

*(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**

**June 19, 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 Jodee Stoolman. Absent: Nick Goodweiler. City Staff present: City Administrator Kofoed, City Clerk Brick, Police Chief Hanna, Public Works Director Goodale, City Attorney Olson and City Engineer Schechinger. Staff attending via Zoom: Finance Officer Heidi Van Auken.

**APPROVE THE AGENDA**

Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve the agenda. Motion carried on a voice vote.

**APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

Approve Minutes from the June 5, 2023 City Council meeting  
 Appoint Rich Stout to the Park & Recreation Commission, term expiration 12/31/2023  
 Approve LL Pelling Sealcoat pricing for 2023  
 Approve the April Monthly Financial Report  
 Claims for 6/19/2023

EXPENDITURES	6/19/2023	
AMAZON.COM	OFFICE SUPPLIES-LIBRARY	124.12
BAKER & TAYLOR	BOOKS	993.95
BOWERS CUSTOM SERVICES	HAULING ROCK TO CITY SHED	375.00
BRICK, LESLIE	MILEAGE REIMB COUNTY COURT	48.48
BROWN'S WEST BRANCH	VEHICLE REPAIR-POLICE	1,603.89
CAPITAL ONE	VARIOUS ITEMS-LIBRARY	56.53
CASEYS GENERAL STORES	CASEY'S TIF REBATE #8	12,975.00
CEDAR COUNTY ENGINEER	ROAD ROCK	4,395.77
CEDAR COUNTY RECORDER	RECORDING FEES	14.00
CY'S TREE SERVICE	TREE REMOVAL	12,955.00
DATA443 RISK MITIGATION	RANSOMWARE RECOVERY SUBSCRIPT	178.75
EMV HOLDINGS	EMV HOLDINGS TIF REBATE #4	5,505.00
GRIEBAHN INDUSTRIES	NAME PLATE-P&R COMMISSION	16.00
HAWKINS INC	CHEMICALS	2,812.61
KANOPI	ON DEMAND VIDEO SERVICE	29.00
KNOCHE, REBECCA	FLOWERS FOR LIBRARY PLANTERS	127.27
LIBRARICA LLC	LICENSE RENEWAL	328.20
LRH HOLDINGS	TRASH & RECYCLING MAY 2023	17,399.50
MEADOWS DEVELOPMENT INC	MEADOWS TIF REBATE #2	26,333.00
MOPPY MO'S	CLEANING SERVICES-TH, CITY, PARKS	892.50
MPEC	SHOP SUPPLIES/VEHICLE MAINT	33.76
OLSON, KEVIN D	LEGAL SERVICES JUNE 2023	1,500.00
PLUNKETT'S PEST CONTROL	PEST CONTROL-TH, CITY	105.90
PYRAMID SERVICES	PARTS-PW	58.54
RUSHTON, AMANDA	TH ALCOHOL DEPOSIT REFUND	100.00
SCHIMBERG CO	SHOP SUPPLIES	331.20
STATE HYGIENIC LAB	LAB ANALYSIS	67.50
THE HOME DEPOT PRO	BLDG SUPPLIES-LIBRARY	478.68
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE	PO BOX ANNUAL RENTAL	70.00
VEENSTRA & KIMM	180 WIDENING COORDINATION	41,269.06
WEST BRANCH TIMES	LEGAL PUBLICATIONS	517.29
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>131,695.50</b>
PAYROLL-WAGES, TAXES, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS: REG & FIRE	6/9/2023	86,207.76
PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS		
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 6/12/2023	941.04
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 6/5/2023	111.59

