

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL
JANUARY 2, 2026**

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Mayor Evenson. Members present: Jack Evenson, Eric Payne, Dan Enderson, Nancy Maanum, and Cherie Stielow. Members Absent: None. Also present: City Clerk Valerie Alsaker, Director of Finance Lisa Kent, Laura Ostlie with Bollig Engineering, City Manager Matt Skaret, City Attorney Stephen Kowal, CEDA Representative Laura Mitteness, Public Works Director Jeff Reuss, Rob Wolfington and Reed Anfinson. On-Line: Rick Schaefer with USAquatics.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked for any changes to the agenda to which there were none. It was moved by Payne, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

The Mayor called for approval of the consent agenda. It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

- December 15, 2025 Regular City Council Minutes
- December 4, 2025 Safety Committee Minutes
- November 17, 2025 EDA Minutes
- Charter Communications Upcoming Changes
- Appoint Peter Carruth to the Airport Commission Term Ending Dec.31, 2028
- Appoint Gene Doscher to the Airport Commission Term Ending Dec. 31, 2028
- Electronic Transfers:
Payroll: December 25, 2025 - \$109,650.17

The Mayor asked for staff announcements to which there were none.

The Mayor called for persons with unscheduled business. Wolfington said in the packet you will see an update to the WAPA agreement. He said as discussed last year, there will be an update to the MRES S-1 contract. It is being rewritten to allow for expansion for expanded energy resources. And lastly, there was a conference call this morning on the 115KV line coming to Benson. The project is coming along nicely. On January 21, 2026 our permit will go the Public Utility Commission and Administrative Law Judge. If approved it will go into effect within 30-60 days, and we will start to see progress on the project, with expected completion in 2028.

Ostlie approached the Council. She said there are 87 residents with lead service lines that need replacing on the private side of the service. Bollig is ready to complete the next step but needs Council approval to move forward with Task Order #1 which is applying for a grant to manage the project along with the agreement for professional services. She said the Federal government is financing the project through the State of Minnesota. She said Bollig wants to get out ahead of other cities by submitting our application early. This application process will be completed this year, and water line replacement would begin in 2027 in a phased approach. After further discussion, it was moved by Stielow, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to approve Task Order One, and the professional agreement between Bollig Engineers and the City of Benson as presented.

Skaret approached to discuss two recent proposals for the swimming pool rehab project. Last October, we received only one bid from Global Specialties in the amount of \$1.2 million. This is far over our budget. Schaefer said he solicited proposals from Horizon and Global Specialties again December 12, 2025. Horizon's came in at \$632,393 without any bids on recoating of the slide. The Global Specialty bid came in at \$1,1770,000, with no bid on the VFD pump installation. Schaeffer said Horizon bid what we asked and reviewed their proposal. He said if Council intends to work with Horizon he recommended Horizon come on site with our operators and to finalize exactly what we want. Kowal asked about the contracting laws and bid process and was concerned about directly contracting off of these proposals. Skaret asked Schaffer if he used the same bid package as we did with the competitive bidding process in October to which Schaffer said yes. We only asked for more line item breakdown and explanation on the previous bids. He said we conducted the formal bid, the secondary request to allow us to evaluate the bid rather than just pick the low bidder and further suggested we select from one of the bids, then negotiate exactly what we want. If this process is taking too long we can review and discuss the bid and process in tandem. If the Council is comfortable with the process so far, we can move forward. Enderson said he assumed we would rebid with each item separated out. Shafer said Global did not do that, but Horizon did without the slide. Kowal emphasized we need to move forward properly by statutory laws and wants to review the process. It was agreed Schaffer and Kowal will discuss the process along with Skaret. Schaffer said we are not entering into a contract, but reviewing it. It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to direct Schaeffer to enter into a discussion/negotiation with Horizon Pools.

Next was City Council Appointments. It was then moved by Maanum, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the following City Council Appointments:

Chain of Command:	Jack Evenson [Mayor] Dan Enderson Nancy Maanum Eric Payne Cherie Stielow
Airport Board [Liaison]	Dan Enderson
Blight Committee:	Dan Enderson and Eric Payne
EDA: [Voting Members]	Dan Enderson and Jack Evenson
Fire Board:	Eric Payne and Jack Evenson
HRA: [Voting Members]	Nancy Maanum [Council opted to leave one spot open]
Library Board: [Council Liaison]	Jack Evenson
Liquor Committee:	Dan Enderson and Nancy Maanum
Park Board:	
Voting Member	Eric Payne
Council Liaison	[Council opted to leave this position open in 2022]
Personnel Committee:	Jack Evenson and Dan Enderson
Planning Commission: [Voting Member]	Jack Evenson and Dan Enderson
Utility Committee:	Jack Evenson and Nancy Maanum
Facilities Committee:	Cherie Stielow and Jack Evenson
Civic Center Board:	Dan Enderson
Kid Day Committee:	Cherie Stielow and Jack Evenson
City Attorney (Civil):	Stephen Kowal

Prosecuting Attorney (Criminal):

Danielle Olson

It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to designate the Monitor News as the official newspaper in 2026.

It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously that state banks, national banks, and thrift institutions located either within or outside the State of Minnesota that qualify as depositories under Minnesota Law are hereby designated as depositories for the City of Benson.

It was moved by Stielow, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to authorize the following as check signers on all accounts: Mayor Jack Evenson, Director of Finance Lisa Kent, City Manager Matt Skaret. Incidental Fund: Valerie Alsaker.

It was moved by Payne, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the City of Benson Electronic Funds and Wire Transfers Policy as presented.

Councilmember Maanum offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION DESIGNATING AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATION
(RESOLUTION NO. 2026-01)**

WHEREAS, THE Governing body of the City of Benson, Minnesota has entered into an agreement to establish The **Missouri Basin Municipal Power Agency, d.b.a. Missouri Rivers Energy Services (MRES)**, and as a member thereof is entitled to a representative who shall represent the Municipal Utility in the business of MRES.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Robert Wolfington be and is hereby authorized and appointed as the representative of the City of Benson, Minnesota, to represent the Municipal Utility in the business of MRES, with the powers, duties and responsibilities as provided in said agreement. The alternate representative, Jack Evenson, is hereby authorized and appointed with equal powers.

Councilmember Stielow seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Evenson, Stielow, Payne, Enderson, Maanum. NAYES: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2026-01 duly passed and adopted.

Councilmember Enderson offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION DESIGNATING AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATION
(RESOLUTION NO. 2026-02)**

WHEREAS, THE Governing body of the City of Benson, Minnesota has entered into an agreement to establish The **Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (WMMPA)**, and as a member thereof is entitled to a representative who shall represent the Municipal Utility in the business of WMMPA.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Robert Wolfington be and is hereby authorized and appointed as the representative of the City of Benson, Minnesota, to represent the Municipal Utility in the business of WMMPA, with the powers, duties and responsibilities as provided in said agreement. The alternate representative, Jack Evenson, is hereby authorized and appointed with equal powers.

Councilmember Maanum seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Evenson, Maanum, Landmark, Payne, Enderson. NAYES: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2026-02 duly passed and adopted.

Councilmember Payne offered the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION TO CONTRACT FOR SALE OF
SURPLUS, OBSOLETE OR UNUSED EQUIPMENT
(RESOLUTION NO. 2026-03)**

WHEREAS, the City of Benson has a need from time to time to sell surplus, obsolete or unused equipment; and,

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Municipal Contracting Law, Minnesota Statutes Section 471.345, Subdivision 17 permits a municipality to sell such surplus, obsolete or unused equipment, without a requirement of competitive bidding, by using an electronic selling process in which purchasers compete to purchase the surplus equipment at the highest price in an open and interactive environment; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the use of such an electronic selling process would be cost effective, efficient and in the best interest of the City and its citizens; and,

WHEREAS, J.A.X. of Benson is a local franchisee of K-Bid and is able to provide an electronic selling process which will fill the needs of the City; and,

WHEREAS, Jack Evenson, the owner of J.A.X. of Benson is a member of the Benson City Council and therefore a public officer of the City of Benson, Minnesota Statutes Section 471.87 prohibits a public officer who is authorized to take part in any manner in making any sale, lease or contract in an official capacity from having a financial interest in that sale, lease or contract or from personally benefitting therefrom; and,

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes Section 471.88 provides an exception to the prohibition stated in Minnesota Statutes Section 471.87 for a contract for which competitive bids are not required by law; and,

WHEREAS, competitive bids are not required by law to enter into a contract for services for arranging the sale of city property; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the contract price offered by J.A.X of Benson is as low as or lower than the price at which the services could be obtained elsewhere.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the city manager is authorized to enter into a contract with J.A.X of Benson for the sale of surplus, obsolete or unused City equipment through the use of an electronic selling process which meets the requirements of Minnesota Statutes Section 471.345, Subdivision 17.

Councilmember Stielow seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Evenson, Maanum, Landmark, Payne, Enderson. NAYES: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2026-03 duly passed and adopted.

It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the 2nd Reading of an Ordinance to Amend Chapter 71.13 of the Benson Code of Ordinances Pertaining to Snow Emergencies.

Next was the draft WAPA, Benson, and MRES REC DE Contract and Firm Electric Services (FES) Amendment. The FES Amendment updates the GPCPs to the latest version, which allows for REC resale. The REC Contract provides the terms and conditions MRES shall follow in providing REC Management Services to Benson, consistent with the WAPA-UGPR REC Program principles, and the applicable General Power Contract Provisions dated July 17, 2025. Kent said MRES has reviewed the documents and finds them acceptable. After discussion, it was moved by Maanum, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to approve the draft agreement as presented, and direct staff to notify MRES for preparation of the final contract signatures.

Next was the MMUA Annual membership for 2026. It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the 2026 MMUA Membership in the amount of \$7,929.00.

Alsaker approached. She said the City of Benson has been in a long standing relationship with MMUA for their drug testing services. The Line Crew has used MMUA for safety training for many years, and eight years ago, the City contracted with MMUA for the employee safety program. They do a great job and have knowledgeable instructors, with classes once a month. She recommended approval of the 2026 safety program. After discussion, it was moved by Stielow, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to approve the MMUA 2026 Safety Program in the amount of \$16,230.00.

It was moved by Payne, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve a pay request from Stantec Engineering for the wellhead protection plan part 2 in the amount of \$6,792.50.

Reuss approached with two pay requests from Land Pride Construction. The first is for replacing a 10" gate valve and box at the intersection of 12th St. N. and Nevada Ave. It was moved by Stielow, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the pay request in the amount of \$13,519.39. The second pay request is for the water main repairs on State Hwy 29. It was moved by Payne, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to approve the pay request in the amount of \$7,800.00.

City Manager Report:

- Skaret, Clavin with CEDA and Rob Wolfington attended the Minnesota Renewable Round Table Conference, and visited with a party with a promising lead for a business in Benson.
- Skaret, Tweed and Clavin attempted a trip to MRES in Sioux Falls, but had to turn around due to bad weather.
- There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Benson Community Center on January 6, 2026 at 2:30 p.m.
- We have received 7 applications for the Charter Commission and will bring those names to the next Council Meeting on January 12, 2026 at 5:340 p.m. for approval, which will then go for approval to the law judge.

There being no further business to come before the Council a motion was made by Payne, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to adjourn the Council meeting at 1:01 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk