

(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**

**February 20, 2024
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: Mike Horihan, Jerry Sexton, Tom Dean, Jodee Stoolman and Nick Goodweiler. City Staff present: City Administrator Adam Kofoed, City Clerk Leslie Brick, Library Director Jessie Schafer and Sergeant Cathy Steen. City Staff attending via Zoom: Finance Officer Heidi Van Auken and Public Works Director Matt Goodale.

APPROVE THE AGENDA

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

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Approve the minutes from the February 5, 2024 City Council meeting.
Approve the appointment of Ryan Foley to the Planning & Zoning Commission, term expiration 12/31/2024 (to fill a vacancy).
Approve the appointment of Deb Watson to the Library Board of Trustees.
Approve a Class C Retail Alcohol License, with Outdoor Service for Eldr LLC. (dba Little Lights on the Lane), 2 Ember Lane, West Branch
Approve the November 2023 Monthly Financial Report
Approve Claims for February 20, 2024.

EXPENDITURES	2/20/2024	
AERO RENTAL	BOOM LIFT RENTAL-LIGHTS	559.00
ALLIANT ENERGY	ALLIANT ENERGY	13,323.52
AMAZON.COM	VARIOUS ITEMS-LIBRARY	544.58
ANTHONY TATMAN	MMPI-2 EVALUATION - POLICE	150.00
BAKER & TAYLOR	BOOKS	430.03
BARNHART'S CUSTOM SERVICES	SNOW REMOVAL CEDAR JOHNSON	2,200.00
BOUND TREE MEDICAL	MEDICAL SUPPLIES-FIRE	547.96
BOWERS CUSTOM SERVICES	SAND TO MIX WITH SALT	500.00
BOWERS, CASANDRA	KINDER T-BALL REFUND	15.00
BROWN'S WEST BRANCH	VEHICLE SERVICE-POLICE	1,179.95
CAPITAL ONE	VARIOUS ITEMS-LIBRARY	66.46
CEDAR CO SHERIFF'S OFFICE	PATROL RESERVES	3,535.00
CEDAR COUNTY COOPERATIVE	FUEL-PW	3,147.53
CULLIGAN WATER TECH	WATER SOFTENER SERVICE	30.49
DES MOINES STAMP MFG	SELF-INKING STAMP-POLICE	41.00
FIVE STAR SHOP SERVICE	EQUIPMENT - FIRE	1,459.65
FROESE, AMANDA	KINDER T-BALL REFUND	15.00
HAWKINS	CHEMICALS	2,970.28
HENNING, JOELLE	KINDER T-BALL REFUND	15.00
IA LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY	MMPI-2 EVAL POLICE	150.00
KANOPY	ON DEMAND VIDEO SERVICE	11.00
KIESLER POLICE SUPPLY	EQUIPMENT-POLICE	485.00
KLEVEN, AMBER	1ST/2ND BASKETBALL REFUND	50.00
KOFOED, ADAM	BLDG INCENTIVE PAYMENT	1,000.00
LEAF CAPITAL FUNDING	COPIER LEASE-LIBRARY	142.02
LINN COUNTY R.E.C.	STREET LIGHTS	292.16
LRS HOLDINGS	TRASH & RECYCLING JAN 2024	22,935.75
LYNCH'S PLUMBING	SERVICE BOILER- FIRE	140.00
MERCY IOWA CITY PHYSICIANS	DRUG TEST FEE-POLICE	44.00
MIDWEST FRAME & AXLE	PLOW CUTTING EDGES	1,297.42
MOPPY MO'S	CLEANING SERVICES-CITY, TH, LIBRARY	857.50
OLSON, KEVIN	LEGAL SERVICES-FEB 2024	1,500.00
PIP PRINTING & MARKETING	PRINTING FOR CITY, FIRE	364.14
PROTECT YOUTH SPORTS	BACKGROUND CHECKS-PD, P&R	39.95
QC ANALYTICAL SERVICES	LAB ANALYSIS	1,108.00
QUILL	OFFICE SUPPLIES-CITY OFFICE	19.44

STATE HYGIENIC LAB	LAB ANALYSIS	43.50
US BANK CORPORATE CARD	CREDIT CARD PURCHASES	2,903.27
WEST BRANCH TIMES	LEGAL PUBLICATIONS	502.46
WEX BANK	VEHICLE FUEL	790.66
TOTAL		65,406.72
PAYROLL-WAGES, TAXES, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	2/16/2024	48,768.22
PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS		
CARDCONNECT	CREDIT CARD FEES	157.25
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 1-29-2024	1,546.42
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 2-5-2024	15.75
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 2-12-2024	85.50
VARIOUS VENDORS	UB REFUNDS	79.26
VARIOUS VENDORS	UB REFUNDS	374.05
TOTAL		2,258.23
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES		116,433.17
FUND TOTALS		
001 GENERAL FUND	61,252.79	
022 CIVIC CENTER	1,077.94	
031 LIBRARY	6,331.94	
110 ROAD USE TAX	12,398.00	
112 TRUST AND AGENCY	10,852.47	
600 WATER FUND	15,393.41	
610 SEWER FUND	8,637.13	
740 STORM WATER UTILITY	489.49	
GRAND FUND TOTAL	116,433.17	
REVENUE-FISCAL YEAR 2024		
FUND NOVEMBER		
001 GENERAL FUND	156,038.89	
022 CIVIC CENTER	1,565.07	
031 LIBRARY	1,307.31	
036 TORT LIABILITY	3,163.44	
110 ROAD USE TAX	27,772.37	
112 TRUST & AGENCY	15,720.70	
119 EMERGENCY TAX FUND	1,699.95	
121 LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX	28,236.55	
125 TIF	17,428.43	
126 TIF LMI MEADOWS PT 4	712.00	
226 DEBT SERVICE	13,271.87	
300 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RESERVE	3,244.56	
500 CEMETERY PERPETUAL FUND	600.00	
600 WATER FUND	82,750.90	
610 SEWER FUND	87,375.45	
740 STORM WATER UTILITY	6,066.75	
TOTAL	446,954.24	

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

PRESENTATIONS / COMMUNICATIONS / OPEN FORUM

Anthony Cappel, representing Main Street West Branch addressed the Council reminding them that Main Street West Branch is a partner to the city and shares many of the same goals to work cooperatively with the City. Cappel spoke about the Community Visioning project that both organizations participated in last year to improve the downtown for residents and tourists in hopes of renewing interest in keeping the project moving forward.

PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Public Hearing – Phase 2 Eastside Water Main Replacement Project.

Laughlin opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m. There were no public comments. Laughlin closed the public hearing at 7:07 p.m.

Resolution 2024-11 – Accept and award the contract for the Phase 2 East Side Water Main Replacement Project to Midwest Underground Contractors Inc. in the amount of \$840,277.00. / Move to action.

Of the seven companies that submitted bids for the project, Eric Gould of Veenstra & Kimm said that Midwest Underground Contractors Inc. based out of Walford, Iowa was the apparent low bidder. Midwest Underground Contractors submitted a bid for both project scopes; Scope 1 – open cut trenches and Scope 2 - directional boring. Gould said the Engineer’s estimate cost for the project for Scope 2 was \$1,150,000.00 Midwest Underground Contractors submitted a bid for scope 2 in the amount of \$840,277.00 which is approximately 26.9% below the Engineer’s estimate cost of the project. Gould said Veenstra & Kimm believes that Midwest Underground Contractors Inc., has sufficient experience and resources to complete the project within the contract time and recommends that the City accept the construction contract for Scope 2 with the bid amount of \$840,277.00.

Motion by Dean, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 2024-11. AYES: Dean, Sexton, Stoolman, Goodweiler, Horihan. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2024-12 - Approving Pay Estimate Number 7 in the amount of \$40,000 to Lynch Excavating Inc. for the East Side Water Main Replacement Project. / Move to action.

Eric Gould of Veenstra & Kimm said that the project is substantially complete with only spring seeding remaining. Gould said Lynch has requested a partial release of the retainage for the project.

Motion by Sexton, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2024-12. AYES: Sexton, Dean, Horihan, Goodweiler, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2024-13 - Approving Pay Estimate Number 16 in the amount of \$62,781.19 to Boomerang Corp. for the Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements Project. / Move to action.

Motion by Sexton, second by Horihan to approve Resolution 2024-13. AYES: Sexton, Horihan, Goodweiler, Stoolman, Dean. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2024-14 – Approving invoice #33192 in the amount of \$4,970.00 to Impact7G Inc. for the Wapsi Creek Widening – SRF Sponsored Project. / Move to action.

Motion by Sexton, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2024-14. AYES: Sexton, Dean, Stoolman, Goodweiler, Horihan. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2024-15 – Establishing an allocation policy for Local Hotel and Motel Tax Revenues. / Move to action.

Motion by Dean, second by Horihan to approve Resolution 2024-15. AYES: Dean, Horihan, Sexton, Stoolman, Goodweiler. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2024-16 – Appointing Gregory Hall to the position of Police Chief for the City of West Branch and setting the annual salary for the position. / Move to action.

Hall, a fourteen-year law enforcement veteran served in Jones County, Tipton, Durant, University Heights and West Branch (part-time) during his career. Hall was interviewed by three panels consisting of city council members, staff, law enforcement professionals and members of the public and was the committee’s top candidate to fill the role of Chief of Police. Hall will start his employment with the City in early March.

Motion by Dean, second by Horihan to approve Resolution 2024-16. AYES: Dean, Horihan, Stoolman, Sexton, Goodweiler. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Administer Oath of Office - Police Chief Greg Hall

Mayor Laughlin performed the oath of office for Chief Hall.

Discussion – Ending the West Branch Building Incentive Plan to fund a full-time Parks & Recreation Director
Kofoed said that through individual discussions with Council members, staff, residents and other community groups, the consensus is to discontinue tax rebates through the building incentive program. The program which began in 2015, enticed builders and new/current residents to invest in West Branch and build new homes. The incentive gave reduced building permits fees to the builders, waived certain infrastructure charges and a five-thousand-dollar tax rebate to the homeowner for a limited time. It's apparent that the program did what it was intended to do, but is it worth eliminating a department of the city? Kofoed said sixty-thousand dollars is budgeted annually from the general fund for the tax rebates and by ending the program, that money could be allocated to back to the Parks & Recreation department. Sexton said that he doesn't feel that the position needs to be full-time. Kofoed said that increased programming will be expected to fill gaps with adult and senior age groups during the winter months when most of the children's programs occur in the spring through fall. Kofoed said he has also learned that there are many park & recs grants available and that by reinstating a director position, applying for grants would be a requirement to help sustain some of the department needs. Sexton said he would support ending the tax rebate program, but said he is disappointed for those property owners who built homes expecting the incentive. Stoolman said she is in favor of bringing back a recreation department, but wanted to see how funding the police department will affect the general fund first. She also asked if there were still plans for increasing staff in the city office. Kofoed said that a shared park & recreation and deputy clerk position was discussed, but was determined to not be the best situation since the roles are very different and the utility billing responsibilities have many daily and monthly deadlines which would interfere with the recreation duties.

Discussion – Outsourcing concession sales at Cubby Park for 2024

Kofoed said he reached out to a couple of concession vendors who would be able to help with running the Cubby Park concession stand for the upcoming season due to the lack of a park & recreation director. He said one vendor is willing to take on the concession stand and in exchange the City would receive a portion of the sales. Kofoed said a contract between the two parties is being reviewed by legal and would be coming back to Council for consideration in the coming weeks. Sexton asked if the vendor would be offering concessions during park & rec activities or just tournaments. Kofoed said the final details had not been worked out yet with the vendor. The other members agreed that a vendor should take over this year and maybe consider it for future years as well with other community groups if all goes well.

Discussion – Strategic Planning – Planning Projects for the future

More discussion took place on which to prioritize; Cedar-Johnson Road re-construction or Main Street. The Council was split on the issue. Improving Cedar-Johnson Road would allow the city more growth to the west and also not affect interstate traffic detours for the duration of the I-80 widening project which is scheduled to be completed in 2027. Main Street (from Parkside Drive to the round-about) a heavily trafficked thoroughway is in dire need of repair from Thomas Drive to the round-about according to Public Works Director Matt Goodale. Goodale said the road is literally "falling apart". Kofoed suggested Main Street through downtown be prioritized as there are grants available and would spur the community visioning of street scaping the downtown and Heritage Square area. After much discussion, Kofoed asked the Council for direction to give to the city engineer to start the planning and design phases of the proposed projects. The Council finally landed on 1) Cedar-Johnson Road, 2) West Main Street (from Thomas Drive to the round-about), 3) Main Street (downtown area and street scaping).

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Kofoed said he recently was notified that the Lower West Branch Road bridge that crosses the interstate just to the west of the city limits will be taken down during the week of March 4th. Kofoed said interstate traffic will be detoured through West Branch during the overnight lane closure.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT – Absent

CITY ENGINEER REPORT - Absent

STAFF REPORTS – No reports

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Laughlin noted that the new mobility lift had been installed at the Town Hall. Horihan thanked Sgt. Steen and incoming Chief Hall for their combined efforts in rebuilding the police department.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Dean, second by Sexton. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leslie Brick, City Clerk