

**DECEMBER 18, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Lake Benton City Council was held on Monday, December 18, 2023 at 5:30 P.M. in the Lake Benton Area Community and Event Center. Mayor Michael Carpenter presided. Trustees Rosie DeZeeuw, Karen Lichtsinn, Patrick Haynes and Scott Christensen were present. City Attorney Mike Cable was absent. City Administrator/Clerk Eileen Christensen, Maintenance Supervisor Travis Lustfield, Lincoln County Sheriff Bob Bushman, and Fire Relief Association members Mike Czech and Daryl Trigg were also present.

Mayor Michael Carpenter called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

Mayor Michael Carpenter then asked if anyone in attendance had an item, not on the agenda, to bring up during the Open Forum part of the meeting. If so, they had two minutes to state their concern. No items were brought forward at this time.

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 4, 2023 were reviewed. **MOTION** by Rosie DeZeeuw, seconded by Scott Christensen to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 4, 2023. Motion carried.

**CLAIMS PRESENTED AGAINST THE CITY OF LAKE BENTON:**

L-P RURAL WATER	\$ 3,925.49	RETHWISCH & SON	\$ 721.71
STATION ONE	\$ 262.31	THOMAS ELECTRIC	\$ 313.61
CITY OF LAKE BENTON	\$ 174.36	POSTMASTER	\$ 171.36
LINCOLN CTY TREASURER	\$ 100.00	CITY OF TYLER	\$ 3,000.00
MN LIFE	\$ 5.10	FIRST SECURITY BANK	\$ 38,500.00
SW SANITATION	\$ 3,751.43	CARDMEMBER SRVCS	\$ 163.44
ONE OFFICE	\$ 95.05	KIBBLE EQUIPMENT	\$ 238.11
ENVIRO PUMP	\$ 494.40		

**MOTION** by Patrick Haynes, seconded by Karen Lichtsinn to approve payment of the claims presented against the City of Lake Benton. Motion carried and the Mayor authorized the City Administrator/Clerk to make payment.

**PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE**

Maintenance Supervisor Travis Lustfield spoke with S & K Towing in Tyler and they agreed to tow any vehicles on the streets in Lake Benton after a snow emergency has been declared and charge the owners of the vehicles \$150.00. The City of Lake Benton declares a snow emergency when two or more inches of snow have accumulated and places a warning on any vehicles left on the street. The City of Lake Benton Ordinance No. 71.04 is on the Local Access Channel, and the Council discussed placing a classified ad in the newspaper to inform the citizens. **MOTION** by Karen Lichtsinn, seconded by Scott Christensen to authorize the Administrator/Clerk to place a classified ad in the newspaper regarding the City's snow emergency and towing of any vehicles left on the street. Motion carried.

Maintenance Supervisor Travis Lustfield then informed the Council of a sewer issue in the alley between Valley Street and East Bluff Street. There are two homes located in the alley, one is vacant and the other is occupied. The sewer line runs on the east side of the alley towards Bluff Street and continues to back up. Travis requested Thomas Plumbing to camera the pipe and was unable to get through the orange berg pipe. The City's ordinance states it is the homeowner's responsibility to pay for the repair of the sewer line but there are two homes and only one homeowner. Travis will provide a quote to the Council when he receives it from Thomas Plumbing to dig 4' and replace the orange berg pipe with PVC pipe.

Travis then reminded the citizens to place their garbage cans off the street and on the boulevard especially when it snows. Johansen's Repair will check over the City's new snow blower before the City uses it.

**MOTION** by Rosie DeZeeuw, seconded by Patrick Haynes to approve the Public Works Update. Motion carried.

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT UPDATE**

Sheriff Bob Bushman presented the November calls for service in Lake Benton and explained there is nothing out of the ordinary. There were a variety of calls, but nothing major. Bob explained that he and his deputies spend time on Highway 14 and Highway 75 and traffic has been down and no one has been speeding. There were no car accidents, but there were a few deer/car accidents. Bob then informed the Council that he and his deputies are getting great use out of the office the City refurbished and other officers are also using the area for meetings, etc. **MOTION** by Scott Christensen, seconded by Karen Lichtsinn to approve the Law Enforcement Update. Motion carried.

