

(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**

**December 4, 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, Jodee Stoolman and Nick Goodweiler. City Staff present: City Administrator Adam Kofoed, City Clerk Leslie Brick, Police Chief John Hanna, Public Works Director Matt Goodale. City Staff attending via Zoom: Finance Officer Heidi Van Auken and City Engineer Dave Schechinger

APPROVE THE AGENDA

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

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Approve Minutes from the November 20, 2023 City Council meeting.
Claims for 12/4/2023

EXPENDITURES	12/4/2023	
101 MOBILITY	TOWN HALL LIFT DEPOSIT	8,762.50
AMANDA MALLOY	BLDG INCENTIVE PAYMENT	1,000.00
AMAZON.COM	VARIOUS ITEMS-LIBRARY	121.15
BAKER & TAYLOR	BOOKS	431.39
CASEYS GENERAL STORES	CASEY'S TIF REBATE #9	18,060.00
CEDAR COUNTY COOPERATIVE	FUEL-PW	1,413.78
CURTIS L CASPER	LAWN MOWING-NUISANCE	110.00
DORSEY & WHITNEY	2023A BOND LEGAL SERVICES	15,000.00
EMV HOLDINGS	EMV HOLDING TIF REBATE #5	7,500.00
FINNEGAN, JEANETTE	BLDG INCENTIVE PAYMENT	1,000.00
GREAT AMERICAN BUSINESS PROD	PET WASTE BAGS	1,040.00
HEIDI VAN AUKEN	MILEAGE REIMBURSE-VANAUKEN	24.24
IOWA ONE CALL	UTILITY LOCATION SERVICE	94.50
KNOCHE, REBECCA	STORY DREAM MACHINE REIMBURSE	39.95
LIBERTY COMMUNICATIONS	LIBERTY COMMUNICATIONS	1,571.38
MAINSTAY SYSTEMS OF IOWA	HP LAPTOP BATTERIES-LIBRARY	60.00
PLUNKETT'S PEST CONTROL	PEST CONTROL-LIBRARY	50.00
STATE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	CHEMICALS	250.38
VEENSTRA & KIMM	VARIOUS PROJECTS	22,078.22
WILEY, BARBARA	BLDG INCENTIVE PAYMENT	1,000.00
TOTAL		79,607.49
PAYROLL-WAGES, TAXES, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	11/24/2023	46,419.71
PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS		
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 11/28/2023	11.13
LYNCH'S EXCAVATING	EAST SIDE WATER PAY ESTIMATE 6	177,021.15
BOOMERANG	WW TREATMENT PAY ESTIMATE 13	517,877.30
JOHN DEERE FINANCIAL	SUPPLIES, UNIFORM-PW	861.45
LEAF CAPITAL FUNDING	COPIER LEASE-LIBRARY	142.02
QC ANALYTICAL SERVICES	LAB ANALYSIS	855.75
TYLER TECHNOLOGIES	TOPS OUTPUT, TRAINING FEE	870.00
US BANK CORPORATE CARD	CREDIT CARD PURCHASES	2,031.25
USA TODAY	ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION	399.24
VERIZON WIRELESS	VERIZON WIRELESS	371.37
METLIFE	INSURANCE	1,243.35
SISCO	INSURANCE	10,747.99
TOTAL		712,432.00
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES		838,459.20

FUND TOTALS		
001	GENERAL FUND	21,782.19
022	CIVIC CENTER	8,807.71
031	LIBRARY	7,810.47
110	ROAD USE TAX	7,353.48
112	TRUST AND AGENCY	17,740.55
125	T I F	25,560.00
321	WIDENING WAPSI CREEK	3,681.00
324	WW TREATMENT FACILITY	528,755.14
326	ROUNDBOUT MAIN & CEDAR	6,450.00
329	EASTSIDE WATER MAIN PH 1	193,090.53
600	WATER FUND	8,560.35
610	SEWER FUND	8,343.27
740	STORM WATER UTILITY	524.51
GRAND FUND TOTAL		838,459.20

Miller questioned the dollar amount for pet waste bags the city purchased and asked for the quantity that represents the \$1040.00 charge. Goodale replied that the amount represents eight thousand bags and that the city orders at least once per year for the various parks. There were no other comments.

