

Truman City Council Minutes

The regular meeting was duly held at the Municipal Building Council Chambers and by electronic means remotely via Zoom on the 17th day of May 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Terry Bentele, Councilor Jake Ebert, Councilor Brian Nickerson, Councilor Brandon Mosloski and Councilor Patty Truax

Staff present: City Clerk-Treasurer Amy Huber, Utility Billing Specialist/Deputy Clerk Thea Boesch via remote access, Utility Foreman Brent Brown, Street Superintendent John Bosshart, and Police Chief Justin Jobe

Also Present: Jennifer Brookens, Kim Breamer, Eli Jorgenson, Kirk Langvardt, Chad Truax, Sarah Caballero, Johnny Vuong, and Katie Gonzales

Mayor Terry Bentele presided over the meeting, opening with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda

A motion was made by Mosloski, seconded by Nickerson, to approve the Agenda with the addition of items 14.b, gravel in alleyways; 14.c, amateur baseball; 14.d, request from Johnny Vuong and his friend from Houston to set up meeting; 14.e, city-wide clean-up; and remove item 6, pickleball/basketball court review with Greg Mitchell. All yeas – motion carried.

Public Comment

Kinship Organization: Sarah Caballero and Katie Gonzales provided the Council with a background of the Kinship Organization, which they explained is a youth mentorship program in Martin County where they pair adults with students who need a little extra in their lives. They mentioned there is a need from someone in Truman to be an advocate for the Kinship program to serve the youth in Truman. They would like to have a waiting list of mentors for students needing mentors so they do not have to wait 1-2 years to find a mentor and the students could receive help as soon as they come to Kinship. A description of what the advocate duties would entail was reviewed and it was mentioned that there are some students in the Truman area specifically that currently need mentors. They also described the qualities and rewards of becoming a mentor and the process to become a mentor, which includes a background check. The Council offered suggestions of groups the Kinship program could contact to promote the program and find mentors. Mayor Bentele agreed to be a contact for the Kinship program locally regarding events in the Truman area.

Kim Breamer – Pool Staff/Wages

Kim stated the pool is opening on June 4th at 1:00 p.m., however she was requesting an increase in the lifeguard's wages at the pool. Staff currently receive an increase of \$0.25/year for each season they return to work at the pool. She said the current pay is \$8.15/hour for a MN small employer, which is the state minimum wage range they have followed over the past. Sherry did some research of area pool starting wages from Winnebago, Madelia, St. James, Jackson, Fairmont, and found the lowest starting wage was \$8.50/hour up to \$10.33/hour. Kim mentioned she has a lifeguard staff shortage this year and other communities have a shortage of workers as well. Fairmont contacted Kim and asked if they could share lifeguards. It was pointed out that the workers have discovered they can go other places and get better pay. The lifeguards need to get recertified every two years, and that cost has gone up and the lifeguard training has a cost to it as well. She gave the example of other summer help in the maintenance/utility department where they get paid \$12.00/hour or more. She said the lifeguards do work hard and some put in a lot of hours to be sure they can remain open. Kim said she has recruited workers from other towns because she is short staffed, and she would like to see students from this community want to lifeguard and take part. She gave several examples of how students can do other things and make more money, so it is hard for her to compete and does not want to be forced to close the pool because she cannot find staff to be open. Kim felt a starting wage of \$9.00/hour would be a good starting point, which would be a \$0.85/hour starting wage increase. She also would like the Council to consider giving the workers that have been there a \$0.85 increase so that the new workers coming in are not making more or equal to what they make. There was council discussion and questions regarding how much regular time and over-time pool staff have had in the past. She mentioned that the head guard gets \$10.00/hour starting out and staff generally work up to four seasons. The Council deliberated various wage scenarios and Council Ebert gave the example that they are looking at around 3000 hours and if you look at \$1.00 in wage increases – is the Council ready to shut the pool down for \$3000.00. Kim said she is a little late requesting this and does not expect the Council to give their recommendation tonight, but she had discussed this with