BOOMERANG	WW TREATMENT PAY ESTIMATE 9	468,052.07
LYNCH'S EXCAVATING	EASTSIDE WATER MAINS PAY EST 1	41,325.00
UMB BANK	GO BOND PAYMENTS	845,878.75
IOWA FINANCE AUTHORITY	SRF LOANS: WATER, SEWER	387,900.68
VARIOUS VENDORS	UB REFUNDS	173.70
GLOBAL PAYMENTS	MAY CREDIT CARD FEES	1,016.12
AMAZON.COM	EQUIP YOUTH SPORTS	90.04
AT&T MOBILITY	WIRELESS SERVICE	364.52
BARRON MOTOR SUPPLY	SUPPLIES	132.40
KOENIG, SASHA	UMPIRE-2 GAMES	60.00
KOENIG, TATUM	UMPIRE-6 GAMES	180.00
LINN COUNTY REC	STREET LIGHTS	231.75
MOORE'S WELDING	MOWER REPAIR	45.00
PARKSIDE SERVICE	TIRE REPAIRS	94.38
WEX BANK	VEHICLE FUEL	1,337.20
FIDELITY BANK & TRUST	ACCIONA LOAN PAYMENT	100,699.58
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 5/30/2023	2,813.66
TOTAL		1,851,447.48
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES		2,069,350.74

FUND TOTALS		
001 GENERAL FUND		94,936.19
022 CIVIC CENTER		345.45
031 LIBRARY		6,960.94
110 ROAD USE TAX		11,390.75
112 TRUST AND AGENCY		15,665.80
125 T I F		44,813.00
226 DEBT SERVICE		946,578.33
302 ARPA WW TREATMT FACILITY		372,611.19
324 WW TREATMT FACILITY		95,440.88
319 RELOCATING WATER & SEWER		11,823.29
321 WIDENING WAPSI CREEK		1,198.50
324 WW TREATMT FACILITY		17,106.88
326 ROUNDABOUT MAIN & CEDAR		2,188.02
329 EASTSIDE WATER MAINS		49,195.33
600 WATER FUND		7,062.10
603 WATER SINKING FUND		58,768.75
610 SEWER FUND		4,133.41
611 SEWER FUNDS SPECIAL		329,131.93
GRAND FUND TOTAL		2,069,350.74

REVENUE-FISCAL YEAR 2023  
FUND APRIL

001 GENERAL FUND		528,703.35
022 CIVIC CENTER		8,353.25
031 LIBRARY		13,296.69
036 TORT LIABILITY		27,824.44
110 ROAD USE TAX		28,106.14
112 TRUST & AGENCY		128,856.55
119 EMERGENCY TAX FUND		15,966.17
121 LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX		16,262.61
125 TIF		234,043.66
126 TIF LMI MEADOWS PT 4		10,363.92
226 DEBT SERVICE		112,225.85
300 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RESERVE		23,186.52
600 WATER FUND		46,130.80
610 SEWER FUND		69,184.97
740 STORM WATER UTILITY		5,667.60
TOTAL		1,268,172.52

Miller asked if the payment to Fidelity Bank was the last payment for the lawsuit with Acciona and Kofod confirmed that it was. Miller shared his excitement over the final payment.

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

**PRESENTATIONS / COMMUNICATIONS / OPEN FORUM - NONE**

**PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA**

**Third Reading of Ordinance 803 – Amending Chapter 92 Titled “Water Rates” of the Code of Ordinances of the City of West Branch, Iowa. / Move to action.**

ORDINANCE 803

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 92 TITLED “WATER RATES” OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH IOWA

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of West Branch had heretofore deemed it necessary to raise water rates in preparation of water infrastructure projects.

BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST BRANCH, CEDAR COUNTY, IOWA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Amendment. Section 92.02(1) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of West Branch, Iowa is hereby amended by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

“Rate effective August 1, 2023:	\$9.74 per 1000 gallons with 1,700 gallon minimum.
Rate effective August 1, 2024:	\$9.93 per 1000 gallons with 1,700 gallon minimum.
Rate effective August 1, 2025:	\$10.13 per 1000 gallons with 1,700 gallon minimum.
Rate effective August 1, 2026:	\$10.33 per 1000 gallons with 1,700 gallon minimum.
Rate effective August 1, 2027:	\$10.54 per 1000 gallons with 1,700 gallon minimum.”

Section 2. Conflicts. All ordinances or parts of ordinances not specifically provided for and in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Section 3. Adjudication. If any section, provision, or part of this ordinance shall be adjudged to be invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any section, provision or part thereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect after its passage, approval and publication as required by law.

Passed and approved this 19th day of June, 2023.

First Reading: May 15, 2023  
 Second Reading: June 5, 2023  
 Third Reading: June 19, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leslie Brick, City Clerk

I certify that the foregoing was published as Ordinance 803 on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leslie Brick, City Clerk

There were no comments.

Motion by Sexton, second by Miller to approve third reading of Ordinance 803. AYES: Sexton, Miller, Dean, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Absent: Nick Goodweiler. Motion carried.

**Resolution 2023-64 – Approving the West Branch Police Department Policy Manual. / Move to action.**

Hanna said the policy manual review encompassed a years-worth of work to review and implement. Hanna said that going forward, he would present the department manual to the Council annually to officially adopt it and make it policy.

Motion by Miller, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 2023-64. AYES: Miller, Sexton, Stoolman, Dean. NAYS: None. Absent: Nick Goodweiler. Motion carried.

**Resolution 2023-65 –Amending the City of West Branch, IA Employee Handbook (dated October 2016). /Move to action.**

Sexton wanted to confirm that the change in number of hours affected when over-time compensation would start. Kofoed confirmed that over-time pay would still be after forty hours and that this just changed the definition of number of hours worked to be considered full-time for employee benefits.

Motion by Miller, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2023-65. AYES: Miller, Dean, Stoolman, Sexton. NAYS: None. Absent: Nick Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Motion to approve and forward the proposal to close a portion of alley between North Fourth and North Fifth Street to the Planning & Zoning Commission. / Move to action.

Sexton asked the other members to consider what their response would be to residents who questioned the closing of the alley. Miller suggested that if the residents weren't happy with a partial closure, the city would vacate the whole alley and the affected property owners could maintain it through a homeowner's association. Sexton said visited the site and noted that most of the property owners who live along N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street have poured concrete approaches up to the alley way from their garages and that the alley seemed in pretty good shape until you get toward the south end where it starts to slope. Schechinger said he had looked into the cost of adding dirt and seeding the proposed area to be vacated and estimated the cost to be around ten thousand dollars. The Council decided it was time to move this subject onto the Planning & Zoning Commission for their comments before moving forward with any additional expense.

Motion by Dean, second by Miller. AYES: Dean, Miller, Stoolman, Sexton. NAYS: None. Absent: Nick Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Motion to approve Chief Hanna's Recruitment/Retention Plans. / Move to action.

Hanna summarized comments made at the last Council meeting on ideas he had been discussing with Kofoed for recruiting (and retaining) certified officers to the City. Hanna presented a few options that would cost the City the least amount, acknowledging that West Branch cannot compete with other surrounding communities' salaries. Hanna suggested that the City could offer one hundred percent employer paid health and dental benefits for family coverage for all current and new officers, which is something the City is able to levy for. Hanna noted that this change would require an FY24 budget amendment should the Council decide go with this option. Hanna also suggested extending the residency requirement from eight miles to twenty miles (which would have no effect on the budget) and still provide a twenty-minute response time. And lastly, allowing the officer to take their assigned squad car home with them. Stoolman and Sexton raised their concerns over the residency requirement and Hanna explained his reasoning. Hanna said he hoped that it would attract a certified officer from a surrounding community who already has a family established in another town and may not want to uproot them for a potentially lower paying position. He used the example of a twenty-minute response time as being as near as the Coral Ridge Mall area, driving the speed limit from Coralville to West Branch. Sexton asked Hanna if he had looked to see what other communities were offering as incentive packages to see what potential candidates are looking for. Hanna said a few were offering sign on bonuses, but most cities are facing the same challenges. Stoolman said she would not support the extended residency requirement and felt that twenty minutes is too long in an emergency. After more discussion, the Council directed Hanna to draft language for a better health and dental offering, but asked him to table the other two items for the time being to see what this change would attract.

Motion by Dean, second by Sexton. AYES: Dean, Sexton, Miller, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Absent: Nick Goodweiler. Motion carried.

