**Regular Month Meeting**

**Benton City Council**

**July 17, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Benton City Council was called to order on Monday, July 17, 2023 at 5:00 P.M. at Benton City Hall. Mayor Rita Dotson presided and called the meeting to order. Pledge of Allegiance was said and prayer was offered by Guy Henton.

Council Members Present: Ann Riley, Kevin Farley, Laura Craynon, Guy Henton, Rita Murray and Butch Holland.

Other Staff Present: Bethany Cooper, City Clerk/Treasurer; Rob Mattingly, City Attorney and Stephen Sanderson, Police Chief

Deb Overby was present regarding the retaining wall at 1502 Main Street which causes flooding issues at her property. She was advised by City Attorney Mattingly and Mayor Dotson that it is a civil issue and will need to contact an attorney to move forward.

City Attorney Mattingly read the second reading of an ordinance amending Section 112: Peddlers, Street Amusements and Other Temporary Sales of the City of Benton’s Code of Ordinances to establish specific guidelines regarding the duration of the temporary business permit, to allow certain exemptions and to establish civil penalties for failure to obtain a temporary business permit. A motion was made by Riley, seconded by Murray to approve. All agreed. Motion carried.

City Attorney Mattingly read the second reading of an ordinance to repeal Ordinance No. 04-06-02 regarding utility easements along lot lines on subdivided property and amend Section 156.02(G) in the Code of Ordinances to state “All utility easements within any subdivision subject to the jurisdiction of either the City’s Planning and Zoning Regulations or its Subdivision Regulations, shall be a minimum of fifteen (15) feet in width. A public utility easement shall be provided for along either the front, rear, or side line of each lot within every subdivision being developed. A lot line between adjoining lots can divide the utility easement if each lot is subject to a 7 ½’ utility easement along and adjacent to and is shared with another lot within a subdivision.” A motion was made by Holland, seconded by Murray to approve. All agreed. Motion carried.

City Attorney Matting read the first reading of an ordinance amending water adjustments and increasing water and sewer tap fees. Ordinance is sponsored by Riley.

City Attorney Mattingly read the first reading of an ordinance regarding grease traps. Ordinance is sponsored by Holland.

Mayor Dotson informed the Council that she and Bethany Cooper have been looking into pricing for radio read water meters. She reviewed some of the pricing. These will be discussed again in Wednesday’s special called meeting when more information is obtained.

Mayor Dotson address court square parking issue. Chief Sanderson feels that it has gotten a little better since new signage has been put up around the square. Mayor Dotson is going to contact courthouse employees to see if employees with smaller vehicles will park on Main Street and Poplar Street to allow larger vehicles to park on 11th Street and 12th Street.

Mayor Dotson mentioned receiving numerous complaints over fireworks. Our current ordinance allows fireworks from the Saturday before July 4 to the Saturday following July 4 until 11:00 pm. A motion was made by Henton, seconded by Riley to amend the ordinance to allow fireworks one day before July 4 and one day after July 4 until 10:00 pm. The exceptions for special events with the required permits filed with Fire Chief will remain the same. Holland and Farley apposed this motion. All others agreed. Motion carried. City Attorney Mattingly will draft an ordinance for first reading at the next regular meeting.

Mayor Dotson mentioned that our cameras on the South end of town in the park area are not working and haven’t in several months. Chief Sanderson has been getting quotes to get this fixed correctly. Our IT company, KeeForce, has recommended that we have a fiber line ran from park to City Hall to connect to our current network. This will cost approximately $20,000. Another option is to pay a monthly internet bill of approximately $200/month to have that provider run the line. This option will still require KeeForce to connect to our network with a cost of $5,000. Sanderson is waiting to hear from one other option.

Chief Sanderson presented the police report for June. There were 915 calls to service, 11 cases, 17 collisions and 101 citation violations.

A motion was made by Holland, seconded by Henton to approve the regular minutes of June 19, 2023. All agreed. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Riley, seconded by Henton to adjourn to executive session to discuss potential litigation and personnel issue.

A motion was made by Farley, seconded by Holland to adjourn from executive session.

In Mayor/Council items, Mayor Dotson mentioned that Happy ZZZ’s has offered to purchase a windscreen for the pickleball courts if they can put their logo on it. Henton and Holland mentioned they’ve talked to several players who do not want a windscreen because it blocks the breeze and the view for spectators. No decision was made on this.

Riley had a complaint about no bleachers at the t-ball fields at the park. Bethany Cooper commented that the bleachers were removed a couple of years ago because they were not being used and they were a maintenance issue. She has not heard any complaints at City Hall.

Mayor Dotson asked the Council to be deciding if they want to add 3 more pickleball courts or install a steel/iron canopy over the grandstands. No decision was made.

Mayor Dotson announced that Marshall County Family Day is set for September 16 and they would like to rent golf carts to help usher people from the parking lots and have asked City to donate $200 towards this as Marshall County Fiscal Court has agreed to $200 as well. Council all agreed.

Mayor Dotson will be out of town for our September 18 regular meeting. A decision was made to move the meeting to September 11.

Mayor Dotson updated the Council on our Symsonia Highway Waterline Replacement Project and that we are searching for other funding options.

A motion was made by Riley, seconded by Henton to adjourn back into Executive Session to continue discussing possible litigation.

A motion was made by Henton, seconded by Murray to adjourn from Executive Session.

A motion was made by Craynon, seconded by Farley to allow City Attorney Mattingly to bid on a possible foreclosed property up to $5,000.00. All agreed. Motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Council, meeting adjourned.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Rita Dotson, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Bethany Cooper, City Clerk/Treas.