

Bentonville City Council
Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2014

The City Council of Bentonville, Arkansas, met in regular session Tuesday, March 11, 2014, at 6:00 p.m., at the Community Development Building, Planning Commission meeting room, 305 SW A Street, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Present were council members Mary Baggett, Chris Sooter, Roger Thomas, Shane Perry, Leah Williams, Bill Burckart, Burton Head and Jim Grider. Also present were Mayor Bob McCaslin, City Attorney George Spence, City Clerk Linda Spence, the press, city staff and the audience.

Mayor McCaslin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Mayor led everyone present in the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence in support of our armed forces. The Mayor also asked the Council to keep former alderman Danny Brewer in their thoughts, as he had heard Mr. Brewer had recently been referred for Hospice care.

Motion was made by Alderman Sooter to suspend the rules regarding the reading of all ordinances on three separate days and further that all ordinances and resolutions be read by title only, second by Alderman Grider. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

Motion was made by Alderman Baggett to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2014 meeting as written, second by Alderman Grider. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

1. Ordinance No. 2014-34: Ordinance accepting a lot split of Lots 4, 5 and 6 McCoy Addition to the City of Bentonville, Arkansas.

[Applicant: Buster Properties; Location: Northeast J Street]

City Attorney Spence read the ordinance by title only. Motion to pass by Alderman Grider, second by Alderman Burckart. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

2. Resolution No. 3-11-14 A: Resolution authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to enter into an agreement with Crafton, Tull and Associates Engineers for services related to Southeast 6th Street sidewalk improvements.

City Attorney Spence read the resolution by title only.

Alderman Thomas asked whether the amount of this contract was in addition to the amount of grant money involved with this item. Ben Peters, City Engineer, stated that the contract was covered by the grant money.

Motion to pass by Alderman Grider, second by Alderman Burckart. Motion carried (8-0).

3. Ordinance No. 2014-35: Ordinance vacating a street right of way located in Lot 7 Eversole Addition to the City of Bentonville, Arkansas, Benton County, Arkansas.

City Attorney Spence read the ordinance by title only. Motion to pass by Alderman Grider, second by Alderman Burckart. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

4. Resolution No. 3-11-14 B: Resolution authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to enter into an agreement with CEI Engineering Associates, Inc. for engineering services associated with infrastructure and apron improvements to the Bentonville Municipal Airport.

City Attorney Spence read the resolution by title only. Motion to pass by Alderman Burckart, second by Alderman Grider. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

5. Approval of a budget adjustment in the amount of \$26,220 for the survey, engineering and consulting involving infrastructure and apron improvements to the Bentonville Municipal Airport.

Motion to approve by Alderman Perry, second by Alderman Grider. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

6. Resolution No. 3-11-14 C: Resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to enter into a professional services agreement with Hight-Jackson Associates PA to prepare concept plans for the North Walton Boulevard Enhancement Plan.

City Attorney Spence read the resolution by title only. Motion to pass by Alderman Grider, second by Alderman Williams. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

7. Approval to award Bid No. 14-17 to Hansen's Tree Service in the amount of \$90,000 to provide grinding services at the Bentonville compost facility.

Motion to approve by Alderman Grider, second by Alderman Burckart. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

8. Ordinance No. 2014-36: Ordinance authorizing the Mayor and the City Clerk to purchase repair components for the automatic bar screen for the McKissic Creek wastewater lift station and waiving the requirement of competitive bidding.

City Attorney Spence read the ordinance by title only. Motion to pass by Alderman Grider, second by Alderman Baggett. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

9. Resolution No. 3-11-14 D: Resolution authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to enter into an agreement with Mercy Health Systems for firefighter physicals for the City of Bentonville.

City Attorney Spence read the resolution by title only. Motion to pass by Alderman Grider, second by Alderman Burckart. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

10. Approval of a budget adjustment in the amount of \$10,000 to the Bentonville Fire Department from the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District to purchase protective equipment for EMS personnel.

11. Approval to award Bid No. 14-12 to Altec in the amount of \$269,480 to purchase a new digger derrick.

Motion to approve by Alderman Baggett, second by Alderman Williams. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

12. Approval of Bid No. 14-15 to Nunnally Chevrolet in the amount of \$36,953 to purchase a one-ton cab and chassis for the Electric Department.

Motion to approve by Alderman Grider, second by Alderman Sooter. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

13. Ordinance No. 2014-37: Ordinance amending the pay plan for the City of Bentonville, Arkansas, pertaining to two positions in the Parks Department.

City Attorney Spence read the ordinance by title only. Motion to pass by Alderman Burckart, second by Alderman Sooter. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

14. Ordinance No. 2014-38: Ordinance amending the pay plan for certain elected officials of the City of Bentonville, Arkansas, effective January 1, 2015.

Mayor McCaslin recognized Ed Wheeler, Human Resources Manager. Mr. Wheeler stated he had done a survey and that the information provided to Council in their packets reflected some of the information gathered about the pay at comparable cities.

Mayor McCaslin explained that for the last few elections cycles, the Council had considered elected official pay in the Spring before the filing period, with the newly established amounts to take effect the following year when the position's new term began. He stated this would allow all persons interested in running for a position to know what the pay would be in plenty of time prior to the filing period. He added it also prevented the Council from being in the position of raising their own pay as the newly established pay rates would not take effect until after an intervening election.

Alderman Baggett began by noting that she thought the Clerk was underpaid considering her duties and moved that the Clerk's pay be increased to \$12,000 annually beginning in 2015, second by Alderman Grider.

Alderman Burckart asked about previous increases in pay for the Clerk and the Mayor explained that all the elected officials received the same COLA increases as city employees, but that there had been no other increases to pay other than COLA for the Clerk or any of the other elected officials.

Motion carried (8-0).

Alderman Grider stated he saw no reason to increase the salary of any further positions at this point.

Alderman Perry expressed that he thought the Mayor's pay should be increased. He indicated that based on comparing the budgets of the various cities, he thought the Mayor of Bentonville was overseeing a larger enterprise and thus thought a pay increase was appropriate. Upon inquiry, the Mayor stated that the position had not had any salary increase other than COLA increases since Mayor Coberly was in office. Alderman Perry proposed a \$10,000 annual increase would be appropriate.

Alderman Burckart indicated the car allowance for the Mayor should also be considered. Alderman Perry stated that the salary should be in line with someone who is effectively the CEO of the community. Alderman Grider indicated he generally agreed that Mayor McCaslin was deserving of an increase, but reminded the Council that the discussion was about the position and not the person holding the position.

A discussion ensued with Alderman Perry and Alderman Thomas participating suggesting the salary for the Mayor be increased to \$125,000 annually with a car allowance of \$7200 annually.

It was noted by Alderman Sooter that at some other cities, including some of those used for comparison purposes, many departments of those cities were run by commissions and not the mayors. In Bentonville, the whole of city government falls under the Mayor's purview.

Motion by Alderman Thomas to set the Mayor's salary beginning in 2015 at \$125,000 with a \$7,200 car allowance, second by Alderman Grider. Motion carried (8-0).

City Attorney Spence read the ordinance by title only.

The Council next turned to the City Attorney's pay. The City Attorney expressed that since the pay was for the position, he would discourage an increase. He noted that in addition to his salary, the City hired him as a contractor for work beyond that assigned to him by ordinance at an hourly rate. He stated that considering the manner in which he and the staff attorney for the City have worked together over the years, the position was appropriately compensated. He expressed that he doubted if the working relationship would be the same with another attorney, meaning the City would be paying more than it probably should. Accordingly, the recommendation was that the pay remain the same.


A brief discussion ensued about pay for aldermen.


Alderman Burckart indicated that though he thought the pay should not be changed, he thought the Council should consider allowing Council members to have some portion of health insurance available paid by the City if they choose to have insurance through the City. Staff was asked to present figures to the Council about the cost of such a proposal.

The City Attorney indicated that the language about the increases for 2015 for the Clerk and the Mayor would be added to the shell

ordinance prepared. Motion to approve the ordinance by
Alderman Grider, second by Alderman Sooter. Motion carried (8-0).

Motion was made by Alderman Baggett to adjourn the meeting, second by
Alderman Grider. Motion carried (8-0).


Linda Spence, City Clerk


Bob McCaslin, Mayor