The next item of business was to review/act on raising the Fire Department's Fire Relief Association Retirement Benefits. Fire Relief Treasurer Daryl Trigg and Fire Relief President Mike Czech were present to request approval from the Council for the Fire Relief Association to raise their retirement benefits from \$850.00/year to \$1,000.00/year effective January 1, 2024. The Fire Relief Association receives approximately \$22,500.00/year of state aid each year for the Fire Relief Association. A firefighter is partially vested after 10 years of service and fully vested after 20 years of service. It was noted that it has been a long time since the Fire Relief Association raised their retirement benefits. **MOTION** by Karen Lichtsinn, seconded by Rosie DeZeeuw to approve raising the Lake Benton Fire Relief Association retirement benefits from \$850.00/year to \$1,000.00/year. Motion carried. Scott Christensen abstained from voting.

Mayor Michael Carpenter thanked the Fire Department for their services to the City and commended the department members for being involved in several organizations within the City which is a large benefit to the City.

The next item of business was to review/act on a Resolution Accepting Donations to the Library. The Library received a donation from the American Legion Auxiliary for \$10.00 in memory of Audrey Johansen. This donation will be designated for collections. Minnesota Statutes state the Library can accept donations for the benefit of recreational services. The Council needs to pass the resolution accepting the donation to the Library. **MOTION** by Karen Lichtsinn, seconded by Scott Christensen to approve the Resolution Accepting the Donation from the American Legion Auxiliary for \$10.00 in memory of Audrey Johansen to the Library. Motion carried.

The next item of business was to review/act on the employee annual wage adjustment effective January 1, 2024. Mayor Michael Carpenter informed the Council the 2024 budget included a 3% wage increase for the City employees. **MOTION** by Patrick Haynes, seconded by Rosie DeZeeuw to approve a 3% wage increase for Administrator/Clerk Eileen Christensen, Maintenance Supervisor Travis Lustfield, and Maintenance Workers Troy Nordmeyer and Todd Draper. Motion carried. Scott Christensen abstained from voting for Eileen Christensen's wage increase.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Trustee Rosie DeZeeuw – The Chamber met and the December Business of the Month is Michelle Weber's "The Studio". The Lions fundraiser served 93 people and raised \$1,100.00 for Christmas decorations for the Chamber. The Lighting contest winners included: 1st place Jason Grooters, 2nd place Aaron Coe, and 3rd place to Sam Luna and Jan Basant, and the Business winner was the Lake Benton Library. Santa Day was Saturday, December 9, 2023 and was well attended. The Elementary coloring contest winners were awarded \$5.00 for each class.

Trustee Karen Lichtsinn – Mayor Michael Carpenter, Trustee Karen Lichtsinn and Administrator/Clerk Eileen Christensen met with Dan Buelteel to move forward with surveying Johnson Commercial Park. The City will need to work with Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water (LPRW) regarding their road access and how far south they need the road to go. Dan stated he may have something to the City by the end of the year but is not sure.

Trustee Scott Christensen – The Fire Department met and approved raising their retirement benefits and had radio training.

Trustee Patrick Haynes – The Opera House board met and they are still looking for a play to present in the spring. The board received a \$10,000.00 award through the bank to build a shed behind the Opera House for storage. The Opera House annual meeting will be held in January to elect new officers. There will be some members resigning and they are looking for volunteers to take their place.

The EDA met and reviewed the inspection of the duplex units which Jared Rouge is working to get completed. Three of the four units have been leased and the fourth unit is awaiting paper work. The board discussed replacing the living room and hallway carpet with laminate vinyl flooring when a tenant moves out of the 4-Plex unit if the carpet is in disrepair.

**MOTION** by Karen Lichtsinn, seconded by Patrick Haynes to approve the Committee Reports. Motion carried.

**ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK REPORT:**

Administrator/Clerk Eileen Christensen provided the Council with a copy of a Notice of Rate Increase from Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water that the new water rates will take effect on July 1, 2024 and payable August 1, 2024. Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water is raising the water rates \$0.25 per 1,000 gallons. This will be put on one of the agendas in May 2024 for the Council’s review and action.

The City office will be closed Friday, December 22, Monday, December 25, 2023 and Monday, January 1, 2024.

**MAYORAL REPORT:**

Mayor Michael Carpenter informed the Council that the 2024 Mayoral Appointments will be voted on at the first meeting in January. Mayor Michael Carpenter read the list of appointments and recommended leaving them the same for the coming year.

Mayor Michael Carpenter wished the citizens of Lake Benton a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The Mayor then reminded the Council of the several projects that will continue into the new year which include Johnson Commercial Park, County Park Projects, and MnDOT Highway 75 Infrastructure Project.

The next regular Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 5:30 PM.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, a **MOTION** was made by Scott Christensen, seconded by Patrick Haynes and carried, the meeting adjourned.

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MAYOR

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ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK