

BELT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

May 21, 2025

7:00PM

The second regularly scheduled meeting of May 2025 was called to order beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were Mayor James Olson; Clerk-Treasurer Lynn Schilling; Aldermen Paul Heikkila, Sally Miller, April Wells, Corbin Keaster, and Becky Gorton; Project Engineer Josh Sommer; and members of the public including Brian Dahl, Ted Nault, and Cindy Nault.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Brian Dahl requesting that he get compensation for damage suffered August 28th when contractor water hammering damaged his water lines. He submitted a Kindred Plumbing bill in the amount of \$845. He commented that he was told by a contractor that he needed to stay home and open lines when the contractor was working on the lines. He stated that this is not a reasonable expectation, and the citizen should not have to "protect their lines" from contractor error and negligence.

Ted and Cindy Nault were present to make comments on the Council's decisions regarding the proposed 29% increase for the Sheriff's Law Enforcement Contract. They commented that the rate increase was not fair or warranted and that the Sheriff does not provide much extra coverage beyond the 911 dispatch service they must respond to regardless of whether a community has a contract with them or not.

REVIEW OF THE COMPLAINT LOG: The complaint log was reviewed with special focus on the number of complainants saying that they were not given notice before, during or even after water was shut off to their residents by the ARPA Contractor. The item is set for further discussion on the next Agenda.

The Minutes from the May 12th and April 23rd meetings were approved by unanimous vote of those present. The claims and warrants were reviewed and approved for release by a unanimous vote of those present.

NEW BUSINESS: Josh Sommer was present with proposed change orders 4 and #5 for \$16,674 and \$13582 respectively. A motion was made to approve both change orders. It was seconded and carried by a vote of those present.

The council considered Resolution #816 to increase water rates by 28.57%. The resolution was discussed, and a motion was made to approve the Resolution and move forward with legal notices, publishings, and a rate increase hearing on June 18th. The rate increase will

fund a 1.7-million-dollar loan to extend the SRF Water Project. Sommer also indicated that ARPA funds will still be available for the FY25 Audit.

The Council engaged in a lengthy discussion revolving around the Sheriff's proposal to increase the Law Enforcement Contract for FY26 by 29%. No action taken. Will be considered further on the next Agenda.

OLD BUSINESS: None

COUNCIL REPORTS: Alderman Heikkila proposed getting rid of the cracked and aging resin picnic tables in Castner Park and replacing them with concrete tables supplied by the Ralph Spiller Foundation. The item will be considered on the next Agenda.

Alderman Keaster called to attention again the condition on 4th Avenue South in which some properties are encroaching into the street so far that it is now a one lane street. He encouraged the Council to address the problem and enforce against the encroachment before it gets any worse. Keaster also stated that the pothole problem is getting quite bad, having not done pothole repair at all last year.

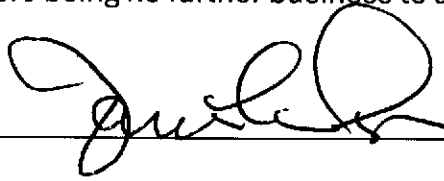
CLERK-TREASURER INPUT: Clerk-Treasurer Schilling said that some preliminary budget considerations should be made soon, including proposed capital improvements and COLA pay increases to take effect July. She said that it would also be necessary to open a discussion regarding proposed budgeting for flood plain administration services and the current \$10,000 contract with Great West, most of which has been expended. The item will be addressed on the next Agenda.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Olson reported that well house #2 at Coe Oven Flats will be getting a new motor and pump soon; expected cost \$37,000. Olson further reported that both Deputy Livingston and Deputy Lugo had been promoted to Corporal. He closed in saying that some research had been done on the 4-year statute of limitations on Flood Plain Regulation violations. He said that based on this information fines could not be levied on violations more than 4 years old.

PUBLIC INPUT: Cindy Nault stated that she is afraid the citizens of Belt are unaware of the city law enforcement contract with the Sheriff and are ignorant of the problems there. She went on to state her belief that Sheriff law enforcement coverage is very poor in Belt and that the city's Ordinances are going unenforced. She closed in questioning the Resident Deputy house and its value to the City, saying that it was a poor use of public funds.

She added that Larry Howes, who has recently lost both legs, would like to come to council meetings and proposed making an entrance to City Hall that is ADA compliant so that he may do so.

There being no further business to attend to, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James M. Olson", written over a horizontal line.

Approved by Mayor James M. Olson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynn Schilling", written over a horizontal line.

Attested to by Clerk-Treasurer Lynn Schilling

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynn Schilling", written over a horizontal line.

Submitted by Lynn Schilling