

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL
NOVEMBER 3, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 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, Public Works Director Jeff Reuss, City Manager Matt Skaret, City Attorney Stephen Kowal, Sheila Kroese with Bolton & Menk, Mike Amborn with Rodeberg & Berryman Inc., CEDA Representative Hillary Tweed, MRES Ambassador Rob Wolfington, Elliot Nelson and Benson Fire Department members Tom Foley, Eric Tolifson, Mark Plumhoff and Nathan Motzko. Telephonically: Joe Peters with MRES and Reed Anfinson.

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 and seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

- October 20, 2025 City Council Minutes
- Grainger – Purchase of a Floor Scrubber at the Armory - \$5,716.35
- Pay Request Bolton & Menk – Floodwall Project - \$23,541.25
- Rodeberg & Berryman – Utility Street Improvements - \$14,150-Bal-\$15,950
- Rodeberg & Berryman – Cottage Square Phase 3 - \$8,480 – Bal. \$19,205
- PioneerLand Library System – 4th Quarter Funding Request - \$26,918.50
- USAquatics Construction Documents/Bidding Pool Project - \$8,000-Bal \$70,000
- Ferguson Paving – Paving Alley Behind Armory - \$21,090
- Electronic Transfers:
 - Payroll: October 30, 2025 - \$108,186.02
 - Journal Entries for September - \$5,583,923.41

Staff Announcements: Mayor Evenson said his grandson graduates from Marines basic training in 30 days.

There was no one with unscheduled business.

The Mayor opened the public hearing at 5:31 p.m. for the DEED Small Cities CDBG-CV project. Tweed said as a requirement for the Armory grant, we are required to hold a second public hearing close to the end of the project. This gives the public a chance to comment and hear updates on the project. We have a one day temporary occupancy for the School District to hold their special election tomorrow. There was a punch list walk-through two weeks ago, and she said she went through a State Grant monitoring two weeks ago. Tweed predicted the project will be wrapped up in the near future. There was no one from the public attending the public hearing, and no public comment. the Mayor closed the public hearing at 5:35 p.m.

Next Joe Peters from MRES gave a presentation on the Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) program, covering basics of the program. It is that time of year the Council has to decide on what they will do with REC. MRES will manage the WAPA RECs on the member's behalf. We, the member will decide if we sell them, retire them or purchase them. MRES Ambassador Wolfington said this is a Minnesota Renewable requirement. After discussion, It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to go for option #2, to purchase an additional estimated 6,554 RECs at \$1 each (based on actual 2026 consumption).

Krose approached with a pay request to Crow River Construction for the flood wall project. She said the berm is built, the wall is up and they are paving the road today. She said the project could be done in 2 weeks. It was moved by Maanum and seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve Pay request #2 to Crow River Construction in the amount of \$628,256.16. Enderson asked why the change order is not included in the pay application break out. Krose said it hasn't been expensed yet, but it will include it in the future.

Amborn presented a pay request for the 12th St. S., 18th St. N. and Cottage Square street and utility work. He said they are wrapping up these projects for this year. They will raise manholes for winter and the second lift of bituminous will go on next spring. It was moved by Stielow, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve pay application #4 to Land Pride Construction in the amount of \$259,469.96.

Next Krose said it's time to choose a design for the water tower so the bids can go out on next year's refurbishment of the water tower. There were 3 mock-ups to choose from. After discussion, it was moved by Maanum, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously on Option 3, green top, green bottom and the City logo in the middle white strip.

Skaret presented a rental and agreement policy and prices for Armory rentals. The City Attorney vetted the document, and said the first official rental of the space will be December 1, 2025. After further discussion, it was moved by Payne, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to approve the rental policy and agreement and prices as presented.

Next Reuss presented a pay application from Ferguson Asphalt for this year's bituminous. The original bid was for \$53,656. Ferguson was also used to patch water main breaks on 16th St. N. and Hwy 29 N. by the Courthouse. There was over run on the Montana Avenue paving. They had to fix part of 9th St. North by Montana Avenue as over winter this area crumbled. There was concern the final bill was \$20,000 over the bid amount. After discussion, it was moved by Stielow, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to pay Ferguson Asphalt Paving in the amount of \$73,731.64.