Thea last month, so is just getting back to it. Kim said she spoke with Thea earlier in the day about the new Covid guidelines and she mentioned they had 2 people that were not certified lifeguards last year that did the cleaning and said there may be some younger students that may want to potentially be lifeguards and could get the feel of the pool environment by doing the cleaning tasks and work the concession stand. The Mayor inquired how many staff Kim would like to see on her roster, and she felt 10-15 lifeguards in a year would be her recommendation. Councilor Nickerson pointed out that if you have more staff, the over-time would potentially be less as well.

Motion by Ebert, seconded by Truax, to increase the base starting wage to \$9.15/hour for youth pool employees plus the \$0.25/hour increase for each additional year of service. All yeas – motion carried.

Truman Storage Facility & John Deere Project Plans

Truman Storage Facility (TSF) representatives attended the meeting and stated that they have already started excavation at their newly acquired site. Kirk mentioned that John Deere (JD) never got back to them about purchasing some of their land, so they are moving forward with the basic plan they originally had. He said they are going from the 80' easement area between Schwans and their property, going north 75' for their gate – the area will be completely fenced in. They still need to find out exactly the set-back they need for it, and then will begin phase I. Councilor Ebert mentioned that as far as the easement area, they can put a fence right up to the easement area. However, it was clarified that the set-back for a building is 25'. The representative from TSF said they intend to be about 3' or higher than the road with a slope to the east and north for run-off. They will cut slab about 3' above the road and have black dirt, then gravel. From corner to corner there is about a 11' difference in elevation. They provided a quote to the city from the excavation vendor, which is about 5,000 yards. It was bid two different ways – one for hauling the dirt out and excavating and one just for excavating it, which would be down to the level TSF would be at finished grade. Otherwise, they would just taper the area from the city's easement to their property if the city did not do anything. TSF does not need any more dirt, so they would push the dirt to the north and John Deere could use it. Councilor Mosloski mentioned the City did not have any immediate plans to do anything with the road because there is no plan in place for future development and did not see why the city would spend funds on this at this time. TSF pointed out the reason the City maybe should consider this is simply because of cost. Councilor Nickerson pointed out the easement roadway is just too high, and something should be done with it to make it usable and for the quote they just received, this is reasonable. Councilor Mosloski was concerned about the city potentially paying to cut it all down and then maybe build it back up to get to the west and spending funds on something they have not investigated. It was pointed out that the area to the west was lower, however, but not significantly according to the maps available. John Deere's representatives brought up the concern about the traffic to their privately owned lot and driveway access is already used by the public to get back to the area west of their shop and the safety and maintenance concerns they have. Councilor Nickerson suggested John Deere could put up signage alerting the public that their property is a private drive. They further explained that the manager from John Deere would like to put up a building right behind their current shop, which would be more convenient for them. He explained they would like to see TSF moved back about 100' and then somehow give TSF another 100' or the area of the 80' easement, if the city would give that up, or incorporate some of the EDA land that they would like to purchase back to TSF. John Deere would like to purchase the remaining EDA land in the area and build a large shed to store equipment in much like Kibble does, which would allow them to be more competitive and an asset to their customers. They would also have demo plots and tech days and pointed out that it would be advantageous to their customers to be able to try the equipment right there on the property. Councilor Mosloski mentioned that the land to the west was originally EDA land, and it was sold to a private party with the understanding that if the EDA wanted it back, it would need to be sold back to the EDA. He pointed out that there has been some interest in a south lot there, and if the City closed off all the access to the area, the City would find themselves landlocked, which is why the City has concerns about leaving the current right-of-way in place. Utilities were also mentioned and how that would be impacted. Councilor Mosloski then wondered if John Deere would consider putting up a building just to the north of the TSF or the south portion of the 5.76-acre EDA land that is available and the representatives from John Deere felt that would be okay, conceding it is not as ideal as directly behind their existing shop. Councilor Mosloski inquired if the City could get something in writing about what John Deere plans to do, building plans, and put some sort of contingency on it. John Deere representatives thought the building would be good sized, would probably be built next year, and mentioned that John Deere is doing this throughout the company in other locations.

