

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
CITY HALL  
JULY 7, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Evenson. Members present: Jack Evenson, Eric Payne, Dan Enderson and Cherie Stielow. Members Absent: Nancy Maanum. Also present: 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 and Tim Miller with MRES. Telephonically City Clerk Valerie Alsaker, Andy Engan with Engan Associates and Silas Parmar with Bolton & Menk.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor asked for any changes to the agenda. Addition of potential change order #004 for work on the Armory was added. It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the amended agenda.

The Mayor called for approval of the consent agenda. It was moved by Payne and seconded by Stielow. Enderson had questions on Representative Anderson's comments in the minutes from the June 16, 2025 meeting, adding that Don Wilcox is drawing up a resolution for the City and County agreeing to reducing the number of board members on the Swift County Hospital District Board, which will be sent on to the State. The motion was then carried unanimously to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

- June 16, 2025 City Council Minutes
- May 19, 2025 EDA Minutes
- Quarterly Charter Communications Changes
- WAPA Mill Reduction
- Application to the Park Board – Ron Hanson with term expiring 12/31/2027
- Pay Request-Rodeberg & Berryman, Inc. - Cottage Square Phase 3-\$11,085.00  
Balance remaining - \$63,915.00
- Electronic Transfers:
  - May 2025 - \$3,407,368.88
  - Payroll: June 12, 2025 - \$144,774.21

There were no staff announcements.

There was no one with unscheduled business.

There was a request to close Nevada Avenue between 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> St. N., on the north side of Roosevelt Park for the Music in the Park event. The Minisota Museum group is serving food and holding a petting zoo. They would like to close the street for the petting zoo area like they did last year. After discussion it was moved by Stielow, seconded by Enderson and carried unanimously to approve closing Nevada Avenue between 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> St. N. on July 24, 2025 from 4-9 p.m.

Next Silas Parmar with Bolton & Menk presented Runway 14/32 AGIS Airport Airspace Analysis. In 2022 the FAA directed the City to conduct a Master Plan update as a requirement of the

runway and lighting system project. The FAA wants the City to justify the air traffic and usage of the airport before funding reconstruction of the runway. Also at the north end of the runway is a wildlife protection area, and the City has an easement to use that so the City has the right to replace any infrastructure there. Last week we heard from the FAA that things are moving toward replacing the existing runway at 4,000' long and 75' wide and lights. The next step required by the FAA is the proposal before us today which is to conduct an Airport Airspace Analysis of the entire runway to certify there are no obstacles to the runway. They use consultant NV5 to do the survey within 2 miles of the airport, and they will do a ground survey as well. The data is then submitted to the FAA. The analysis is 95% FAA funded, 2.5% State funded and 2.5% City responsibility. The City's share will be \$3,500. Parmar reviewed in May 2025 we had \$110,000 grant funds set to expire, which we loaned to another airport that needed it. We will get the credit back. After discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the Airport Airspace Analysis project.

Next Andy Engan discussed change orders and pay application #001 from Marcus Construction for work on the Armory. Engan has reviewed the pay application and confirmed it is ready for payment. After discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to approve pay application #001 from Marcus Construction in the amount of \$331,596.55.

Tim Miller with MRES approached to discuss the revised electric rate study, which we have worked on for the last couple of years. The last electric increase to consumers was 2018. He said with the last rate study a 12% increase was proposed, but with revisions, we are currently looking at a 5% increase each year for the next three years. After Miller's presentation, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the rate study and rate increases as presented and bring the electric rate resolution to the next City Council meeting.

Mayor Evenson discussed an event the week of Kid Day called "Touch A Truck" . The event is in the morning on July 18, 2025 from 8-12:30p.m. and gives kids the chance to approach vehicles such as fire trucks, ambulances and large equipment. The group is asking to close two blocks in front of Northside School on Nevada Ave. It was moved by Payne, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to approve closing Nevada Avenue in front of Northside School for the "Touch A Truck Event".

Next Reuss approached to discuss the purchase of two 2015 dump trucks from Swift County. He said we have been talking to the County for a year about purchasing the trucks. It is in the 2025 budget to purchase them. The County will be getting two new trucks at the end of July, and at that time we can take possession of the used ones. After discussion, it was moved by Stielow, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the purchase of two 2015 dump trucks from Swift County in the amount of \$140,000.

Reuss brought a pay request for repairs to the Tow Master T-10 trailer. Huston & Sons Truck Repair went through the trailer and discovered several issues, and there was more wrong with it than anticipated. Evenson asked if there is a system for servicing and checking equipment so there aren't these surprise repairs. Reuss said we recently hired a part-time street employee that has repair experience which will help in teaching the younger employees. Council said there needs to be a maintenance system in place to help limit these costly repairs. After further discussion it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to approve the pay request to Huston & Sons Truck Repair in the amount of \$5,503.69.

Next Reuss brought a new piece of equipment he would like to purchase for the Street Department called a Swenson Specialty Cross Conveyor. He said they would like to mount it on a dump truck and it will allow the street department to lay asphalt along the gutter instead of shoveling, which will be easier on employee's backs. He went on to explain other uses for the conveyor. When asked if this was in the budget Reuss responded no. He said we can pay for this out of Capital outlay reserves. It was then moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the purchase of the Swenson Cross Conveyor in the amount of \$12,818.00.

Reuss then presented a quote for two fire hydrants. He said two hydrants are not working. One hydrant is at the south west corner of Roosevelt, which they tried to flush last week and something broke at the bottom of the hydrant. We will have to tear up the highway for this repair, which they hope to start the week of July 21, 2025 after Kid Day. The other is on 12<sup>th</sup> St. S. He presented a quote from DSG for \$7,358.61 per hydrant. After discussion, it was moved by Payne, seconded by Stielow and carried unanimously to approve the purchase of two fire hydrants from DSG in the amount of \$14,717.22.

Tweed approached to discuss the sale of a lot the City owns on 16<sup>th</sup> St. N., Parcel #23-0503-000, to Habitat for Humanity for \$1.00, with the understanding that the land would be used for affordable housing. The agreement would have a claw back provision if the property is not developed within one year. CSNelson Properties will be constructing a twin home that will span our lot as well as an adjacent lot owned by Swift County. The twin home will be owned by two different owners. If Council approves the purchase agreement, Habitat for Humanity will begin the process of selecting and qualifying families for the homes. Swift County HRA is collaborating on the project. They are selling the lot next to ours for \$1.00 as well. She went on to say one change Habitat for Humanity would like to make in the agreement is to allow two years to complete the home build instead of one year. After discussion, it was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne and carried unanimously to approve the sale of parcel #23-0503-000 for \$1.00, and the purchase agreement as presented with one change to the agreement, item 11, stating the buyer will agree to have a duplex on the property within two years.

Next Skaret presented a MRES program called GreatBlue Research Survey. It is a survey for residential electric customers to obtain feedback on customer satisfaction, value, ownership, interest in service, rebate programs, electric vehicles and time of use programs. The survey would run from September 22 – November 21, 2025. The survey can be answered on line or through an app. The Cost is \$775, plus the cost of direct mailers or utility bill inserts. He asked if the Council is interested in participating in the optional program. Enderson asked what will be done with the data. Skaret said it is a gauge on how we are doing. There was discussion on the low number of returns in other communities on the survey. Council asked Skaret to bring back some more information on the survey to the next meeting.

Skaret said Lake Central Bank and their partners approached the City with an \$80,000 donation. We would like to use it for a community tangible project, steering clear of operation expenses. Kent was at the meeting, and she said the focus of the bank's Vice President Brady Olson was parks or recreation. There is no reporting with the donation but the only ask that we tell them what we spend the money on. She said she and Skaret discussed staff get together and brainstorm some ideas where we could use the money, and bring back to Council where we would like to spend the money.

Councilmember Enderson offered the following resolution:

**CITY OF BENSON  
RESOLUTION ACCEPTING DONATIONS**

**(RESOLUTION NO. 2025-15)**

**WHEREAS**, The City of Benson is generally authorized to accept gifts and bequests pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 465.03 and Minnesota Statutes Section 471.17 for the benefit of its citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, the following persons and entities have offered to contribute the cash amounts set forth below to the city:

**Patrons – Fire Department Fish Fry Donations - \$1,137.00**  
**Patrons – Fire Department Donation Bill Hoberg Memory - \$50.00**  
**Carol Rohloff – Fire Department Donation Bill Hoberg Memory - \$50.00**  
**Zetetic Study Club – Beautify Benson Donation - \$500.00**  
**Patrons – Fire Department Fish Fry Donations - \$2,365.00**  
**Swift County Benson Health Services-Pool Donation - \$397.00**  
**Patrons – Cemetery Donation LouElla Brown Memory - \$200.00**  
**SWIF Foundation – Kid Day Donation - \$5,000.00**  
**Hawley’s Inc – Kid Day Donation - \$50.00**  
**Shamrock Hest Riding Club – Kid Day Donation - \$25.00**  
**Mini Sota Museum – Kid Day Donation - \$25.00**  
**Melody Zosel – Kid Day Donation - \$25.00**  
**Friends of the Library – Kid Day Donation - \$25.00**  
**Benson Assembly – Kid Day Donation - \$25.00**  
**Mick Quinn Insurance – Kid Day Donation - \$1,000.00**  
**DeGraff Fire Department – Kid Day Donation - \$25.00**  
**Patron – Kid Day Department - \$25.00**  
**Cub Scout Pack 3485 – Kid Day Donation - \$25.00**  
**Benson Lions Club – Kid Day Donation - \$250.00**  
**Benson Women of Today – Kid Day Donation - \$25.00**  
**Hollermann Curb Side Treats – Kid Day Donation - \$25.00**  
**Centracare – Kid Day Donation - \$1,000.00**  
**Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company – Kid Day Donation - \$500.00**  
**Lake Central Bank – Donation - \$80,000.00**

**WHEREAS**, all such donations have been contributed to assist the various city departments and programs as allowed by law; and

**WHEREAS**, The City Council finds that it is appropriate to accept the donations offered.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BENSON, MINNESOTA, AS FOLLOWS:**

1. The donations described above are accepted and shall be used to benefit the departments listed above, as allowed by law.

Councilmember Payne seconded the foregoing resolution and the following vote was recorded: AYES: Evenson, Stielow, Payne, Enderson. NAYES: None. Thereupon the Mayor declared Resolution 2025-15 duly passed and adopted.

Kowal joined Skaret and discussed updating the City Charter. Skaret said we are one of about 107 cities in Minnesota that is a Charter City. The Charter is the City's constitution. Skaret said he feels the Charter is very sound but needs a few items updated such as the City Manager's spending authority. The Charter was last updated in 1983, so with inflation, \$5,000 is closer to \$16,000 today. There are a couple things related to budgeting and financing not in compliance with State law any more. In order to approve updates there are several ways to do this. Three involve taking the changes to the public for a vote, or have the Charter Commission update the charter and bring it to Council for update and approval which is the most efficient way to go about it. We need to reactivate the Charter Commission. State statute says we can have anywhere from 7-15 members on the Charter Commission. He asked Council for authorization to proceed with reactivating the Charter Commission. Once we have our members, the list goes to a District Judge for member approval. The entire process can take 6-12 months. He went on to say once established the Charter Commission must meet at least once a year. Kowal gave a history of the Charter Commission. He mentioned the only person who cannot be on the commission is an elected Judge. Enderson asked staff give Council what proposed communication to the public would be about updating the Charter. Kowal said we must follow open meeting law and quorum rules. There was discussion on getting assistance from the League of Minnesota Cities or American Legal Publishing help us decided what is outdated. Enderson said he would like to see what a Charter Commission application would look like, and what the League would charge to review our charter. He requested education on the difference between resolutions, ordinances etc.

Next the City Manager gave a report on the following:

Cottage Square construction is working on tree removal and erosion control, and will begin the underground portion of the project the week of July 14. The bond money was released and it is being held by Ehler's to earn more interest. Some projects the bond money will be used for is pool and water tower. Staff will be taking the water tower down this year in practice for the 6-12 weeks it will take to refurbish the water tower next year. We will need to implement watering bans. This year's practice run will be August 11-22, 2025. Kid Day is July 19, 2025. The liquor committee met last week in order to make a recommendation on the future of the Liquor Store. He said he had a conversation with West Central Sanitation on a City Wide Cleanup, discussing several options on how to execute it. We have a preconstruction meeting on Thursday, July 10, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. to meet with contractors on the project for the floodwall project which will happen in 2026. Budget worksheets have been distributed to department heads to start working on next year's budgets.

The Mayor presented the addition to the agenda which is a change order from Marcus Construction for two outlets in the Armory kitchen. It was moved by Enderson, seconded by Payne to approve Marcus Construction Prime Contract Potential Change Order #004 for electrical box walk in the amount of \$1,996.50. Enderson asked about the change order numbering. Change Order #1 was not a project change order, but it was additional work. Change order #003 was approved at the last meeting, which is the repair to the floor in the proposed kitchen. The motion carried unanimously.

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 7:16 p.m.

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Mayor

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City Clerk