Recognition of Hoover's Hometown Days 2023 sponsors.

Mayor Laughlin publicly thanked this year's event sponsors for their generous donations ranging from one hundred dollars to five thousand dollars. Those businesses and individuals sponsoring this year's event are: Title Sponsors- Parkside Petroleum/Advantage Development, US AutoForce and Heritage Hill. Fire Department Stage – West Branch Animal Clinic. Main Street Stage – Veenstra & Kimm and Altorfer. Family Fun Activities – Barnhart's Custom Services, Chris & Lisa Kofoed, Croell Inc., Fidelity Bank & Trust, Hills Bank & Trust, KLM Investments LLC., Plastic Products and Rummells Farms. Festival Supporters – The Family Pet and Rindy Inc.

Discussion – Amending Chapter 65 “Stop or Yield Required” (Chief Hanna)

Hanna said his office has received several complaints over the past few years over a three-way stop at the corner of Serenity Circle, Cedar-Johnson Rd and 350<sup>th</sup> Street. Hanna said there have some “close calls” due to north bound traffic not being required to stop. Hanna went on to say that there is more out of town traffic now who are not familiar with the area and that a four-way stop would help with the confusion. Sexton said he would prefer to have the north and south bound traffic have the right of way and only east and west bound traffic stop. Dean said there is a large tree on the southeast corner of the intersection that does pose a sight issue when not kept trimmed. The Council decided to table this item for the time being.

Discussion – Ballot language for future LOSST

The Council discussed Kofoed’s proposed ballot language on how to use LOSST dollars if voters decided to extend to the measure after June 30, 2025. The Council felt that voters want to know exactly how those dollars are spent rather than being “too broad”. The Council directed Kofoed and Olson to update the language to City of West Branch park debt (Cubby Park), public safety and infrastructure.

Discussion – FY24 Strategic Plan

Laughlin reminded the Council of the FY23 strategic goals and priorities approved via passage of Resolution 2023-02.

Discussion – Hoover’s Hometown Days Committee transition direction

Laughlin stated the Hoover’s Hometown Days committee has been in discussions in recent months regarding transitioning the City out of the lead committee role. This would allow another group to coordinate future events, while the City steps back. Laughlin said he would like to see the City still donate to the event and suggested an initial ten thousand-dollar start up donation from the FY24 budget. Kofoed, who has led the event coordination this past year, said that City could entertain being a sponsor of the event each year, but it would depend on the budget each year. When asked how much the City budgeted for the FY24 event, Kofoed didn’t have those numbers readily available. Sexton said he would feel more comfortable not committing to an annual donation until the new organizers take over and the residents “could see” what the event will look like. The Council was in agreement that the City should take a step back from the event with fundraising, organizing and using staff hours to coordinate and execute the event.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT** – No report

**CITY ATTORNEY REPORT** – No report

**CITY ENGINEER REPORT**

Schechinger reported on several City projects underway and reported that both lanes on the Johnson County side of the round about have been poured and that Streb Construction was making good progress on the project. He also reported that the Eastside Water Main project has started on N. 6<sup>th</sup> St. Schechinger also gave brief updates on the Wastewater Treatment Facility Project, Wapsi Creek Widening and progress on The Meadows Part 3 (private development).

**STAFF REPORTS** – No reports

**COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Sexton raised his concern over recent nuisance letters delivered to residents and lot owners in the new subdivisions. Sexton asked that consideration be given to the undeveloped lots and suggested a Code update. He stated that he didn’t think it was reasonable to have builders or future builders mow grass every week to stay under the current six-inch requirement. With no one living on the property, it may be burdensome to have to haul a mower to mow the grass each week. The Council agreed that a Code update would be considered and City Attorney Olsen said he could provide some language options. Sexton also expressed his frustration on right-of-way mowing and that realtors need to do a better job explaining to homeowners their responsibility to maintain those whether there is a sidewalk or not.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Miller, second by Sexton. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Leslie Brick, City Clerk