

**Regular Month Meeting
Benton City Council
March 16, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Benton City Council was called to order on Monday, March 16, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. by Mayor Rita Dotson with the Pledge of Allegiance and opening prayer by Kevin Farley.

Council Members Present: Butch Holland, Sherra Riley, Ann Riley and Kevin Farley.

Absent were Rita Murray and Charles Edmonds.

Other Staff Present:

Bethany Cooper, City Clerk/Treasurer	Tony Seavers, Water Plant
Rob Mattingly, City Attorney	Harry Green, Fire Chief
Randy Wood, Asst Fire Chief	Todd Riley, Gas Mgr
Stephen Sanderson, Police Chief	

Kalib Swift of 290 Phillips Road was present to ask the Council to waive part of his high water bill from a recent leak. He had a leak in his yard that used over 300,000 gallons in one month. He received an adjustment already of \$184.46 in accordance with our water adjustment ordinance. Because he is outside the city limits and does not have sewer service his adjustment wasn't as large as some because there was no sewer to adjust off. The City is willing to do a payment plan for him but he wants to pay it in full and feels we should cut it in half. Sherra voiced that she hates the situation but feels we have to treat him like everyone else and follow our adjustment ordinance. Holland and Farley agreed as well. Kalib has been told that there is no way that much water would go through his meter without losing water pressure in his house and he said they never lost pressure. It was agreed that his water meter will be sent off for testing and then let him know the results once they are in. If the meter is accurate, his adjustment will remain as is.

The following bids were received for trash service:

Waste Path - \$9.50/month for 3-year contract and \$9.98/month for 5-year contract.

WCA - \$9.45/month for 3-year contract and \$8.95/month for 5-year contract.

Republic Services – (submitted two proposals) \$11.77 and \$13.37/month for 3-year contract and \$10.99 and \$12.86/month for 5-year contract.

Council would like additional time to review each proposal and meet back next week in a special called meeting to decide.

There were no fire truck bids received. Mayor Dotson mentioned that Bethany applied for a Fire Assistance Grant through FEMA to purchase a new fire truck for \$450,000. Harry Green and Randy Wood were both present on behalf of the fire department. They explained that a good, used fire truck will range between \$175,000 to \$200,000. No company this far has been interested in trading in our old truck. Ann would like them to look for trucks then bring the amount and what they find back to the Council for approval. Harry affirmed that most companies are willing to hold vehicles to give cities and counties time to meet with officials for decisions.

There was one bid received on the property located at 400 West 8th Street from Rusty Burkeen in the amount of \$500.00. The Council was not interested in selling at that low price.

A motion was made by Farley, seconded by S. Riley to renew the contract with American Red Cross to utilize space at 200 West 1st Street. This contract is good from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2023. All agreed. Motion carried.

Mayor Dotson informed the Council of what she found out with the old hospital property on George McClain Drive. The City will not be able to use this location for a wastewater pond. There is a large gas main that runs through the property. One of the City's main water wells is located near that property also. All Council agreed that they are not interested in accepting this donation from Dennis Smith and partners as the expense would be too great.

City Attorney Mattingly read the first reading of an ordinance repealing Ordinance No. 19-08-01 regarding responsible bidders. Mayor Dotson explained to the Council that when the ordinance was originally voted on, it wasn't completely understood. They have since learned that this ordinance can keep contractors from bidding jobs in Benton.

Mayor Dotson read a municipal order to update the personnel policy to amend a portion of the Mobile Telephones and Communications Device section to read as follows:

"For new employees that use mobile phones to conduct city business, but who cannot end a current telephone contract, or removal will significantly affect the cost of their current personal plan, the city will provide those employees with \$35.00 per month, which will be included in the employee's wages. If current employees choose to remain on their own phone plan and not part of the City's plan, the same reimbursement will apply."

A motion was made by S. Riley and seconded by Holland to approve. All agreed. Motion carried.

Mayor Dotson read a resolution in support of House Bill 484 to create an independent County Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees. A motion was made by A. Riley, seconded by Holland to approve. All agree. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Farley, seconded by A. Riley to re-appoint Jacob Ford and Tom Blankenship to the Ethics Committee. Mayor Dotson is still trying to find a third member.

City Attorney Mattingly discussed the property located at 303 W. 16th Street. Harry has cited this house multiple times and the lienholder company is not responding or taking responsibility. A motion was made by Farley, seconded by S. Riley to proceed with contacting this company and filing lawsuit if needed. All agreed. Motion carried.

Susi King is helping Marshall County Children's Art Center with a landscaping project. They have requested \$420 to be used from the City's budget for the Children's Art Center to purchase top soil and rock. This budget amount was originally set for utility, insurance and major improvements. The Council agreed to allow \$420 of this budget to be used for topsoil and rock.

Mayor Dotson suggested setting Spring clean-up dates for May 11 through 15 depending upon the coronavirus situation. This will be revisited closer to time.

Police Chief Sanderson presented the police report for February. There were 10 cases, 22 collisions, 37 citation violations and 517 calls to service.

A motion was made by Holland, seconded by S. Riley to approve the regular minutes of February 17, 2020 and the special called minutes of March 4, 2020. All agreed. Motion carried.

In Mayor/Council items, Mayor Dotson informed the Council of her decision to cancel Tater Day. Kiwanis was unanimous with this decision as well. Mayor Dotson and Patricia Green with Kiwanis have discussed a festival later in the summer to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the City instead. All events pertaining to Tater Day are cancelled, including those at the grandstands. All Council agreed.

There being no further business to come before the Council, meeting adjourned at 6:25 P.M.

Rita Dotson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Bethany Cooper, City Clerk/Treas.