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

PRESENTATIONS / COMMUNICATIONS / OPEN FORUM

deNovo Marketing - a marketing campaign presentation for Operation Blue Savior

Jen Neumann described deNovo's marketing strategy and how they can help West Branch "tell their story" to attract new employees to the City which promotes public safety and a safe community. Neumann said they would work with city leaders, staff and prominent business leaders to develop marketing materials to learn about West Branch and why this is the place to be. Neumann said it imperative to focus on positive things in the community and the "good" rather than the "negative" to attract and retain employees and make its residents feel safe. Neumann said as part of their offering, they would develop short videos that would be placed on the city website, social media platforms and recruiting sites such as LinkedIn and Indeed where potential employees and residents will visit to learn more about the West Branch community and culture.

PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution 2023-129 – Adopting a Pay Scale for Permanent Full-time West Branch Police Officers. / Move to action.

Stoolman asked if the proposed pay scale was "close" to that of what surrounding counties pay their officers. Kofoed said the salaries were within a few thousand dollars and that years of service with other departments would follow a lateral move on the proposed pay scale.

Motion by Dean, second by Miller to approve Resolution 2023-129. AYES: Dean, Miller, Goodweiler, Stoolman, Sexton. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Motion to accept the resignation of Police Chief John Hanna. / Move to action.

Miller thanked Hanna for his years of service with the West Branch Police Department (as well as his family for allowing Hanna to provide a safe community). Sexton addressed Hanna and stated that he has been and will always be remembered as a well-respected police chief and member of the community and thanked Hanna as well for his service. Sexton added that if his circumstances were to change, the city would welcome him back. The remaining members thanked Hanna as well.

Motion by Goodweiler, second by Sexton. AYES: Goodweiler, Sexton, Miller, Stoolman. NAYS: Dean. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the 2024 City Council regular meeting schedule. / Move to action.

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

Discussion – Considering an employer benefits contribution change

Kofoed suggested the Council consider them approving a change in the employer contribution for health and dental insurance for employees from seventy percent to ninety percent. Kofoed said the Employee Benefits

Fund (which the city levies taxes for) currently has a healthy fund balance of more than four hundred thousand dollars and said that the fund continues to grow with a smaller staff and more employees opting for the stipend in lieu of health benefits when a spouse has better or less expensive coverage. Van Auken added that the Employee Benefits Fund will also now pay for Worker's Comp premiums rather than coming from the Tort Liability Fund. Kofoed said he felt that there were still enough reserves to offer the additional employer contribution. The Council informally agreed to the employer contribution increase. Kofoed said he would have a resolution drafted for Council approval at a later date.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Kofoed said Public Works employee interviews will occur this week and that a police department reorganization is needed for a smooth transition with the exiting Hanna. Kofoed asked the Council to think about deNovo's proposal and possible next steps.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT – Absent

CITY ENGINEER REPORT

Schechinger said he and other city leaders met with IDOT last week regarding the next phase of the I-80 widening project. He said the project will consist of widening the eastbound lanes from east of the Wapsi Ave bridge to east of exit 254. Eastbound traffic will be moved to the westbound lanes and will result in a temporary closure of the West Branch exit during construction. Schechinger said the westbound lanes will then be constructed the following year.

STAFF REPORTS

Hanna explained his transition plans to the Council and requested permission to temporarily end the twenty-four hour on-call time with having only himself, Steen and one part-time officer available. Hanna also asked to be able to immediately post a supervisor/sergeant position and have in place by January 1st when he departs. This will provide supervisor responsibilities of part-time scheduling, reporting requirements and other necessary tasks the Chief is responsible for until the City replaces his position. The Council gave their approval to Hanna to do what is necessary to help with the transition of duties.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

The council discussed deNovo's proposal for marketing services to determine which offering they would go with. Most felt the "storytelling approach" was the least that they should do, but Miller suggested the third option as a "go big, or go home" effort. Miller asked Kofoed if local businesses would contribute to the cost of the marketing outreach as it would benefit them as well as the residents who live in West Branch. The consensus of the Council was to proceed with the second option.

Miller asked why Public Works did not put up all of the Christmas lights used in years past. Goodale said that many of the lights are very old and are in need of replacing as well as some of the light poles that they are placed on pose safety threats to his staff.

Laughlin asked Kofoed to prepared the FY25 budget meeting schedule as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Miller, second by Sexton. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leslie Brick, City Clerk