

BELT  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

March 19, 2025

7:00 PM

The second regularly scheduled meeting of March 2025 was called to order beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were Mayor James Olson; Aldermen Paul Heikkila, Sally Miller, April Wells, Corbin Keaster, Michelle Stinson, and Becky Gorton; Clerk-Treasurer Lynn Schilling; Public Works personnel Codi Heikkila; Deputy Alec Lugo; Project Engineer Josh Sommer; Flood Plain Administrator's assistant Rolf Johnson; Belt Librarian Gladys Rayhill; and members of the public including Cindy Keaster, Harley Gorton, Marla Mital, Kelsi Permann, Britani Hiatt, and Amy Olson.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Amy Olson on behalf of the VFW and Belt Chamber of Commerce group proposing and asking for permission to use the access road within the park for a car show during rodeo and to receive reduced priced Pavilion rental. Will be considered on the next Agenda.

Marla Mital was present to request permission and assistance on constructing a raised planter with water access on city owned property. Alderman Heikkila stated that it might be on the highway right of way and that perhaps the state would donate gravel for the construction.

Harley Gorton, Amy Olson, Brittani Hiatt, and Cindy Keaster were present to discuss the benefits of making amendments to the existing Ordinance and allowing a small number of laying hens, no roosters, and regulations regarding cleanliness. Brittani Hiatt indicated that she had a list of 24 citizens in favor of allowing a regulated small number of laying hens.

Belt City Librarian was present to inquire as to when the \$13,000 library expenses to repair damage to the library resulting from ARPA Water Project Contractor's alleged negligence on August 28, 2024, would be acknowledged and reimbursed. Rayhill also stated that the Library Board would like whatever work product, including blueprints, was completed by Spark Architecture for the \$48,000+ paid to them with ARPA Library Project funds. Clerk Lynn Schilling stated that to date she had not received a project budget, a copy of publishing contractor bid offers, an affidavit of that publishing as required by state law, or any work product or documents other than the original schematic drawings that accounted for \$7000 of the \$48000 spent.

Kelsi Permann was present to seek permission from the City of Belt to use, lease, rent, etc the city owned parking lot at Bridge, Castner, and A Street for a drive through coffee kiosk.

The Complaint Log was reviewed, and it was decided to discuss amending the Dog Control Ordinance to allow only a certain number of dogs per owner and household on a future Agenda. Mayor Olson explained that the Kennel License portion of the Ordinance had been repealed a few years ago with the thinking that it was unfair for a resident to rely on the good nature and permission of their neighbors to acquire permission to have 4 or more dogs. It had also been realized that any bad product of having a lot of dogs (barking, running at large, biting, being ill kept) would be controlled already by other clauses in the existing Dog Control Ordinance.

The Minutes, Claims and Warrants were submitted for Council approval. All were accepted by a unanimous vote of those present.

NEW BUSINESS: The Council considered a request for use of the city owned parking lot on Bridge Street for a coffee kiosk. The Council identified that the building would be small and stationary; not on wheels and would not require water, sewer, or electrical hookup. After some discussion, the request was denied, saying that the parking lot needed to be reserved for snow removal pile of snow in the winter months. The Council stated that they would consider a trailer and the purchase of a street vendor's permit, and suggested other locations that might work for the project.

The Council considered a liability waiver requested by ARPA Water Project Contractor JR Civil. After some discussion it was decided that the wording did not adequately protect the town, and that the Council should not be making decisions related to project contractor liabilities or defining what constitutes an act of negligence or deviation from the project contract. Though it was the Council's general consensus that it would be outside the scope of the Council's role to sign such a statement, it was agreed to entertain a statement with different wording at the next meeting and suggested that maybe such policing would be better administered by the project engineer and Great West.

The Council discussed parameters of the start up in the Spring of the ongoing water project. It will be the expectation of the city, as agreed by the elected officials and Great West Engineering that the project contractor, JR Civil, will provide adequate and legal notification door to door when water service will be turned off or interrupted. It also was agreed that City Public Works personnel will not be engaged by the contractor to turn valves or provide assistance in the construction of the ARPA Water Project.

Josh Sommer, Project Manager with Great West Engineering, was present to get Council approval for the amount and parameters of the proposed new SRF loan for further

development of water mains and valves, as well as to propose future water rate increases to the users to fund the loan. Sommer indicated that the loan amount will be 3.6 million, with a possible loan forgiveness of 1.8 million, and a required rate increase of \$15-18 per month, per user. The matter was tabled for exact amounts to be presented at the next meeting.

Republic Services representatives were, again, not present for comment and discussion related to inadequate garbage collection received by the City of Belt. The matter will be tabled to a future meeting.

The Council considered a proposal to amend the existing Ordinance to allow citizens to have a small number of laying hens in the City of Belt. After extensive discussion, no action was taken. The matter will appear on the next Agenda for consideration.

OLD BUSINESS: Rolf Johnson was present to report on the ongoing status of Flood Plain compliance issues. Johnson announced that FEMA has notified Belt that the city is no longer on probation from its participation in the NFIP. He stated that 7 of the 11 sited violations had been amicably dealt with in meetings with the individuals aimed at dealing with their violations. The remaining 4, will be sent certified warning letters requesting further action by a specific deadline. He was decided to discuss the possibility of offering a position to a flood plain administration assistant on a future agenda during preliminary budget considerations.

COUNCIL INPUT: Alderman Heikkila stated that there was a new small building in the floodway and blocking the gate to the lift station #2.

Alderman Miller inquired about the status of the DEQ Mine Water Cleanup Plant as well as the status of the collapsed section of city dike that may be on land controlled by DEQ. Mayor Olson indicated that it would be addressed on the next Agenda.

CLERK-TREASURER INPUT – None

MAYOR'S INPUT: Mayor Olson indicated that the Little League group would like to lock up the tennis court and that this consideration would be presented on the next Agenda.

Olson further stated that he had found out the mayor cannot declare an emergency with respect to dike repair and needs to obtain approvals and permissions from DEQ as well as FWP before proceeding.

There being no further business to attend to, the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 PM.