The Utility Foreman asked TSF what they will need for utilities, pointing out that materials are scarce and some materials they have been waiting for since January. TSF mentioned they need single phase electrical.

Councilor Ebert inquired about the dirt that could potentially be moved off the 80' easement area if John Deere would want the dirt if they purchased the EDA land and the consensus was that the dirt could be used somewhere in that area so it would not need to be hauled away. Councilor Mosloski mentioned that the city probably should not do anything until Bolton & Menk looks at the area and pointed out that they do not have any funds set aside for this and it was not even on the City's radar, further pointing out that they did not want to cause water issues due to the moving of dirt and excavation. However, Brian was concerned that the city would end up spending three times the money to do this later and said the City could use some of the funds from the EDA land sale to pay for the excavation. TSF believes they will have about 500 cubic yards of dirt left over and they don't want a pile of clay sitting out there. They plan to rock 1 acre of the TSF area, start building on that, and the rest would be grass. Brian felt any extra dirt could be piled up where the cul-de-sac is it and could be used for John Deere's building pad. Councilor Ebert agreed that the dirt could be piled near the cul-de-sac for now and that it will benefit someone at some point as long as nothing has been planted in the area. The Clerk mentioned she spoke with Mr. Graham Friday, who generally rents the EDA land, and Mr. Graham said he has not planted anything in the area but would like to know in the next couple of days whether he can or should plant it. The John Deere representatives said they know they plan to move forward with purchasing the EDA land. However, timing is important due to the urgency to plant it or not and they would contact Amy at City Hall Tuesday with their plan. Amy can then let Mr. Graham know whether he should plant the EDA land or not. The price for the EDA land was discussed, and it was felt that the \$3000.00/acre that has been asked of other EDA land purchasers would be fair and would be the amount the City would ask of John Deere. Finally, Councilor Truax suggested that John Deere put in writing what their intent is and submit it to the City. The Council thanked TSF and JD representatives for coming to the meeting to discuss the issue and their intended plans.

Item #6, Review Pickleball/Basketball Court Draft with Bolton & Menk. This was removed from the agenda due to Greg Mitchell's cancellation earlier in the day to attend the meeting. However, Mayor Bentele had another quote he received from Nicklason Athletics for equipment at the court, which was shared with the Council. The Street Superintendent mentioned they did cut into the existing court and found that there was only about 1" of gravel/base at the existing courts.

Minutes from May 3, 2021

Motion by Truax, seconded by Ebert, to approve the regular meeting minutes from May 3, 2021. All yeas – motion carried.

Approve City Claims

Check #38757 – 38805

Councilor Ebert inquired if there was anything budgeted for putting in the hydrant and the utility foreman said he utilized the funds budgeted for a valve replacement and will do that instead next year.

Motion by Mosloski, seconded by Ebert, to approve the Claims totaling \$215,029.77. All yeas – motion carried.

Approval of Ridgelawn Memorial Park Cemetery 2020 Financial Report

Motion by Ebert, seconded by Nickerson, to approve the Ridgelawn Memorial Park Cemetery 2020 Financial Report. All yeas – motion carried.

Beam Vision/Dental Plan Renewal

The Clerk mentioned that the plan renews annually on June 1st. The Vision rates remain unchanged from last year and the Dental rate increased by 10% for a total amount for the upcoming plan year of \$39.12. Amy mentioned that Justin is the only one currently on these two plans.

Motion by Ebert, seconded by Truax, to approve the Vision/Dental plan renewals. All yeas – motion carried.

Hiring of Summer Applicants for Maintenance/Utilities Department

John, Wayne, and Brent looked at the applications and agreed on the hiring of two candidates, Jacob Moeller and Owen Haefner. There was a total of four applicants for the two summer positions.

Motion by Nickerson, seconded by Mosloski, to approve John and Brent's recommendation to hire Jacob Moeller and Owen Haefner. All yeas – motion carried.

Discuss Potential Product Shortages

John discussed that the chlorine tablets used in the wading pool may be short supplied this season but said that Wayne did get a supply in this week, and it will be enough to get him started. However, he just wanted the Council to be aware that there could be difficulty getting supplies as the season continues.

Councilor Mosloski mentioned the City should look at possibly bumping up admission fees to reflect material and wage cost increases. He did not suggest doing it right now, but this may be something to put on the radar. The Mayor suggested looking at the admission rates of the pools in area towns to see how they compare as well. Amy mentioned that she could work on collecting that data and get back to the Council with this information.

The Street Superintendent said that Wayne sent the Council a text earlier in the day inquiring about who would fill in doing pool testing the week he and his family are gone in June. Mike Heckman wondered if he needs to send a bill for being a private contractor or what he should do. Mike also was getting \$20/day before but would like \$40/day the week he is filling in this year. It was brought up that there is no one else to do it in the absence of Wayne or his family. Councilor Mosloski suggested the Public Utility staff could be on call doing the pool testing tasks. Wayne relayed to Brandon that the testing in the morning when the Utility staff came and again when they leave would be sufficient for a week while Wayne is gone. Mosloski suggested to the Utility Foreman that this is something that could be looked at in the future to be sure the City is covered. The Utility Foreman felt the Utility crew would be willing to have that conversation but suggested that everyone needs to fill-in on this task. John said he spoke with Wayne about this and said he does not know what it takes to do it and does not have enough experience on how to react to changes that need to be made based on the testing outcome. John suggested that Mike would probably know what to do. Councilor Mosloski pointed out that a high schooler used to do this task and if a high schooler can figure this out, he is confident others can learn and feels all the City workers should be able to learn it and do it. It was pointed out that you do not have to be certified to do it. Currently, the only person certified is Wayne and the other people doing it in his absence are simply working under Wayne, but it may be helpful to have a second person certified so if something happens, you have another certified person on staff. Brent gave the example of how the utility crew cross-trains and felt this would be helpful in this situation as well. Brandon suggested that Michael, who is the water specialist, would be a logical person to do it.

Motion by Mosloski, seconded by Truax, to approve Mike Heckman's salary of \$40.00/day for the week that Wayne and his family are gone in June of 2021. All yeas – motion carried.

Old Business

Camera Update – Justin mentioned that he put the camera up in the park on the north side for about a week before the battery died. There were no issues that week. The battery died due to cold temperatures that week and a lot of motion recording. It is now recharged, and Justin inquired where to put it now. It was pointed out that there were issues on the south side of the restrooms where the hand sanitizer was vandalized. The Council felt the camera should be moved to the south side facing toward the bathroom and jungle gym. The Utility Foreman agreed to help Justin set up the camera at the park. The Mayor inquired if there was a protective metal surround, or something to protect the hand sanitizer from vandalism and John said he would check into that. Brandon pointed out that we have COVID funds which could be used to purchase something more durable.

Opening of Public Restrooms Update – The Street Superintendent said the only restrooms he opened was at Graf Park last Thursday, but they are locked up again right now because there is not much going on there. After discussion about having the park bathrooms open, it was decided that the Street Department should open the bathrooms every morning and the Police Department lock them at night and can do a walk through at the same time. The park closes at 10:00 p.m. John mentioned they had cleaned up at the park, so it is ready to go.

John stated that he did not open the restrooms at Rosburg ball field yet as there are two port-a-potties there and he did not know who ordered them to be placed there. It was suggested that perhaps the school had ordered them, but no one knew for sure. Amy said she will check into who ordered them to be placed at the ball field.

EDA and Bau Land Rent Update – The Clerk mentioned that the City had been receiving \$2000.00/year for rent on the EDA land in the past, but the renter would like to know the city's plan for this year, if the City would like the EDA land planted this year, and would like an answer in the next couple days. Amy will follow-up with John Deere and what their timeline and intentions are and let Mr. Graham know whether to plant the remaining EDA land or not. Regarding the Bau property, Amy confirmed that the Bau family has received first half rent on the property now owned by the city. Following discussion on 2nd half rent on the Bau property, it was decided the rent should be pro-rated and the city receive the 2nd half rent. The City Clerk will follow-up with the Bau family and let them know of this decision. Amy also brought up electricity at the Bau property and wondered if the Council wanted to discontinue electricity at the site or keep it activated. After discussion, it was decided that if the Bau family would like the electricity left on if they are working at the property, that they pay the city for electrical use. Amy will follow up with the family in regard to that decision. The Clerk also mentioned that the Bau family pointed out that there are crops planted at the property and if the City were to begin a residential project on the land before the crops were harvested, the City would need to pay for any crop damage.

New Business

Mulch Request at Downtown City Park – there has been a citizen request for Mulch around plants on the two corners next to the sidewalk and it was pointed out that the Welcome to Truman sign on the south side of town is leaning south. It was decided that the city needs to get a few bags of mulch and fill in these two areas and the Street Superintendent agreed to take care of this.

Gravel in Alleyways – Mayor Bentele received notification that the alleyway from Tennyson's to Manskes still had not been done and was inquiring if this could get done soon. The Street Superintendent mentioned that he was aware of the various alleyways that still needed to get done. He said he has 2-3 loads of gravel and has filled a few potholes to date. He wondered how much the Council wanted to spend on this and it was pointed out that there was about \$1500.00 budgeted and there are some miscellaneous funds available.

Amateur Baseball Request – Councilor Truax mentioned she was contacted with an inquiry about selling 3:2 beer at the ballfield. She pointed out that it would actually be on school property, so they would need to get permission from the school, but the group wondered how the City felt about it. The Police Chief said he would check into this.

Johnny Vuong Request – Johnny wondered why it was illegal to put up a carport behind his commercial property – he was told it was illegal to do this. Councilor Ebert thought residential property you could not have a carport but did not think there was a problem having one on commercial property. The Council thought the Building Inspector should be consulted on this to verify the code. Mr. Vuong also invited the Council and city staff to a meal at Perkins for his 3-year anniversary and to meet with his acquaintance from Houston that may be interested in opening a restaurant in Truman or taking down a wall to the building next to him and adjoining the two restaurants together with the addition of a bar. After lunch, his friend would like to see the City of Truman and what could be offered or incentives for him to open a business in Truman. After further discussion, the Council decided that all but one Council person could attend the lunch and the meeting/tour in Truman. Johnny also mentioned that many customers have inquired why he has not opened his restaurant for indoor dining yet, but Johnny said it is hard to find help and that is why he has not opened yet.

City-wide Clean-up – Councilor Mosloski mentioned that in the past several years there have been discussions about a city-wide clean-up. He stated several people have contacted him lately about having clean-up days. Brandon pointed out that we are fortunate to have Prairieland right here in Truman but wondered what other towns have done or what they charge. Amy will check into this and can bring the information back to a City Council meeting. Councilor Truax said she would contact Prairieland regarding this as well.

Councilor Nickerson mentioned that Tim Bartels lawn was affected from a street project that happened a few years ago and is currently in poor condition by the curb. He wondered how long the

warranty is good for this project. It was stated the warranty is generally no more than two years. Brian also mentioned he spoke with the Bosshart family and thanked them for the donation back to the City of Truman. Councilor Nickerson also inquired whether the City needs to have a permit from the state for the RV Park. It was pointed out that it is simply a state regulation.

Mayor Terry Bentele entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Motion made by Ebert, seconded by Mosloski. All yeas - motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m.**

Amy Huber, City Clerk – Treasurer