

**Regular Month Meeting
Benton City Council
February 19, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Benton City Council was called to order on Monday, February 19, 2024 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 Rob Mattingly.

Council members present were Laura Craynon, Ann Riley, Rita Murray, Guy Henton, Butch Holland and Kevin Farley (5:15 pm).

Other staff present were Bethany Cooper, City Clerk/Treasurer; Rob Mattingly, City Attorney, Stephen Sanderson, Police Chief and Todd Riley, Gas Manager.

Drew Williams was present to ask if the city would like to donate towards the pony pulls again this year. Council agreed to give \$1,000 to Tater Day LLC to go towards cost of pony pull event.

Mayor Dotson asked the Council to be thinking about new Senate Bill 47 regarding medical cannabis and how they would like to handle within city. The Council will have three choices: pass an ordinance to allow sales within city, pass an ordinance to not allow sales within city or put on the ballot for community to vote. The state will begin issuing license January 1, 2025. The sale of medical cannabis has to be prescribed by a medical professional.

Mayor Dotson reviewed the Department for Local Government's COLA increase to be retroactive to January 1, 2024 of 3.4%. This increase brings annual council compensation from \$2,556.00 to \$2,642.90 and it will bring the annual mayor compensation from \$31,950.00 to \$33,036.30.

Mayor Dotson discussed the issue of the increasing number of signs being placed in rights-of-way. City Attorney Mattingly said that our current sign ordinance prohibits signs of any type from being placed in right-of-way area of attached to electric/telephone poles. However, there are currently no fines established. Council asked Mattingly to see what other cities do and bring back to next meeting.

City Clerk Cooper discussed providing a Customer Web Portal for Benton Water & Sewer customers. This portal will allow customers to log in to their account to see their account balance and will also allow them to choose e-billing versus mailed bill each month. The cost of this program is \$1500.00 one time set up fee and an annual fee of \$1,855.00. Using this system will does require higher fees of \$2.50 minimum plus a %. Cooper recommended if they Council would like to purchase this program, to also keep our current online service through Kentucky.gov that allows customers the choice. The current online program will have lower service fees but does not keep account information on file nor offer e-billing. A motion was made by Farley, seconded by Holland to purchase the Customer Web Portal system in addition to our current online system. All agreed. Motion carried.

Mayor Dotson and City Clerk Cooper met with Josh Wagner of Miracle of KY & TN to discuss upgrading our playground equipment. The proposed design was shown and discussed. We proposed applying for a crumb rubber grant that is a 75/25 grant in order to install poured in place rubber versus crumb rubber. A motion was made by Riley, seconded by Farley to approve the purchase of the proposed playground equipment along with applying for the grant to help cover the cost of the poured in place surfacing. This motion is good up to the amount of \$140,000. This motion also includes a

General Fund budget amendment to move funds from General Expenses to Park Expenses. All agreed. Motion carried.

Mayor Dotson read a proclamation declaring City of Benton a Purple Heart City. A motion was made by Henton, seconded by Holland to approve. All agreed. Motion carried.

City Attorney Mattingly read the first reading of an ordinance sponsored by Holland to add a \$4.00 surcharge to water and sewer bills for capital improvements to water system.

City Attorney Mattingly read the first reading of an ordinance sponsored by Craynon to amend the gas deposits ordinance.

City Attorney Mattingly read the first reading of an ordinance sponsored by Farley to amend the sewer repairs and maintenance ordinance.

Mayor Dotson explained that because Marshall County Caring & Needline will have to move to their back building for operations during their renovations to continue meeting requirements of their CDBG grant, they will need water and sewer connections which are not currently there. Mayor Dotson asked for Council approval to waive those tap-on fees. A motion was made by Henton, seconded by Riley to approve. All agreed. Motion carried.

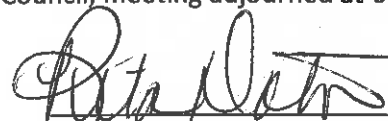
Chief Sanderson presented the police report for January. There were 8 cases, 9 collisions, 53 citation violations and 598 calls for service.

A motion was made by Farley, seconded by Henton to approve the special called meeting minutes of January 23, 2024 and the special called meeting minutes of February 6, 2024. All agreed. Motion carried.

In Mayor/Council items, Riley announced that the City Council would like to host a Mayor Appreciation Day on April 30, 2024.

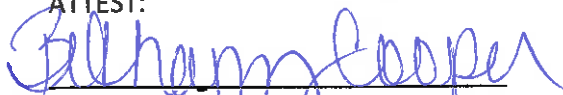
Mayor Dotson updated that construction has started on the second set of pickleball courts. Lions Club has also donated \$10,000 for the pavilion to be installed at the pickleball court area also. They will have naming rights of this pavilion.

There being no further business to come before the Council, meeting adjourned at 6:14 pm.



Rita Dotson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Bethany Cooper, City Clerk/Treas.