

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Bird Island City Council
April 13, 2020 at 7:00 PM**

Council members present via ZOOM meeting: Sander, Seidl, Prokosch, Schneider, Engelmann

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sander.

A motion was made by Seidl and seconded by Prokosch to authorize payment of the claims and approve the minutes of the last regular meeting. Passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Seidl and seconded by Prokosch to approve a land use permit for Joe & Julie Griffith (modular home/garage). Passed unanimously.

- Seal Coat Project** The summary of bids for the 2020 seal coat project was reviewed. A motion was made by Engelmann and seconded by Seidl to accept the low bid of \$302,092.40 from Pearson Bros, Inc. from Bid Schedule A. Passed unanimously. Prior to the seal coat work, further asphalt patch repairs may be needed at the corner of 11th/Birch and some areas on Ranchwood Drive.
- Crack Seal Project** The Council reviewed the bids submitted for the crack sealing project. Bertram Asphalt Company had the low bid of \$1.32 per pound. It is estimated that it will take about 30,000 pounds of material to complete the project. Provided company references are satisfactory, a motion was made by Engelmann and seconded by Seidl to hire Bertram Asphalt Company for the crack sealing project at a cost of \$1.32 per pound. Passed unanimously. The Contractor will need to complete the work prior to the start of the seal coat project.
- 6th Street Watermain** A bid was submitted by Schmidt Construction to replace 100' of watermain on 6th Street. There is a total of 420' of pipe that needs to be replaced. If replacing more than 100', an MDH permit is required, along with plans provided by a certified engineer. Mobilization costs from outside contractors to annually replace 100' segments will also increase the cost of the project; and the road will be tore up for five years in a row. The Council felt it made more sense to complete the project this year, utilizing funds from the Sewer Fund, if necessary. It was suggested to get a bid from Schmidt Construction to replace all 420' of watermain. A motion was made by Engelmann and seconded by Seidl to hire Schmidt Construction to replace all 420' of watermain, provided their unit prices remain the same (or less) as their prices for the 2018/2019 improvements project. If not, the City will need to solicit other bids. Passed unanimously.
- Highway 212
Drain Tile** During the 2018 watermain loop project, farm tile lines were severed and not reconnected, as it was felt that they were plugged and not in use. This ditch area along Hwy. 212 is now staying saturated and wet will standing water. The Contractor, R&R Excavating, was asked to excavate the area and reconnect the in-place tiles. Woelfel requested an hourly rate from Contractor to complete the project. A motion was made by Engelmann and seconded by Schneider to authorize up to \$2000 to repair the tile line. Passed unanimously.
- Water Rates** Due to recent construction projects, the Water Fund Debt Service payments have increased. A water rate analysis was completed to determine if user fees should be increased. Current rates are as follows: \$30 base rate (no usage) and \$6.26 per 1000 gallons used. To accommodate budgeted disbursements, either the base rate would need to increase to \$41 per month, or the user rate would need to be \$9.63 per 1000 gallons, or a combination of the two. It was suggested to research what other cities are charging and consider an annual increase in the base rate for the next three years, to get to the \$41. Staff will research and draft a Resolution for the Council's consideration.
- Midco OTN** MidContinent Communications (Midco) will be bringing fiber optic cable into Bird Island along 212, then north on County Rd. 5 (via 10th Street North and Maple Avenue). Midco would like to lease land from the City for placement of an Optical Transition Node (OTN), a prefabricated 16' x 30' building that houses equipment for fiber optics. They are looking at the City lot (100' x 100'

area) east of 13th Street and south of Hwy. 212. The Council was not opposed, but since this area is used for event signage and parking, two other possible alternative City lots will be suggested: the 75' x 140' lot north of Athmann's Inn and the land by the community garden.

Resolution 2-20 The Council discussed the possible adoption of Resolution 2-20, enacting actions and policies to be in effect during the COVID-19 pandemic. A motion was made by Engelmann and seconded by Prokosch to adopt Resolution 2-20, as presented. Passed unanimously.

Nuisance Abatements The District Court has ordered abatement of nuisances at 615 South 8th Street, and 1060 Highway Avenue continues to be noncompliant. Staff will consult with the Sheriff's Department on how best to move forward with the abatement process. The garage on 1060 will also have to be removed by 4-30-20. Prior to the May Council meeting, the Sheriff's Department will survey the town for nuisances and abandoned vehicles.

Citywide Clean Up Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City will not sponsor a citywide clean up day this year; however, funds will be budgeted in 2021 for a spring clean-up project. Due to garbage being left at the City's burn site, staff will research the price of installing cameras at the site, and by the cemetery.

Support Letter A motion was made by Engelmann and seconded by Prokosch to approve a letter in support of a funding application for the US Highway 212 Freight Mobility and Safety Project. Passed unanimously.

BOLD School Facilities & Student Location The City Council discussed the apparent upcoming decision of the BOLD School Board to move all elementary students from the Bird Island Campus to portable classrooms at the Olivia campus. The loss of the public school in Bird Island would be detrimental to our community and its future. It appears that there is again a concern with mold and moisture issues with some rooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors, precipitating the possible movement of students to the Olivia campus. Some Councilors remain concerned that the building is not being properly maintained, and feel that the cause of the moisture issues should be researched and contractor bids be solicited to fix the problem. Why are local contractors not allowed in the building to assess the problem and provide cost estimates for possible needed improvements? It is also felt that efforts should be made to open dialog with our neighboring school district as they are in a very similar position with declining enrollment and aging buildings. Mutual planning could result in a larger enrollment and tax base to meet the needs of all students and to cover expenses. There has been discussion in the community for the City of Bird Island to leave the BOLD School District, via the petition process. The petition would need signatures of 2/3 of the eligible voters. Recently, the BOLD School District approved the distribution of a community survey to arrive at households by the end of March. Where is that survey? There is a BOLD Facility Committee Meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 16th, and apparently, no one from the public is allowed to attend. Why not? Last November's Operating Levy referendum barely passed. This should certainly send a message to the BOLD Administration and School Board to be more transparent, accountable, responsible and responsive to the taxpayers who vote and pay their wages.

Meeting adjourned.
Deb Lingl, City Administrator