Reuss presented a Minnesota Department of Minnesota Aeronautics 2026 Grant award notification for the airport. The septic system at the airport is failing, and we are having to pump it out. We originally applied for this grant a couple years ago, and didn't receive it. We have been awarded this grant in round two of the grant. We need to notify the State of our intent to apply for this grant by November 14, 2025. The Grant is for replacing the septic system up to \$125,000. The City would have to pay 30% and the state will pay 70% of the project. There will also be engineering needed. Reuss said he and Skaret consulted our airport engineer Silas Parmar from Bolton & Menk as well as previous Public Works Director Elliot Nelson who said the main problem is there is a dip in the sewer pipe and it is freezing. There was discussion on the cost and if we could save money by replacing it independently. It

was the opinion of Wolfington and Nelson we could not. After discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve moving forward with the grant application.

Next Firemen Motzko and Tolifson approached the Council to get approval to increase their PERA Firefighter Retirement from \$1,800 contribution to \$2,1000. This is for those firemen that are vested, which means you have served on the department for five years. Motzko said they want to increase the retirement as a means to encourage Fireman to stay on, and to use it as a recruiting tool. He presented a list of several departments around the area and what their cities are contributing. Enderson asked why is this coming now? Foley said if the Council approves it by December, it can go into effect January 2026. Kent said the information in the packet is only a report for our audit. Typically we need to request a cost analysis from PERA first. This actuarial doesn't have the proposed \$2,100 ask in it. Enderson said he doesn't like these things coming before Council for a quick decision, and this did not come before the Personal Committee. After further discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to table this until the Personnel Committee can meet and decide at the next Council meeting.

Skaret said our Wastewater plant is required to have a licensed Class A operator. We have been contracting with Brent Powers to be our Class A operator. We have an employee that will be eligible to test for his Class A license next spring. Powers is asking to raise his monthly contracted amount by \$600. After discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the amended Wastewater Class A contractor agreement with Brent Powers raising his monthly fee from \$2,400 to \$3,000 starting November 1, 2025.

Reuss presented a capital authorization request to purchase a new sectional snow pusher. Our old one is in rough shape. This will be used to clear snow from streets and parking lots. It's design will be easier on infrastructure in the road. He went on to say we would like to keep the old one as an emergency back-up. He presented two quotes. One is from Arnold's in the amount of \$20,000. The other is from John Deere in the amount of \$20,580. He said this item is in the 2025 budget. After discussion, it was moved by Payne, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve purchase of the 2025, 11.5' sectional Artic Snow Pusher from Arnold's in the amount of \$20,000.

Reuss then said he would like to sell the dump truck we replaced with the Swift County dump truck. He would like to sell it at auction. After discussion, it was moved by Maanum, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to approve selling the 2007 Sterling Tandem dump truck at auction.

Skaret said the Liquor Committee has met. They looked at the Liquor Store and City Hall and they are both in need of work. The Committee feels they are at a cross roads and have made a decision to take the next step to have Ringdahl Architects draw up a proposal to look at possibly building a new City Hall/Liquor Store. Dustin Johnson from Ringdahl has come out and submitted a proposal for services to see how it would look. There was discussion on redesigning what we have for a liquor store which won't solve our problem of the small building. Neighboring communities that are building new stores say construction costs are roughly \$240 a square foot, which would come in at about \$1.9 million. After discussion, it was moved by Maanum, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to approve Ringdahl Architectural services proposal in the amount of \$4,200.

City Manager's Report:

- We will be advertising for a full time position in the billing office after AFSCME Union approval. We also have a part time position being advertised at the Liquor Store.

- He has the streets and utility CIP street work for 10 years at a cost of \$21 million. He will be scheduling a date for a CIP work shop.
- We need one to two more applications for the Charter Commission.
- The BNSF Study for the 115kv line is back and shows no interference with railroad operations.
- We will be training on the new GoGov application. Marketing materials are coming to send out to citizens.
- With the Federal Government shut down, we have not received any reimbursement on our grants. This may cause a struggle to pay our bills. Enderson asked if we are in the cue to be paid. Skaret said no.
- Our recent round of requirements for the lead water line survey is done. We have 18 known residents with lead lines, 69 with galvanized and 720 unknown which are mainly from the curb stop to the water main. Property owners will receive a letter in the mail soon.
- Skaret and the Mayor will be going to Grand Rapids, MN for the fall CGMC Conference the end of next week.

There being no further business to come before the Council a motion was made by Payne, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to adjourn the Council meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk