**Regular Month Meeting**

**Benton City Council**

**September 16, 2019**

The regular meeting of the Benton City Council was called to order on Monday, September 16, 2019 at 5:00 P.M. by Mayor Rita Dotson with the Pledge of Allegiance and opening prayer by Zach Brien.

Council Members Present:

Ann Riley Charles Edmonds

Sherra Riley Kevin Farley

Rita Murray Butch Holland

Other Staff Present:

Zach Brien, City Attorney Bethany Cooper, City Clerk/Treasurer

Todd Riley, Gas Mgr Jeromy Hicks, Police Chief

William Treadway, Police Sgt Stephen Sanderson, Police Captain

Trent Weaver, Officer Caleb Curtner, Officer

Keegan Cole, Officer

Guest: Chandler Maddox was a guest of Mayor Dotson for her AP Government class at MCHS.

Mayor Dotson presented the bids for the Main Street Water Main Replacement Project:

* Youngblood Excavating/Contracting, LLC bid $502,931.00 for 8” water main and $532,896.00 for 10” water main.
* Murtco Utility Services, LLC bid $743,627.00 for 8” water main and $787,263.00 for 10” water main.
* Twin States Utilities & Excavating, Inc. bid $961,290.00 for 8” water main and $1,027,326.00 for 10” water main.

RiverCrest Engineering supplied a letter of recommendation and references for Youngblood

Excavating/Contracting, LLC. Mayor Dotson also mentioned that she, along with RiverCrest, recommends the 10” water main as there is a 10” water main that runs along Poplar Street also. A motion was made by Holland, seconded by S. Riley to approve the bid from Youngblood Excavating/Contracting, LLC for the 10” water main replacement. All agreed. Motion carried.

City Attorney Brien read a resolution to authorize the acquisition of an easement for a parcel on Golf Course Road. This easement is necessary for the utility expansion to service Southwest One Industrial Park. A motion was made by Edmonds, seconded by Farley to approve. All agreed. Motion carried.

City Attorney Brien read the second reading of an ordinance to set the 2019 advalorem tax rates as follows: real property is 21.5 cents; personal property is 28.57 cents and vehicle is 24 cents. A motion was made by Murray, seconded by A. Riley to approve. All agreed. Motion carried.

Mayor Dotson opened discussion on animal control. Farley mentioned that he still has not received any financial figures yet. Mayor Dotson provided each council with some recent complaints. Animal Control will not pick up animals in the city of Benton and tells callers that Benton does not pay for that service. Mayor Dotson noted that she does not expect Animal Control to service leash law calls since that is by City ordinance but all other calls should be taken care of by Animal Control. Mayor Dotson asked the Council to think over how they would like to resolve this issue and decide at next Council meeting

The Halloween curfew was set for 10:00 P.M. on October 31, 2019.

Mayor Dotson recommended Police Captain, Stephen Sanderson, as the new Police Chief upon Jeromy Hicks’ retirement. Murray made a motion to accept the recommendation. There was much discussion on this recommendation. S. Riley said she has concerns along with several citizen concerns that have been brought to her. She would like to see the City reach out for the best possible candidate. She would like to see Sanderson serve as Interim Chief until a proper procedure has been gone through. S. Riley feels that other officers will not give their best if they have no shot of promoting. She also noted that before Hicks was hired as Police Chief, the Captain was not always the next to be appointed Chief and she does not feel that the Captain is always the best option.

Holland voiced that he feels it is best to promote from within the department to keep morale up and he feels the Council should follow the Mayor’s recommendation.

Murray agreed with Holland to promote from within and listen to the Mayor’s recommendation.

A.Riley respects KRS 83A.080(3) and feels the Council should follow the law.

Edmonds agrees with Mayor’s recommendation and feels it is best to look within the force to see how they get along with each other.

Farley mentioned that he feels this conversation should have been discussed before an appointment was recommended by Mayor. He would like to see a committee that includes all Council to interview for this position. He agreed with S. Riley that he would like to see Sanderson as Interim Chief while the best Chief is chosen for the position.

Mayor Dotson explained to everyone how she came up with her decision. Sanderson has been with the Benton Police Department for over 12 years. Eight of those years he has served in the capacity of either Sergeant or Captain. He has been faithful to this department, he is well liked by the community and he has the qualifications to do the job. Mayor Dotson feels the morale of the department will be high with Sanderson as Chief.

After much discussion, Holland seconded Murray’s motion to recommend Stephen Sanderson as the next Police Chief of Benton. S. Riley and Farley abstained from the vote. All others agreed. Motion carried.

Chief Hicks presented the police report for August. There were 35 cases, 17 collisions, 88 citation violations and 794 calls for service. Hicks will be retiring September 30, 2019.

City Attorney Brien announced his resignation as City Attorney as of October 31, 2019. He and his family will be moving to Lexington, KY.

In Mayor items, Mayor Dotson read an email she received from International Institute of Municipal Clerks congratulating Bethany Cooper, City Clerk, on her CMC certification through IIMC.

Mayor Dotson also mentioned that Benton was awarded Discretionary Road Funds for some of our paving projects and will be receiving a check on September 19. The amount has not been disclosed yet.

In Council items, all Council members thanked City Attorney and Police Chief for all they’ve done for City of Benton.

A motion was made by Murray, seconded by Holland to adjourn to executive session per KRS 61.810(1)(b) for property acquisition.

A motion was made by A. Riley, seconded by Murray to adjourn from executive session.

There being no further business to come before the Council, meeting adjourned at 6:26 P.M.

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Rita Dotson, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Bethany Cooper, City Clerk/Treas.