

BROWN CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS
May 11, 2020

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR JULIE MILLER AT 7:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE LED BY MAYOR JULIE MILLER.

PRESENT: Mayor Julie Miller; Councilmembers: Stacy Biel, Patricia Jacobson, Christine Lee, Ross McIvor and Walter Robison (7:03); City Manager Clint Holmes, City Clerk Juanita Smith and City Attorney Gregory Stremers.

ABSENT: Councilmember Eugene Navock.

GUESTS: Larry Steigerwald and Police Officer Adam Stracenrider.

ADDITIONS, CORRECTIONS AND DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

City Manager Clint Holmes stated that there would be two additional requests under Petitions and Communications and also there would be two additional items under the Manager's Report.

CORRECTION & APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by CM McIvor, second by CM Biel, to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2020 as presented. Motion carried.

PAY BILLS:

Motion by CM Jacobson, second by CM Lee, to pay the bills in the following funds: **General - \$22,016.13** (9788 – 9816), **Payroll - \$15,495.40** (9419 – 9435 plus EFT), **Major Street - \$90.00** (4026), **Sanitary Sewer - \$420.00** (3880), **Water - \$1,688.30** (3196 – 3200) and **Equipment - \$14.71** (1717). Motion carried.

POLICE REPORT: Report reviewed. No questions or concerns.

PERSONAL APPEARANCES: None.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS & COMMENTS:

Larry Steigerwald attended the Council Meeting and questioned how the City was letting one DPW worker stay at home while the other two DPW workers were on the job. The employee is rotated every week. It was explained to Mr. Steigerwald that we needed to make sure one DPW worker remained well if the other two became sick. Mr. Steigerwald said the Councilmembers had to vote on it to make it legal which they had not done. At this time CM Lee made a motion, second by CM Robison to work two DPW individuals per week with the third on call during the COVID-19 restrictions. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** CM Robison – Yes, CM McIvor – Yes, CM Lee – Yes, CM Biel – Yes, CM Jacobson – Yes, CM Navock – Absent. . 5 Yes Votes, 0 No Votes, 1 Absent, 0 Abstaining. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None Scheduled.

PUBLIC HEARING: None Scheduled.

RESOLUTIONS: None Scheduled.

ORDINANCES: None Scheduled.

PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:

1. 7090 Merrill Street: Remove and replace shingles.

Motion by CM Biel, second by CM Lee, to approve the request for a building permit to remove and replace the shingles at 7090 Merrill Street. Motion carried.

2. 4220 Third Street: Install 9' X 18' "Easyset" swimming pool.

Motion by CM McIvor, second by CM Jacobson, to approve the request for a building permit to install a 9' x 18' "Easyset" swimming pool at 4220 Third Street. Motion carried.

3. 7090 Merrill Street. Install a 12' x 16' skid shed.

Motion by CM McIvor, second by CM Lee to approve the request for a building permit to install a 12' x 16' skid shed at 7090 Merrill Street on the property of the DPW. This shed will belong to the Brown City Festival Commission. Motion carried.

4. 7192 Lincoln Street: Install a 14' x 18' deck on the rear of the home.

Motion by CM McIvor, second by CM Biel, to approve the request for a building permit to build a 14' x 18' deck on the rear of the home at 7192 Lincoln Street. Motion carried.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

1. **Reed Street Water Project:** The job has been awarded to Murray Underground Systems of Port Huron and accepted. The pre-construction meeting took place on May 5th by conference call. Anticipate work to begin the first week of June and be completed within two weeks. When the new water main is connected to the existing mains, some residents will lose water for a short period of time. Those that will be affected live on Reed Street, Main Street between George and St Marys Streets and on Maple Street between McMorran and Lincoln Streets. Letters will be sent to those impacted when the exact dates are finalized.
2. **Agri-Valley Services:** As requested by the City Council, AVS extended the date for submitting the broadband interest surveys to May 22nd. The City mailed postcards on April 30th to all residents requesting they complete the survey. Each of you should have received one in the mail. Results of the extended survey should be available at the next City Council meeting.
3. **Water Shut-Offs:** Executive Order 2020-28 does not allow water shut-offs for non-payment until the order is rescinded. Currently, 37 customers out of 624 are behind on their utility bill by two or more months, amounting to \$8,469.59. Ordinance requires the City to shut off water on the first Tuesday following the last Friday of the month for non-payment. This means there could be dozens of people who will lose water service once EO 2020-28 expires. The City has never had a formal payment plan policy. For

individuals who notify City Hall they will be late with a payment, the City has generally granted extensions of up to a week. Now, however, the timelines and amounts owed are much greater. What policy does the City Council wish to establish for this unique situation?

The Councilmembers were asked to think about this unique situation and it will again be addressed at the May 25th Council Meeting.

4. **Water Service Line:** The small subdivision that was built south of Maple Street across from Merrill Street has a single water service pipe that supplies all four houses. One property was separated from the other three. The three are owned by a single individual and are used as rental property. Since there is only one water shutoff for all four dwellings, when one (routinely) has its water shutoff for non-payment, the others lose water also, even though they are current on their payments. Recommend a separate water line be installed on the single property. Due to a large number of trees, the line would have to be bored instead of trenched. Cost will be about \$5,400. How does the City Council wish to proceed?

Motion by CM McIvor, second by CM Jacobson, to install a separate water line on the single property at a cost of about \$5,400 (Five Thousand Four Hundred Dollars). Due to the large number of trees on the property the line will need to be bored instead of trenched. Motion carried.

5. **Software:** The City currently uses Pontem software to keep track of revenues and expenses (General Ledger), pay bills (Accounts Payable), and generate paychecks (Payroll). Pontem plans to end support for these software products at the end of the year. BS&A currently provides software to do these jobs and will integrate with the BS&A products currently in use by the City. Cost to transition, including transferring databases and training staff, is \$20,015 with an annual service fee of \$1,365 per year. BS&A is in wide use by local governments. How does the City Council wish to proceed?

Motion by CM McIvor, second by CM Biel, to purchase BS & A's software to keep track of revenues and expenses, pay bills, and generate paychecks. The cost to transition including transferring databases and training staff will be \$20,015 (Twenty Thousand Fifteen Dollars) with an annual service fee of \$1,365 (One Thousand Three Hundred Sixty-five Dollars). ROLL CALL VOTE: CM McIvor – Yes, CM Lee – Yes, CM Biel – Yes, CM Jacobson – Yes, CM Navock – Absent, CM Robison – Yes. 5 Yes Votes, 0 No Votes, 1 Absent, 0 Abstaining. Motion carried.

6. **Water Quality Report:** The Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) is the annual report required by the state and federal governments summarizing information about drinking water quality provided during calendar year 2019. Following review by the City Council and EGLE, the document will be posted on the City's website; printed in *The Banner*; and copies mailed to EGLE and the Sanilac / Lapeer County Health Departments. Copies will also be available at City Hall for review. The City met or exceeded all water quality requirements in 2019.

7. **Brown City Schools:** Michigan Pipe Inspection completed the final inspection and televising of school's wastewater system on May 8th. A significant crack was located and sealed. The DPW will reinstall the check valves when the Foreman returns to work.
8. **COVID-19:** The City continues to closely monitor the situation. No employees have exhibited symptoms. We are still emphasizing use of mail, the drop box and telephone for conducting business.
 - a. The Governor spoke with city managers by conference call on May 5th. No significantly new information. She was asked about impact on Revenue Sharing but apparently had no information. Emphasis will be on testing – especially Detroit and Flint.
 - b. The Sanilac County Health Department, Sanilac County Emergency Manager and Sanilac County administrator and city managers had a conference call on May 4th to learn the current status of COVID-19 in Sanilac County. Testing will be available at the SC Health Department by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Currently, the impact of the disease overall has been relatively small (see map). The next group call is scheduled for May 18th.
 - c. Because of a combination of constitutional requirement, statute and tradition, Michigan must balance its budget, and cannot use debt to fund operating costs. When revenues fall, Michigan must cut spending or raise taxes. With so many people out of work, and uncertainty over whether and when consumer spending will return, Michigan can be expected to keep tax increases minimal. That leaves only one alternative: deep spending cuts. This is also true of Brown City. The Michigan Treasury expects to meet on May 15th to determine what funds will be available to disburse to cities and counties. Current estimates generated by Michigan local governments are a cut of 18% to 25%. With the continuing extensions to the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order this may prove optimistic. Generally, the amount the City receives in Revenue Sharing approximates the annual cost of Public Safety, to include police and fire.
 - d. FEMA Funds: Some funds to mitigate costs directly due to COVID-19 are available through the state. The necessary application to apply for this funding was due prior to April 30th. The City completed the application process and received notice that it was accepted prior to the deadline. Estimated costs, as of May 5th, for wages and supplies are about 2,974.99. However, based on the mandatory FEMA Applicant Briefing that took place on May 11th via teleconference, the grants are 75% federal and 25% local match, minimum amount is \$3,300, and will only cover overtime wage costs for stand-by employees. Costs other than stand-by wages that are a direct result of COVID-19 are essentially zero, but there have been some donations of PPE, hand sanitizer and office partitions accepted by the City.
 - e. Governor Whitmer signed [Executive Order 2020-77](#) to extend Michigan's Stay Home, Stay Safe order to May 28. All businesses in the state—including manufacturers—must require masks to be worn when workers cannot consistently maintain six feet of separation from others, and consider face shields for those who cannot consistently maintain three feet of separation from other workers. Additionally Governor Whitmer detailed the six phases of her MI Safe Start Plan to re-engage Michigan's economy. The governor has worked with leaders in

health care, business, labor, and education to develop the plan, and announced today that Michigan is in phase three. The phases of the pandemic include:

- 1) **UNCONTROLLED GROWTH:** The increasing number of new cases every day, overwhelming our health systems.
- 2) **PERSISTENT SPREAD:** We continue to see high case levels with concern about health system capacity.
- 3) **FLATTENING:** The epidemic is no longer increasing and the health-system's capacity is sufficient for current needs.
- 4) **IMPROVING:** Cases, hospitalizations and deaths are clearly declining.
- 5) **CONTAINING:** Continued case and death rate improvements, with outbreaks quickly contained.
- 6) **POST-PANDEMIC:** Community spread not expected to return.

9. **Senior Class Parade:** The Senior Class of 2020 plans to have a parade on May 17th at 2:00 p.m.

On May 17th at 2:00 p.m. the Brown City Senior Class of 2020 will have a Drive-By Parade through Brown City. The parade will be led by the Police officer on duty at that time. The parade will line up and begin in the parking lot at the old VFW Hall. They will proceed from there through the town, turn around on the west side of the City, and return through town. A speaker will be set up at the corner of Main and Welles to announce the Seniors as they pass.

10. **City Clean-up Days:** Clean up days are set for June 17th by Knox Disposal. The information will be displayed on the Library sign on Main Street if the Library agrees to let the City use their sign. Post Cards will also be sent out to inform the town citizens.
11. **Fire Hydrant Flushing:** The Brown City DPW plans to flush fire hydrants June 22nd through June 26th as part of this semi-annual program. Hydrant flushing will usually take place during the day. Residents may notice some discoloration in the water during this process. Residents are advised not to wash white or light colored clothes during this period. This notice will be published in the Banner and posted on Channel 6.
12. **Reopening City Hall:** Communications between the city managers and administrators throughout the state indicated that most will open their City Halls on June 1st. What is the recommendation of the City Council?

The consensus of the City Council is to reopen City Hall on June 1st, subject to requirements approved in Lansing by the governor and legislature.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

City Attorney Gregory Stremers reported that he had been working on the DDA property that was Robert Pridemore's. Robert Pridemore died and he is working to get the property deeded back to the DDA. It has been okayed to post the property for sale. No probate was necessary.

The City Treasurer and the City Attorney have been working to zero out certain long past due accounts. This should be done by June of 2020.

TREASURER'S REPORT: None.

CLERK'S REPORT: None.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

1. BC Days.

The Brown City Days have been cancelled for this year due to the COVID-19.

2. Fireworks.

The Fireworks are still scheduled as slated for June as planned at this time.

There was a Motion by CM Jacobson, second by CM Mclvor, to donate the traditional \$2500 (Twenty-five Hundred Dollars) to the Festival Committee to help offset the cost of the fireworks. Motion carried.

3. Senior Parade on May 17th at 2 PM.

4. Memorial Day Planning.

Memorial Day planning is in progress. There will be some type of ceremony at the Brown City Evergreen Cemetery with a bugler playing and perhaps a speaker.

5. Proclamation Presentation.

The presentation of the Proclamations for Valedictorian Kaitlyn Fletcher and Salutatorian Shayla Goddeeris is set for June 8th at the regular Council Meeting.

6. Citizen's Request.

A letter was read by the Mayor from Andrew Laarman requesting that he be paid by the city for work that he had to perform on his own property. It was not clear just what kind of water line repair work he had done. Water line repair on an owner's property is usually the responsibility of the owner. City Manager Clint Holmes will check into this matter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. Building and Grounds (Mclvor) – None.
2. Personnel (Biel) – None.
3. Police / Fire Authority (Lee) – None.
4. Streets and Sidewalks (Navock) – None. (Absent)
5. Tax and Finance (Jacobson) – None.
6. Water and Sewer (Robison) – None.

GENERAL CONCERNS OF THE COUNCIL:

CM Robison spoke of his concern about a couch and/or chair that has been setting out by a garage behind the Brown City Income Tax office. He said it has been there for quite awhile.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS & COMMENTS: None.

CLOSED SESSION: None Scheduled.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by CM Lee, second by CM Mclvor, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Juanita Smith
City Clerk