

(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 4, 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, Police Chief Greg Hall, Public Works Director Matt Goodale and City Attorney Kevin Olson. City Staff attending via Zoom: Finance Officer Heidi Van Auken Library Director Jessie Schafer and Sergeant Cathy Steen.

APPROVE THE AGENDA

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

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Approve the minutes from the February 20, 2024 City Council meeting.
Approve a Class E Retail Alcohol License for Casey’s Marketing Company #3463, 615 S. Downey St., West Branch.
Approve the December 2023 Monthly Financial Report.
Approve the January 2024 Monthly Financial Report.
Approve Claims for March 4, 2024.

EXPENDITURES	3/4/2024	
BAKER & TAYLOR	BOOKS	395.42
CEDAR COUNTY RECORDER	RECORDING FEES	42.00
HI-LINE	SHOP SUPPLIES-PW	41.00
IMPACT7G	WIDENING WAPSI CREEK	4,970.00
IOWA ONE CALL	UTILITY LOCATION SERVICE	21.60
KIESLER POLICE SUPPLY	EQUIPMENT-POLICE	242.00
LIBERTY COMMUNICATIONS	LIBERTY COMMUNICATIONS	1,578.17
LYNCH'S EXCAVATING	EASTSIDE MAIN PAYMENT & MAIN REPAIR	44,464.00
MAINSTAY SYSTEMS OF IOWA	BACKUP SOFTWARE & LAPTOPS	2,377.00
MOORE'S WELDING	PLOW REPAIR	127.50
OVERDRIVE	DIGITAL & AUDIO BOOKS	39.99
STEEN, CATHERINE	ILEA CONF REIMBURSE-STEEN	402.48
THOMAS HEATING & AIR	FOOD PANTRY FURNACE REPAIR	85.00
UNIFORM DEN	UNIFORM-POLICE	974.90
VEENSTRA & KIMM	VARIOUS PROJECTS	23,729.80
TOTAL		79,490.86
PAYROLL-WAGES, TAXES, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	3/1/2024	40,621.96
PAID BETWEEN MEETINGS		
AMAZON.COM	MEMBERSHIP FEES 2022, 2023	358.00
LEAF CAPITAL FUNDING	COPIER LEASE-CITY OFFICE	435.60
MEDIACOM	CABLE SERVICE	41.90
PITNEY BOWES GLOBAL	POSTAGE METER LEASE-LIBRARY	77.37
VERIZON WIRELESS	VERIZON WIRELESS	412.88
METLIFE	INSURANCE	1,084.43
SISCO	INSURANCE	9,830.02
BOOMERANG	WW TREATMENT PAY ESTIMATE 16	62,781.19
IA INSURANCE DIVISION	CEMETERY REPORT FILING FEE	171.00
SISCO	HEALTH CLAIMS 2/20/2024	1,620.00
TOTAL		76,812.39
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURES		196,925.21

FUND TOTALS		
001	GENERAL FUND	22,387.77
022	CIVIC CENTER	130.22
031	LIBRARY	7,010.53
110	ROAD USE TAX	4,867.86
112	TRUST AND AGENCY	13,877.33
321	WIDENING WAPSI CREEK	10,411.50
324	WW TREATMENT FACILITY	75,473.13
326	ROUNDAABOUT MAIN & CEDAR	220.00
329	EASTSIDE WATER MAIN PH1	40,240.00
330	EASTSIDE WATER MAIN PH2	3,969.04
600	WATER FUND	11,253.35
610	SEWER FUND	6,568.25
740	STORM WATER UTILITY	516.23
GRAND FUND TOTAL		196,925.21

REVENUE-FISCAL YEAR 2023
FUND DECEMBER

001	GENERAL FUND	70,129.61
022	CIVIC CENTER	880.16
026	SIGNS ACCIONA DONATION	86.77
031	LIBRARY	1,260.76
036	TORT LIABILITY	968.16
110	ROAD USE TAX	30,219.22
112	TRUST & AGENGY	6,136.02
119	EMERGENCY TAX FUND	520.31
121	LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX	27,214.58
125	TIF	2,448.39
126	TIF LMI MEADOWS PT 4	619.98
226	DEBT SERVICE	3,943.63
300	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RESERVE	993.02
324	WW TREATMENT FACILITY	556,055.90
500	CEMETERY PERPETUAL FUND	504.89
501	KROUTH PRINCIPAL FUND	742.95
502	KROUTH INTEREST FUND	347.32
600	WATER FUND	60,428.78
610	SEWER FUND	79,117.88
740	STORM WATER UTILITY	5,541.09
TOTAL		848,159.42

REVENUE-FISCAL YEAR 2024
FUND JANUARY

001	GENERAL FUND	35,241.36
022	CIVIC CENTER	374.68
031	LIBRARY	365.15
036	TORT LIABILITY	333.64
110	ROAD USE TAX	29,371.85
112	TRUST & AGENGY	3,244.22
119	EMERGENCY TAX FUND	179.28
121	LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX	25,650.25
125	TIF	707.57
226	DEBT SERVICE	1,521.22
300	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT RESERVE	342.22
324	WW TREATMENT FACILITY	467,595.89
500	CEMETERY PERPETUAL FUND	172.87
600	WATER FUND	55,244.77
610	SEWER FUND	73,966.60
740	STORM WATER UTILITY	6,459.16
TOTAL		700,770.73

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

Rebecca Whitaker, 406 Dawson Drive addressed the Council and expressed her disappointment with the proposed termination of the Building Incentive Program. Whitaker said the incentive was in part what attracted her to West Branch as well as others in her new neighborhood. Whitaker said affected eligible homeowners

were not notified by the Council or city staff to discuss the proposal and was disappointed in the lack of communication. Whitaker said she feels that the program was “false advertisement”.

