

The regular meeting of the Benton Village Board was called to order by Village President, Gary McCrea, at 6:30 p.m. in the conference room of the Benton Business Incubator Building at 244 Ridge Avenue on Wednesday March 17th with the following members present: Gary McCrea, Kenneth Farrey, Chuck Wartner and Jill Knight Absent: Cal Robbins, Katie Neis and Terry Sheffer Village employees present: Beverly Hitz and Eric Mowry. Others Present: Jaclyn Essandoh In compliance with the open meeting law, proper notice of the meeting had been posted in four public places; the Zephyr Depot, Benton State Bank, Benton Post Office, and the Benton Business Incubator Building.

Motion (Farrey, Knight) to approve minutes from the regular village board meeting held on February 17, 2021 as presented. Voice-all ayes. Carried

Jaclyn Essandoh, Project Planner from Southwest Regional Planning reported that she sent a copy of the 2021-2026 Benton Outdoor Recreation Plan Update for our review on March 6th, 2021. She had a zoom meeting with Jill Knight, Gary McCrea and Katie Neis on March 11th. She made corrections following that meeting and sent out a revised copy on March 17th. Jaclyn stated that there are currently 3 outstanding issues. Dog park, Walking/Biking Trail and Swift Park courts for tennis, pickle ball and basketball. Representatives from SWWRP, Ryan Carver and Eric Mowry will meet in Benton on Monday, March 22nd to review the areas in question and make a plan to move forward.

After some discussion it was decided to remove the dog park from the plan at this time.

Motion (Knight/Wartner) to approve the resolution adopting the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan including all the changes discussed. Roll-all ayes. Carried

Eric Mowry reported that the first winter with the new plow truck went well. There was an issue with the transmission, but it was resolved. They finished up the electric at the phosphorus building and trimmed the trees in the Village Park. He is getting some issues resolved with the street sweeper and getting it ready to go soon. He contacted Cummer Masonry to look at the tennis, pickle ball and basketball courts at Swift Park for an estimate to resurface/level. He is going to clean up the bank across from Swift Park before football begins. He delivered the hanging pots for the flowers to Cushman's.

Gary commented that we should ask Cushman's to plant our baskets with only pink, white and red flowers this year as the darker purple flowers do not seem to do as well. Bev will call Cushman's tomorrow and let Steve know.

Jill Knight commented that it would be nice to get the fountain up in the BCDC Park soon. We will have to get a concrete pad poured to install. She met with Ryan regarding the shelter, he has ordered the materials from Menards. She also mentioned that she had a zoom meeting with Southwest Regional Planning representatives and a person from the DNR regarding different types of grant funding available.

Motion (Wartner/Knight) to approve \$3,000 for televising sewer mains, \$2,635 to sandblast and paint remaining 31 hydrants, \$1,400 for new gutters at the Village garage and for Joe Hayes to do a sample refinishing of curb as a test. Roll-all ayes. Carried

Gary attended a budget meeting with Travis Tranel and Howard Marklein to speak out about Shared Revenue We will get 2% increase this year and next year for a total of about \$12,000.

Gary stated that the landowner at 70 Alma Street that wanted to donate the property to the Village has added stipulations for use if he donates it to us. The board has decided to decline the donation.

Gary reported that the garbage truck broke up the street by his house when they set the bucket down so hard on the street. He called Thursday, March 11th and Friday, March 12th with no response back. Bev called them on Monday, March 15th. He still has not heard back from them.

Motion (Farrey, Wartner) to approve \$1.00 per hour increase for Bill McCauley for mowing. Roll-all ayes. Carried

Motion (Knight, Wartner) to approve an Operator's License for Annalise DeMuth. Roll-all ayes. Carried

A discussion took place regarding our police officer position going forward. Brad Schumacher has resigned effective March 31, 2021, Bev will gather more information from surrounding communities and provide it to the Board. It will take some time to recruit and hire someone. We will purchase coverage from the County in the interim.

The board tabled renewal of the 2 year contract with Benton School District for use of the Swift Park pending insurance limits information. They are requesting that the coverage increase from 50,000/100,000 to 100,000/300,000.

The claims against the Village were presented for payment.

Motion (Knight, Farrey) to pay the claims against the Village. Roll-all ayes. Carried.

Motion (Wartner, Farrey) to adjourn. Voice-all ayes. Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.