

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
CITY HALL  
JUNE 2, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Evenson. Members present: Jack Evenson, Eric Payne, Nancy Maanum, Dan Enderson 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, CEDA Representative Hillary Tweed, City Attorney Stephen Kowal, Rob Wolfington, Police Chief Ian Hodge, Kari Steinbeisser, Becky Lysen, LeAnn Simonson, Sheila Krohse from Bolton & Menk, Paul Coyour from Prairie Five Rides and Reed Anfinson.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked for any changes to the agenda. A paving estimate from Ferguson Asphalt Paving, Inc. was added to the agenda, and the Mayor asked to move the Wastewater Floodwall item up on the agenda. It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

It was moved by Maanum, seconded by Enderson, and carried unanimously to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

- May 19, 2025 City Council Minutes
- Gambling Permit – Northern Lights Trails November 21, 2025
- Rodeberg Berryman - Cottage Square Phase 3 - \$2,430 – Balance - \$17.00
- Rodeberg & Berryman – 2025 Street & Utility Improvements - \$9,900 – Balance - \$40.00
- Electronic Transfers:  
Journal Entries: April 2025 - \$2,387,448.03

Staff announcements. Alsaker announced the pool opened today. Police Chief Hodge said the City Crew has the town looking good, and Tweed said the first Music in the Park event will be June 12 in Roosevelt Park starting at 5:30 p.m.

There was no one with unscheduled business.

Coyour from Prairie Five Rides approached the Council to say they are looking to build a bus garage across from the Street garage on City property. The proposed garage will be a 73' x 75' building with 3 bays capable of holding 6 vehicles and an office area. The property he is asking to place the building on is City owned and on one continuous parcel. The project is funded by MnDOT 90% and 10% a local match. Enderson asked if Prairie Five wants to rent or own the land the building will be placed on. Coyour said MnDOT prefers we purchase it. After discussion Council asked Skaret if he had some direction on the project. Skaret said it would be beneficial to the City if Prairie Five had their own building as they currently rent garage space from the City. If they move out, we will have more room to house our equipment. Wolfington asked to speak. He said this garage project has been in the works for ten years. Looking at the north east portion of the street garage property is what we were looking at six month ago. After further discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and to direct Skaret, the City Attorney and Coyour work out the details of the project.

Next was a Conditional Use Permit for 625 – 8<sup>th</sup> St. N. The homeowner wants to move a 10' x 12' shed onto his property. This will be a second ancillary building on the property, after another 8' x 8' shed is removed. The Planning Commission met today and had the following findings of facts:

1. Reasonableness:

The Planning commission felt the shed will be used in a reasonable manner on the property.

2. Essential Character:

The Planning commission said the shed will not deter from the essential character in the neighborhood, also stating there is a larger metal shed about a block south of this lot.

3. Light and air to adjacent property will not be restricted by the shed.

4. The Commission saw no safety concerns to the neighborhood.

5. The Planning Commission said they found the shed will not impact the property tax values in the neighborhood.

The Planning Commission recommended approval to City Council with the following conditions:

1. The 8' x 8' shed must be removed
2. That the new shed be in alignment with the garage as not to impede any alley ways or easements.

After discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve Conditional Use Permit #2025-01 at 625 – 8<sup>th</sup> St. N. to move a 10' x 12' shed onto the property, with the aforementioned conditions.

Next Simonson approached the Council to request street closures on Friday night before Kid Day. They are looking to close Idaho and Nevada Avenues between 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> St. N. on Friday, July 18, 2025 starting at 6 p.m. in order to start setting up for the Kid Day activities the next morning. Barricades will be set up on either ends of the block. It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve closing Idaho and Nevada Avenues at 6 p.m. July 18, 2025 between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> St. N. in order to set up for Kid Day activities.

Then Simonson requested an extension of the noise ordinance Saturday, July 19, 2025 to 11:30 p.m. for the Kid Day teen dance at the high school football field. After discussion it was moved by Stielow, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to extend the noise ordinance to 11:30 p.m. for the teen dance July 19 for the Kid Day teen dance at the football field.

Lastly Simonson said they would like to apply for two grants for Kid Day. One is through CentraCare and one is through CVEC. It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously approve the application for the grants, but to have Kent review them for any City commitments before applying.

Next Krohse from Bolton & Menk approached to present the bids on the Wastewater Floodwall project. She said there were three bidders on the project and they were pleased with the bids. They came in as follows:

Crow River Construction	\$2,519,056.79
Land Pride Construction	\$2,856,027.50
Duininck, Inc.	\$3,941,127.50

She said after reviewing the qualifications of the low bidder, it is their opinion that the low bidder is qualified to complete the work in accordance with the contract documents. It was then moved by Payne, seconded by Maanum to accept the bid from Crow River Construction in the amount of \$2,519,056.79. There was discussion and a request from Enderson to have a document outlining how much we have already spent between the two grants and a running total throughout the project. The motion carried unanimously.

The Mayor called on Kari Steinbeisser to present the City Audit for 2024. Steinbeisser went through a power point presentation showing changes in fund balances from the prior year. Their audit report shows an unqualified opinion. A motion was made by Payne and seconded by Steinbeisser to accept the 2024 Audit for the City of Benson. The following vote was taken: AYES: Enderson, Payne, Stielow, Maanum, Evenson. NAYES: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Next was the annual request for support from the Pioneerland Band Festival Committee for the 2025 parade. This year the parade will be June 13, 2025 instead of the 14<sup>th</sup> when it is usually held. The request is in the amount of \$3,500. It was moved by Payne, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to approve supporting the Pioneerland Band Festival in the amount of \$3,500 paid out of the tourism fund.

Skaret approached. He said at the last meeting Wolfington discussed the 115kv line coming to town to improve electric reliability. He has asked MRES CEO Matt Schull to come to the June 16, 2025 City Council meeting to answer questions on the proposed sale of the transmission line and having to comply with NERC requirements. Wolfington said there are several on-line videos that can outline the 9 requirements of NERC, which could help with discussion at the next meeting. Schull will provide some assurance of the agency proposal and assure their motivations are in line with ours.

Reuss approached to discuss upcoming stack testing at the power plant. He said we will need to purchase fuel to replace what we will consume during the stack testing. The testing will be June 17-18, 2025. The estimate he presented from Glacial Plains Coop is the closest estimate he can get as fuel prices fluctuate every day. After discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to approve the purchase of fuel for the power plant in the amount of \$25,000.

Next Reuss said the road grader needs repairs done to it. In talking with RDO out of Marshall, it would be cheaper to have them come and pick up the grader, load it onto a semi-truck and bring it to their shop for repairs than to send a technician out. After discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to have RDO transport the grader to their facility in Marshall and repair the grader in the amount of \$10,323.81.

Tweed approached the Council to request applying for the Junegrass Winds Grant for the National Night Out event for expenses associated with the event. They award grants on a quarterly basis ranging from \$1,000 - \$5,000. The grant will help to defray expenses for food, signage, advertising, and prizes for the event. The Line Department truck will be there and the Benson Police Department will have demonstrations as well. It was moved by Stielow, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve applying for the grant from Junegrass Winds.

Skaret said as a result of Councilmember Payne's request to use the City's Face Book page to

share community events, we have been working with the City Attorney to update the City's social media policy. The process is to have people fill out a form to be sure they meet our guidelines. It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the amended social media policy as presented.

The UMVRDC is still looking for a board member. The UMVRDC is a community development agency that services a five-county area, and provides support and services to local units of government in that area. They also offer a stipend for board members. After discussion, councilmember Stielow agreed to volunteer for the position.

Tweed and Skaret approached the council to present additional work to the Armory project which will not be part of the bond or grant. Marcus construction has finished the demolition work on the outside of the Armory and next they will be moving on to working on the interior. New sewer and water into the building is an additional expense. Marcus Construction said they could bring the new sewer and water into the building and save time since they are already here. Staff has been trying to get quotes from two other companies with no response. Engan Associates estimated the cost to install the sewer and water at \$35,000. However, Marcus said they can do this for \$45,772.10, which breaks down to \$39,456.10 for the site work, \$5,912.50 for the concrete work and project management fee in the amount of \$313.50. Skaret said he texted Council last Wednesday stating he approved the work, as it is a time sensitive matter. He said he is looking for Council to ratify his decision. Tweed said prior to Skaret's authorization, they reached out to Mike Amborn with Rodeberg and Berryman for their expertise to see if this is an acceptable quote, to which he confirmed it is. Also the Marcus quote reflects the cost savings in having them already on site and we will not incur mobilize costs. After discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Maanum and carried unanimously to approve the Marcus Construction quote for additional sewer and water installation at the Armory in the amount of \$45,772.10.

Reuss approached to discuss the electrical behind the Armory in the alley. He said we are trenching in electric service, and instead of patching the trench, and in order to ensure proper drainage in the alley, he is proposing milling off the blacktop in a 20' wide swath and replace it with blacktop. He said he acquired a quote from Fergus Asphalt Paving Inc. in the amount of \$21,090.00. We would keep the milling for fill. He went on to say after talking to Kent, the alley is a street asset. Kent said we have \$250,000 in the Street capital outlay fund, which is where we can pay for this out of. It was then moved by Stielow, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the quote from Ferguson Asphalt for work in the alley between Kansas and Wisconsin Avenues behind the Armory in the amount of \$21,090.00.

#### City Manager's Report:

- Skaret said the open house for the Cottage Square and street repair projects went well.
- There was a preconstruction meeting with Land Pride and Rodeberg and Berryman and they will start the street projects next week. Cottage Square will be first, then 18<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- Kent, Skaret and Reuss have had preliminary discussion on infrastructure projects.
- The City hired David Drown to conduct a wage study on non-union staff. The Personnel Committee has been working on this, and will bring it to the June 16, 2025 Council meeting for review. There is a lot of information in the study. There will be a staff meeting beforehand with effected staff. Enderson asked for this to be a decision item.
- Edible THC Sales have begun last Friday at the Liquor Store. This Thursday there will be a meeting with a consultant from the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association to conduct an assessment of our store operations.
- Representative Paul Anderson will be coming to the City Council meeting on June 16, 2025 pending no special sessions called by the Governor.
- Stantec Engineering has a pay request on the clear well project. It has been a year since the last

bill on this project. We met with Ryan Capell on this. He assured us there has been a lot of behind the scenes work. He will be coming to look at possibly helping us with procedures in running the clear well next year when we are rehabbing the water tower.

- Skaret said he has been working on finding a date for the Strategic Planning event, and said the fewest conflicts are on September 19-20, 2025.

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 7:18 p.m.

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Mayor

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City Clerk