASKETBALL GYM RENTAL	375.00
TOTAL		34,669.79
PAYROLL-WAGES, TAXES, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	3/3/2023	50,211.33
PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS		
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 2/27/2023	1,231.17
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 2/21/2023	11.88
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 2/13/2023	11.41
SISCO	FLEX CLAIMS 2/21/2023	2,940.00
METLIFE	INSURANCE	1,406.76
SISCO	INSURANCE	12,510.58
HY-VEE	CONCESSION SUPPLIES	251.03
IMPACT 7G	WIDENING WAPSI CREEK	8,323.00
MEDIACOM	CABLE SERVICE	41.90
PITNEY BOWES PURCHASE POWER	REPLENISH POSTAGE-CITYTH	500.00
US BANK CORPORATE CARD	CREDIT CARD PURCHASES	2,030.35
TOTAL		29,258.08
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES		114,139.20

FUND TOTALS		
001	GENERAL FUND	30,996.52
022	CIVIC CENTER	140.00
031	LIBRARY	6,122.89
110	ROAD USE TAX	16,254.31
112	TRUST AND AGENCY	24,648.91
321	WIDENING WAPSI CREEK @ BE	11,477.00
324	WW TREATMT FAC IMP 2021	13,507.30
329	EASTSIDE WATER MAINS	1,673.84
600	WATER FUND	5,482.12
610	SEWER FUND	3,836.31
GRAND FUND TOTAL		114,139.20

Miller asked Chief Hanna if Casey’s had any recent violations. Hanna responded that his department does not do compliance checks, that is done by the Cedar County.

Motion by Miller second by Goodweiler to approve the Consent agenda. AYES: Miller, Goodweiler, Dean, Sexton. NAYS: None. Absent: Stoolman. Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS / COMMUNICATIONS / OPEN FORUM

West Branch Fire Department Annual Update – Fire Chief Kevin Stoolman presented the department’s annual report. Stoolman said the department responded to seven hundred twenty-nine (729) calls in 2022, that was one hundred sixty-six (166) more calls than in 2021. Of the 729 calls, 329 were calls in West Branch. 292 calls were medical and 37 were fire call. The remaining calls were in the townships the department covers. In addition, Johnson County Ambulance handled 399 of the medical calls. Stoolman said that the department only responded to 99 calls on the interstate and credits a mild winter. The annual report will be available on the city website for additional stats on the departments call volumes.

Sandy Heick, paramedic / West Branch Fire Department volunteer gave an update to the Council on her work for pushing for EMS to be an essential service. Heick said the state legislature did pass a law that allows cities to levy for EMS services now. Heick said she is discussing what amount the city could levy for indicating that it would most likely be less than forty cents (per one thousand dollars of valuation). She reiterated, EMS is not just ambulance. It’s police, fire, and first responders too. Heick said it doesn’t matter if you are a volunteer or paid, the same training is required by the state which is a big expense for the department. Heick provided a proposal for the Council to consider on how the department would like to increase their budget with additional on-call staffing dollars to entice more volunteers from the community. Heick said it is nationally recognized that the younger generations do not have that “volunteerism” gene and that once the current generation (30 – 70-year olds) age out, small communities that rely on volunteer fire & rescue departments will suffer. Councilperson Miller pledged his support for Heick’s proposal to levy taxes for EMS services and thanked Heick for her service. Heick said the fire department is going to start reaching out to residents to educate them on the EMS issue and that once she obtains information from the County Auditor on how much tax to levy for EMS would be needed to sustain the department, then the Council could consider adding a measure on the ballot in 2023.

PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Public Hearing – Regarding construction of certain public improvements, approving preliminary plans and taking of bids for improvements known as the I-80 Utilities Relocation Project.

Laughlin opened the public hearing at 7:41. There were no public comments. Laughlin closed the public hearing at 7:42 p.m.

Resolution 2023-17 – To accept and award the contract for the I-80 Utility Relocation Project to Central Excavating Inc. in the amount of \$747,982.00. / Move to action.

This is an Iowa Department of Transportation project and part of the I-80 widening. The DOT will reimburse the City for all expenses related to the project.

Motion by Dean, second by Miller to approve Resolution 2023-17. AYES: Dean, Miller, Sexton, Goodweiler. NAYS: None. Absent: Stoolman. Motion carried.

Resolution 2023-18 – Approving a Sewer Agreement with West Branch Village c/o Havenpark Capital Partners LLC. / Move to action.

Sexton asked Kofoed how the forty dollars was derived at as he felt that “was too cheap” and not necessarily a motivator for completing the installation of the sewer meter. Kofoed stated that he reviewed the West Branch Village utility account and determined that an average household usage would be approximately three thousand gallons. That usage, multiplied by the current rate, then doubled would be forty dollars. Sexton was unclear how Kofoed came up with forty dollars as the math didn’t work. Miller said that at this time, only two of the thirteen homes are occupied so the forty dollars is better than nothing. Kofoed stated that the City is not notified when residents move in since this is not like a housing subdivision where certificates of occupancy are required. Goodweiler said he issue with West Branch Village allowing homes to be occupied before they are being charged with sewer fees as other West Branch residents. The Council continued to debate the proposed forty dollar a month fee and the Mayor requested a vote to determine next steps.

Motion by Sexton, second by Goodweiler to approve Resolution 2023-18. AYES: Goodweiler, Dean. NAYS: Sexton. Abstain: Miller. Absent: Stoolman. Motion failed.

Resolution 2023-19 – Approving various contracts for Hoover’s Hometown Days 2023 in the amount of \$11,330.00. / Move to action.

The proposed vendor contracts are vendors the City has used in the past. Laughlin noted that the inflatables cost was scaled back this year from \$12,000 to \$10,000. Miller asked if wristbands would be used this year. Kofoed responded that last year, more than five hundred bands were passed out which indicated that the inflatables are a popular event and that it would be difficult to get a permit from the National Park Service for charging a fee for the inflatables since they are located on park property.

Motion by Sexton, second by Goodweiler to approve Resolution 2023-19. AYES: Sexton, Goodweiler, Dean. NAYS: Miller. Absent: Stoolman. Motion carried.

Resolution 2023-20 - Approving a resolution of support for the City Administrator to apply for Cedar-Johnson Reconstruction funding under Congressperson Miller- Meeks FY2024 Community Project Funding Program. / Move to action.

Kofoed said four million dollars was available from the program but said he was not confident that he would be successful the first time trying for some of those funds. Kofoed said he would continue to try through 2024. Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2023-20. AYES: Miller, Dean, Sexton, Goodweiler. NAYS: None. Absent: Stoolman. Motion carried.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Kofoed announced that the Park & Recreation community survey has been placed on social media and will collect responses for two weeks. Kofoed said the purpose of the survey is to get feedback from residents for the Parks Plan. He also informed the Council that the Tipton Aquatic Center will be closed for renovations this summer and that the City’s new Parks & Rec Director was reaching out to other cities to find a replacement location for swimming lessons. Kofoed also reminded the Council that they (and all city staff) are required to attend NIMS training. Training dates & locations will be made available by the next meeting.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Olson said he reached out to Hills Bank regarding the property on East Green Street. Olson said he informed them that he is willing to publish notice of the condemnation to resolve the issue. Olson said he expected to get a response from the bank before next meeting.

CITY ENGINEER REPORT

Schechinger reported that the Roundabout Project will begin with a complete road closure on April 3rd. He said signage is expected to go up two weeks prior. Schechinger said the project is expected to take seventy working days (Monday-Friday), which would take the project through late fall. Schechinger said he was also reviewing construction drawings for the Meadows Part 3 as that project will be going on along with the roundabout project. Schechinger said there were no new updates on the Wastewater Treatment Facility Project due to wet conditions, but as spring hits the project will start to see more activity.

STAFF REPORTS - None

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Laughlin announced that RAGBRAI will not be coming through Cedar County.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Sexton, second by Miller. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leslie Brick, City Clerk