

City of Brownsdale

Garden Spot of Mower County

Mayor – Jeff Foster Council Members – Gene Crabtree, Debra Schuette, Jessica Bakken, Rick Smith

City Clerk/Treasurer – Adria Vargas

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City Council Regular Meeting January 7th, 2019

Mayor Jeff Foster called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.; everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Mayor Jeff Foster; Council Members: Gene Crabtree, Debra Schuette, Jessica Bakken, Rick Smith

City Employees: City Librarian: Deb Smith, City Clerk: Adria Vargas,
and Police Chief: Jon Smerud, City Maintenance: Wayne Baldner

Public in attendance: Loren Swanson, Gene Tindal, Jenelle Parks, Joah Parks, Ardis Jensen, Jan Ball,
Robb Luthe and Ben Simmons

The City Clerk administered the Oath's of Office to Mayor Foster and Council Member Schuette, Bakken and Smith.

December 3rd meeting minutes stood approved as written.

Public Works Report: Wayne started by asking the Council to listen No more humming. He stated that Fox Electric had finished the work at City Hall, Library, Maintenance and Clerks office. Wayne also extended tours to Jessica, Rick and Deb as their schedules allow to visit the lift station, pumphouse, ponds, brush dump.

City Police Officer's Report: available at the City Clerk's office upon request.

Officer Smerud stated that Mower County is upgrading software on their computers and that after talking in depth with the IT person from Mower County that he would like to wait until they make the change over there to decide what type of software will be installed in the possible new Brownsdale Computer. He said that is an important factor because so much of the work is done together.

Officer Smerud also asked for the Councils approval to write a grant to place a digital traffic speed sign to place on the South end of town. There are many traffic issues there. The Council stated if you can get it that would be perfect.

Officer Smerud stated that live traps are out to catch feral cats and many have been caught and rehomed. Council Member Crabtree stated that Chelsea from First American is interested in taking some as barn cats.

Mayor Foster added that Officer Smerud has passed his 6- month probationary period and congratulated him. Council Member Schuette moved to increase Officer Smeruds hourly rate by \$1.00 per hour. Council Member Bakken seconded the motion. 5 yeas, 0 Nays. Carried.

Old Business

Wayne commented that he has received bids for the Pavilion project. The Council after much discussion decided that more information was needed on the bids to make an informed decision. This matter is tabled until the next council meeting.

New Business

Library: Deb Smith stated she is excited for the new year. She stated that work has been done updating policies and procedures for the library. Deb stated that there are many new things she is working on for the library. She presented some materials to the Council.

The Council discussed reimbursement and pay for the Clerk to attend water and waste water. This is tabled until the Clerks talks to Natalie who is in charge of Water and Waste Water in Brownsdale and Dexter.

The Council disgcussed Employee annual raises, for Deb, Shelley, Adria, Wayne and Jon. After a very lengthy discussion. Council Member Bakken asked what was done last year. It was stated that a raise was given to all employees of .75 cents per hour.

Council Member Crabtree stated that some information that he had stating that many wages are not comparable to other cities our size. Mayor Foster stated that we don't have a job description for the other towns. Council Member Crabtree read the population size, job description for the other position and stated that sounds like what Wayne does, then some and more. He stated we need to compensate people for the job they do or they will go elsewhere. Council Member Crabtree stated we don't offer them benefits, only cash money and it does make a difference.

Robb Luthé stated that The City of Brownsdale has always been a stepping stone. The Police Officer for example will always move on when they are offered benefits or a higher per hour wage, stating "that's the way its always been. I was on the Council for 28 years."

Robb also added that Social Security raises are only 2.8% percent this year. He also said look at the turn over in Public Works in the last 10 years. Wayne stated if your spouse carries the insurance benefits that the money per hour does make a difference.

Tax base and infrastructure were also sore spots of the discussion. Jon Doe doesn't want to pay more taxes and we are already highly taxed. Mayor Foster stated that he wouldn't live in a town that pays high taxes like that. Step increases and COLA were mentioned along and paying a percentage vs a dollar increase.

After moving way off the topic of employee raises., Loren Swanson stated to Council Member Crabtree to make a motion. Council Member Crabtree moved to increase city wages by \$1.00 for all city employees. Council Member Bakken seconded the motion. 3 Yeas, 1 Nay (Foster) 1 Abstain(Smith). Carried to start pay period 1/14/2019-1/25/2019

Mayor Foster wanted it stated in the record that he would be in agreement to no more than a .50 per hour increase across the board for all employees stating that pay equity is a fine line to balance and that he doesn't want to see the City be out of compliance.

The Council discussed a training opportunity for the newly elected officials. Mayor addressed the newly elected council members with the dates of the trainings. Jan.25 & 26, 2019 in Mankato and Feb.1 &2, 2019 in Plymouth. Council Member Bakken stated that she would like to attend the Mankato session. Council Member Smith stated he would like to attend the Plymouth session. **Council Member Schuette moved to send Council Member Bakken to the Mankato session Jan. 25 & 26, 2019 and Council Member Smith to the Plymouth session Feb. 1&2, 2019 for a total cost of \$450.00 dollars. Council Member Crabtree seconded the motion. 3 Yeas, 2 Abstain (Bakken, Smith) Carried.**

Council Member Schuette moved to accepted Resolution 2019- 1 approving the Designation of Services and Annual Appointments. Council Member Smith seconded the motion. 5 Yeas, 0 Nays. Carried.

Council Member Schuette moved to approve Gene Crabtree as acting Mayor, Council Member Bakken seconded the motion. 4 Yeas, 1 Abstain (Crabtree). Carried.

Council Member Schuette moved to adopted Resolution 2019-2 approving the Annual fee schedule. Council Member Bakken seconded the motion. 5 Yeas, 0 Nays. Carried.

Council Member Crabtree moved to adopt Resolution 2019-3 Combining polling place along with Red Rock Township at Brownsdale City Hall, for Primary and General Elections. Council Member Schuette seconded the motion, 5 Yeas, 0 Nays. Carried.

The Council also discussed fund balances. The Council discussed paying off the park equipment loan at this time. The Council after the discussion about the pavilion decided to not move on this topic.

Robb Luthe asked the Council to address the Frontier Lounge about the pathetic sight to see in the front of their business. Cigarette butts all over, the ashtray is filled to the top and bottles and cans strewn all over the front along the sidewalk. He stated that he walks almost daily to the post office and it's a sight for sore eyes. The Council stated that they have been talked to in the past month. Officer Smerud stated that he would talk to them again and would watch over the next month. If it doesn't improve that he will have the Clerk send them a letter.

Bills were presented and signed

Council Member Schuette made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 pm. Council Member Bakken seconded the motion. 5 Yeas, 0 Nays. Carried. The meeting stood adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Adria Vargas; City Clerk/Treasurer