PUBLIC HEARING / NON-CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution 2024-17 – Approving a contract with Willie Guy for Cubby Park concession sales and management for 2024. / Move to action.

No discussion.

Motion by Dean, second by Sexton to approve Resolution 2024-17. AYES: Dean, Sexton, Stoolman, Horihan, Goodweiler. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2024-18 – Approving the termination of the West Branch Building Incentive Program. / Move to action.

Sexton said he was part of the committee who developed the program in 2015 when no growth was occurring in West Branch. The committee consisted of builders, realtors, developers, bankers, private citizens, city staff and business owners. All had a vested interest in seeing the city grow. He said no one expected to see the quick growth the program would see, but is happy with the results. Sexton said he feels the rebate portion of the program should continue for those eligible homeowners. He added that the rebate was similar to “TIF rebates given to developers, the city doesn’t take that away.” Goodweiler argued in support of ending the program and in favor of hiring a Parks & Recreation Director with those funds. He reminded the Council that Parks & Recreation has been around for over twenty years and residents expect it. Horihan added that when the program was first introduced in 2015, as a private citizen he wasn’t for it. He also felt the Council should have had a hard end date from the get go. To address why the Council proposed ending the program, Van Auken reminded them that the additional three hundred thousand dollars added to the police budget was a factor. Van Auken said that she and City Administrator Kofoed looked for other areas to cut, but this program will cut to help save another. She added that in recent months, senior residents have asked why there were no activities for the senior population as well as children programs. Kofoed added a long list of areas that have been cut starting in 2022 to current. He said he struggles with giving property owners “who can afford a new home, over kids from the mobile home village who can’t afford recreation activities” and said sacrifices have to be made somewhere. Kofoed too, said he is eligible for the program so it affects him as well.

Motion by Sexton, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2024-18. AYES: Dean, Goodweiler, Horihan. NAYS: Sexton, Stoolman. Motion carried.

Resolution 2024-19 – Approving to hire Erin Laughlin as the Full-time Parks & Recreation Director. / Move to action.

Laughlin recused himself from this portion of the meeting due to his relationship with the proposed candidate. Horihan asked Kofoed to provide some background on Miss Laughlin’s background that qualified her for the position. Kofoed responded that (Erin) was interviewed in October of 2023 when the position was vacated by the director hired in early 2023. Kofoed said that five applications were received and that Erin was in the top two and interviewed twice. Kofoed said although Erin does not have a parks and recreation background, she has volunteered and organized youth activities in the past. Kofoed described Erin as a “go-getter, and someone who is willing to take on any kind of challenge”.

Motion by Goodweiler, second by Dean to approve Resolution 2024-19. AYES: Goodweiler, Dean, Stoolman, Horihan, Sexton. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Resolution 2024-20 – Approving Support for the City Administrator to apply for Cedar-Johnson Road Reconstruction Funding under Congressperson Miller-Meeks FY2025 Community Project Funding Program. / Move to action.

Kofoed said Council support will allow him to apply for the Miller-Meek’s Community Project Grant which he applied for last year, but was unsuccessful. Kofoed said there is no cost to apply for the grant and said he would apply to fund the cost of the Cedar-Johnson Road reconstruction costs.

Motion by Sexton, second by Horihan to approve Resolution 2024-20. AYES: Sexton, Horihan, Goodweiler, Dean, Stoolman. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

Discussion – Review tree quotes for the Wapsi Creek Widening Project

Eric Gould of Veenstra & Kimm informed the Council that his firm had received four quotes on taking down trees in the project area that needs to be complete by March 31st of this year so as to not interfere with the bat habitat that begins in April. Gould said approximately three hundred trees will need to come down and the low quote came from Barnhart Custom Services in the amount of \$7440.00. Gould said if the city uses their own funds for the tree removal, it would have no affect on the SRF Sponsored Project grant. The Council verbally accepted the low quote to keep the project moving forward to meet the March 31st deadline.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Kofoed reminded the Council of the many service projects the West Branch Lions Club does for the community such as helping fundraise and receive grant funds for the new mobility lift at Town Hall and offering to help the City with the annual Easter Egg Hunt. Kofoed also welcomed Chief Hall as the new police chief and recognized the qualities that made him the city’s top candidate.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT – No report

CITY ENGINEER REPORT - Absent

STAFF REPORTS – No reports

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Goodweiler mentioned that the city’s new online payment system seemed to have some quirks and asked if others were experiencing issues as well.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Sexton, second by Dean. Motion carried on a voice vote. City Council meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Roger Laughlin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leslie Brick, City Clerk