

MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED BENTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD MONDAY JUNE 9, 2025 AT 5:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL ROOM OF THE CAMPBELL BUILDING LOCATED AT 901 PUBLIC SQUARE, BENTON, ILLINOIS.

MAYOR MESSERSMITH CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER KAYS, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH WERE PRESENT FOR ROLL CALL.

COMMISSIONER KAYS MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING FROM MAY 27, 2025 AS PRESENTED WITH THE CORRECTION OF "COMMISSIONER KAYS" CALLING THE MEETING TO ORDER BEING CHANGED TO "MAYOR MESSERSMITH". SECOND BY COMMISSIONER STOREY. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 4. COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM ABSTAINED.

MAYOR MESSERSMITH ASKED AJ KINSMAN TO JOIN HIM AT THE PODIUM. MAYOR MESSERSMITH PRESENTED MR. KINSMAN WITH A PROCLAMATION FOR EARNING STATE CHAMPION IN SHOT PUT AT THE IHSA STATE FINALS.

COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE PURCHASE ORDER #00866 TO AEDGRANT.COM FOR 5 LIFEPAK CR2 AED, 5 AED CABINETS, AND 5 FAST RESPONSE KITS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$9,946.35. COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA STATED THAT REGULAR MSRP FOR THESE UNITS WOULD BE \$15,760.00 AND THAT THESE AED UNITS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE AMR AMBULANCE ELECTRODES. COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA ALSO STATED THAT DEPUTY CITY CLERK DAMIEN WILBURN WAS ABLE TO ACQUIRE THIS GRANT FOR THE CITY. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER STOREY. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0.

COMMISSIONER COCKRUM STATED THAT THERE WERE NO PURCHASE ORDERS FOR THIS MEETING FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

COMMISSIONER COCKRUM MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE POOL ADJUSTMENTS FOR DELORIS STOWERS, JAMIE TUCKER, LINDA VOLZ, RICHARD AVERY, AND BRITTANY EASLEY AS THEY MEET THE CRITERIA SET FORTH IN THE ORDINANCE. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER STOREY. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0.

COMMISSIONER COCKRUM STATED THAT THERE WERE NO LAKE LOT LEASE TRANSFERS SUBMITTED FOR THIS MEETING.

COMMISSIONER COCKRUM STATED THAT THE WATER PROJECT AROUND THE HIGH SCHOOL HAS STARTED. HE STATED THAT THE WORK WAS BEGUN ON BURKETT STREET.

COMMISSIONER STOREY STATED THAT HE HAD NO PURCHASE ORDERS OR DEPARTMENT REPORTS FOR THIS MEETING. COMMISSIONER STOREY STATED THAT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WILL BE HAVING TESTING TO COMPILE A LIST ON JULY 19, 2025. COMMISSIONER STOREY ALSO STATED THAT THE INTERVIEWS FOR THOSE THAT PASSED THE MERIT BOARD TESTING TO COMPILE A LIST FOR HIRING A POLICE OFFICER ARE CURRENTLY ONGOING. COMMISSIONER STOREY STATED THAT THERE WERE 2 LATERAL TRANSFER APPLICANTS AND 4 APPLICANTS THAT PASSED THE POWER TESTING.

COMMISSIONER KAYS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE PAYROLL DATED JUNE 6, 2025 FROM THE GENERAL FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$70,717.97 AND WATER AND SEWER FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$24,209.94 FOR A TOTAL PAYROLL OF \$94,927.97. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER COCKRUM. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0.

COMMISSIONER KAYS MADE A MOTION TO PAY MONTHLY BILLS FROM THE AP FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$329,934.81, FROM COMMUNITY EVENTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$11,928.29, AND FROM MFT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$973.50 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$342,836.60 TO BE PAID ON JUNE 9, 2025. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER COCKRUM. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0.

COMMISSIONER KAYS ASKED WHO WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL ILLINOIS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE CONFERENCE IN SEPTEMBER. COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA STATED THAT SHE WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND AS WOULD MAYOR MESSERSMITH. COMMISSIONER KAYS STATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEND THE CITY CLERK, THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, THE MAYOR, THE TREASURER, THE CITY ATTORNEY, AND COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, AND ANYONE ELSE WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND. COMMISSIONER KAYS, COMMISSIONER STOREY, AND COMMISSIONER COCKRUM STATED THAT THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED IN ATTENDING. COMMISSIONER STOREY MADE A MOTION TO ALLOW THOSE LISTED ABOVE TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER COCKRUM. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0.

COMMISSIONER KAYS STATED HE HAD NO FURTHER BUSINESS FOR THIS MEETING.

ATTORNEY MALKOVICH STATED THAT HE HAD NO UPDATES FOR THIS MEETING.

MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT THE RODEO WAS A SUCCESS AND THAT PLANS ARE ALREADY STARTING TO REPEAT THE EVENT NEXT YEAR. MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT HE HAD ALSO RECEIVED A LETTER FROM JENNY REN STATING THAT SHE WILL BE PLACING HER FIRST OF THE MINI LIBRARIES SOON. ALSO OF NOTE, MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT THE FIRST BILLS FOR THE WWTP HAD ARRIVED SINCE STARTING USING SOLAR POWER. MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT THE SAVINGS WERE ALREADY AROUND \$6,000.00. MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT GREATER EGYPT WILL BE APPLYING FOR

GRANTS FOR THE EAST MAIN WATER PROJECT AS WELL AS THE AIRPORT PARK PROJECT.

MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT HE WAS NOT IN ATTENDANCE WHEN THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST ORDINANCE WAS PASSED. HE STATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO AMEND THIS ORDINANCE BY STRIKING #7, EXCLUSIONS FROM ELIGIBILITY, PROFESSIONAL EXCLUSIONS (SPECIFIC TO ZONING AND PLANNING COMMISSION). DISCUSSION WAS HELD. COMMISSIONER KAYS SAID THAT HE IS HAPPY TO MAKE THE MOTION TO ALLOW THE COUNCIL TO VOTE, BUT HE WILL BE VOTING NO ON THE AMENDMENT. COMMISSIONER STOREY ASKED IF THE COUNCIL COULD ADD LANDLORDS TO THE LIST AS AN EXCLUSION AS WELL. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM STATED THAT HE AGREES WITH THE ORDINANCE AS IT IS WRITTEN. COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA STATED THAT SHE HAS BEEN THINKING ABOUT THIS ORDINANCE AND SHE ALSO WOULD LIKE TO AMEND IT. COMMISSIONER KAYS MADE A MOTION TO AMEND THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST ORDINANCE PER MAYOR MESSERSMITH'S REQUEST. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 2. COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 3. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, AND COMMISSIONER KAYS. MOTION FAILED TO PASS.

MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT WE HAVE COME TO A STANDSTILL ON WHAT WE CAN DO WITH THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1403 SOUTH MAIN STREET AT THIS POINT. MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO DESIGNATE THIS CITY OWNED REAL ESTATE AS SURPLUS PROPERTY. COMMISSIONER KAYS STATED THAT THE BUILDING AT 1403 SOUTH MAIN HAS COST THE TAXPAYERS TWICE. HE SAID HE HAS NO ILL WILL TO BENTON GRADE SCHOOL OVER THE SITUATION, BUT AT THIS POINT HE FEELS WE HAVE BEEN DUMPING MONEY INTO A PIT. COMMISSIONER KAYS MADE THE MOTION TO DESIGNATE 1403 SOUTH MAIN AS SURPLUS PROPERTY. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER STOREY. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0.

MAYOR MESSERSMITH ASKED ZONING ADMINISTRATOR BRIAN CALCATERRA TO ADDRESS ITEM (F) DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL OF THE RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE STRONG COMMUNITIES PROGRAM GRANT TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF THE GRANT. MR. CALCATERRA STATED THAT THE ILLINOIS HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY DESIRES TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$30,000.00. COMMISSIONER STOREY MADE THIS MOTION. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0.

MAYOR MESSERSMITH ASKED MR. CALCATERRA TO ALSO ADDRESS ITEM (G) DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL OF THE APPLICATION TO RE-ZONE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 14507 CUTLER STREET FROM A-1 TO R-5. MR. CALCATERRA STATED THAT THE ZONING BOARD HAS RECOMMENDED APPROVING THIS APPLICATION. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION TO RE-ZONE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 14507 CUTLER STREET FROM A-1 TO R-5. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER STOREY. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY,

COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH.
NAYS: 0.

MAYOR MESSERSMITH ASKED MR. CALCATERRA TO ALSO ADDRESS ITEM (H) DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL OF THE APPLICATION TO RE-ZONE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 104 BAILEY LANE FROM R-2 TO B-2. MR. CALCATERRA STATED THAT IT WAS THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE ZONING AND PLANNING COMMISSIONER TO APPROVE THIS APPLICATION FOR ZONING CHANGE. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION FOR ZONING CHANGE FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 104 BAILEY LANE FROM R-2 TO B-2. SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALIA, COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0.

NO MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS.

IN OLD BUSINESS, MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT SINCE THE LAST MEETING WHERE CITIZENS CAME TO ASK THE COUNCIL TO HELP WITH CLEANING UP THE NEIGHBORHOODS, SEVERAL THINGS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED. MAYOR MESSERSMITH STATED THAT THE POLICE CHIEF IS FORMING A TASK FORCE TO SPECIFICALLY DEAL WITH THIS SITUATION; TICKETS ARE BEING WRITTEN BY CODE ENFORCEMENT, FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND POLICE DEPARTMENT; BRIAN CALCATERRA IS GOING TO BE CERTIFIED TO CONDEMN HOMES; CAMERAS ARE BEING PUT UP IN MULTIPLE SPOTS SOON AND THE POLICE CHIEF IS HELPING TO FORM SOME NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUPS.

COMMISSIONER STOREY STATED THAT THERE ARE A LOT OF GENERATORS IN USE IN TOWN WHERE THERE IS NO POWER OR WATER AT A HOME. COMMISSIONER STOREY ALSO STATED HE IS SEEING MORE AND MORE CAMPERS BEING LIVED IN IN THE CITY LIMITS. HE ALSO SAID THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS ILLEGAL BURNS. HE STATED THAT WHEN AN ILLEGAL BURN HAPPENS A WARNING IS GIVEN FOR THE FIRST TIME AND THEN A TICKET IS ISSUED IF IT HAPPENS AGAIN.

NO NEW BUSINESS.

IN MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC AUDIENCE, SARAH NELSON AND HER MOTHER ADDRESSED THE COUNCIL. THEY STATED THAT THEY LIVE IN THE BUCHANAN STREET AREA OF TOWN. THEY SAID THAT THEY HAVE AN ISSUE WITH PEOPLE LIVING IN A BURNT OUT HOME. THEY STATED THAT THERE IS DRUG TRAFFIC AND THEFT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. THEY ALSO STATED THAT THEIR HOMES HAVE BEEN BROKEN INTO. MS. NELSON STATED THAT SHE HAS HAD THE POLICE CALLED OUT TO HER HOME 4 TIMES NOW. MS. NELSON STATED THAT OFFICER PEMBERTON TOLD HER SHE SHOULD COME TO A CITY COUNCIL MEETING. MS. NELSON AND HER MOTHER BEGGED THE COUNCIL TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE SITUATION.

COMMISSIONER STOREY MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN. SECOND BY
COMMISSIONER COCKRUM. VOTE WAS TAKEN. YEAS: 5. COMMISSIONER
COCKRUM, COMMISSIONER STOREY, COMMISSIONER GARAVALLA,
COMMISSIONER KAYS, AND MAYOR MESSERSMITH. NAYS: 0.

5:45 P.M.