

**STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, COUNTY OF MARSHALL, CITY OF BENWOOD, CITY
COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 14, 2025**

City Council of the City of Benwood met in Regular Session on Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at the City Building in the Council Chambers. Mayor Walter W. Yates called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The following council members were present: Ankrom, Fehr, Ferrera, Givens, Kazemka & Lunsford. Excused Absence Councilperson Longwell & Mele. Others present: Chief Frank Longwell, Dave McLaughlin Director of Public Works, Tiffany Ankrom City Clerk & Eric Gordon City Attorney.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Walter W. Yates led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

MINUTES

Councilperson Ferrera moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for December 10, 2024 & Special Meeting Minutes for December 17, 2024 & Councilperson Ankrom seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Erin Hupp was present to address council regarding residents not cleaning up after their dogs. Chief Longwell would like to be contacted when residents see this happening so the individuals can be contacted.

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF WATER/SEWER ADJUSTMENT

A resident at 616 Water Street addressed council to ask for a water/sewer adjustment due to her high water consumption. Resident lives and owns a duplex with two units but has one water meter. Resident states the renters on the other side of the duplex had a toilet leaking and did not notify her.

With the water going through the meter into the sewer the resident is not able to receive an adjustment per the ordinance. Councilperson Ankrom recommended for her to come in and sign up for a payment plan. The resident was worried about the upcoming late fee on her bill and council agreed to waive the fee.

Councilperson Ferrera made the motion to waive the late fee and Councilperson Givens seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PURCHASING IN-SYNCH RMS SYSTEM FOR POLICE DISPATCH

The current system the Police Dispatch is using is out of date and cannot be updated. The State is requiring all departments to use the IN-SYNCH RMS System. Quote was submitted for \$5,940.00 for new software.

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Councilperson Ankrom made the motion to approve purchasing IN-SYNCH RMS System and Councilperson Ferrera seconded the motion. Mayor Yates called for a roll call, vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF DEBRIS FALLING FROM BELLAIRE BRIDGE

Chief Longwell is attempting to meet with the state again to ask for funding opportunities to remove Bellaire Bridge. Pieces of steel are falling off the bridge and landing in Undo's parking lot and has potential to be harmful & hazardous to the public. An issue with removing the bridge is the lead paint.

DISCUSSION OF DILAPIDATED UNION SCHOOL BUILDING

The sale of the Union Jr. High School building is on hold with the Estate wanting to sell it for \$500,000.

The building is condemned due to dilapidated conditions. Windows are broken out; roof is caving in and vagrants living inside.

Edgco, Inc. submitted a quote to demolish the building for \$390,000.

Neighborhood Development Services, Inc., has withdrawn their request to purchase the property due to the cost exceeding their budget.

Attorney Gordon would like to set up a meeting with the Estates Attorney to discuss the property.

DISCUSSION OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF INVOICES RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION & OTHER SERVICES FOR THE PROPOSED COMBINED SEWER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS PHASE III PROJECT

No information was submitted, item is tabled until further notice.

APPROVAL OF QUOTES TO COMPLETE PILOT STUDY FOR WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Thrasher Engineering was hired by the city for the water improvement project. As part of the project, Thrasher advised they need to complete a pilot study of our current water. To do this study, the water department shall be responsible for 50% of the cost of the pilot study. The current estimated cost associated with the pilot study is \$55,000. Therefore, the water department will be required to allocate \$27,500 toward the study. The balance of the cost will be grant funding from the Infrastructure Jobs & Development Council (IJDC). The city may be reimbursed their portion of the cost.

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Councilperson Ferrera made the motion to approve the quote and Councilperson Ankrom seconded the motion. Mayor Yates called for a roll call, vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF DONATION TO APPALACHIAN OUTREACH INC.

Appalachian Outreach has requested a donation for their charity.

Councilperson Ankrom made the motion to approve of a donation of \$100 and Councilperson Kazemka seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

FINANCE & TAXATION

An ordinance entitled: "An ordinance to pay a claim against the city for work and other claims." Be it ordained by the Council of the City of Benwood, that the sum of \$292,774.67 be appropriated out of the funds belonging to the city, to pay a claim against the city, and that an order signed by the Mayor and Recorder be drawn upon the Treasurer for the above amount and that this ordinance takes effect from and after its passage. (See Copies of Supporting Accounts Payable Registers Attached).

Councilperson Ferrera moved to adopt the above ordinance on first reading, seconded by Councilperson Givens. Mayor Yates called for roll call vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

Councilperson Ferrera moved to adopt the above ordinance on second reading, seconded by Councilperson Givens. Mayor Yates called for roll call vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CHECK REGISTER REPORTS

Councilperson Ferrera moved to receive and file accounts payable check register reports totaling \$292,774.67 seconded by Councilperson Givens. Mayor Yates called for a roll call, vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

Revenue/Expense Report and Financial Report as of January 8, 2025:

Cash Operating Report: General Fund \$2,177,800.56; Coal Severance Fund \$80,785.67; Garbage Fund \$1,317.92, Fire Fund \$28,391.38, Water Fund \$303,578.35 & Sewer Fund \$377,597.92 Total operating cash \$2,969,471.80.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT REPORT

Councilperson Ferrera moved to receive and file the Cash Operating Report and Financial Reports, seconded by Councilperson Givens. Mayor Yates called for roll call; vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

WATER & SEWAGE PLANT OPERATION

Gary Williams, Water Supervisor, submitted reports pertaining to the Water & Wastewater Departments.

Water Department: 56,323,300 gallons of water were pumped in 2024. New scales were installed at the water plant, ordering scale for Well 1 in February. Electrical work completed at Water Plant & 2 in Trash Pump was purchased. Numerous meter profiles completed & water leak on 7th street is in the process of being finished. Organized tools & parts in vehicle as well as all water meter related parts at city garage.

Wastewater Department: 2.9879 million gallons of wastewater were pumped from Benwood to Wheeling for December 2024, lowest reading for December. Lift stations are running well, and the usual problem with floats going bad. Lift stations are inspected daily & degreased as needed. Air release valves are checked weekly & are operating as they should. Sean Lake will finish walking the high-pressure line as soon as he's able. Jetted & cleaned lines, manholes & catch basins on Ashland Ave due to complaints from residents. Installed new pump at C Plant due to older smaller pump failing after three years.

STREETS, ALLEYS AND GRADES

Deegan Ave has an area where the storm sewer is sinking.

Portions of Blanche Ave and Ashland Ave have sunk 2inches. Fracking may be being done in the area; Engineers are looking into the issue.

CITY OFFICE, PROPERTY, FIRE & POLICE

Mayor Yates recommended a 5% pay increase across the board

City Clerk is preparing for the 2025-2026 Budget

Conference call with Omni Strategic Technologies and Dave Parsons with WV Cyber Security regarding the Public Service Commission compliancy requirements on Cyber Security. Mr. Parsons will prepare a report on how the city stands with being compliant.

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The city will be receiving a \$5,000 settlement from the state regarding a lawsuit filed against Pfizer and Ranbaxy based on allegation of delay of availability of generic Lipitor between March 24, 2010 & November 30, 2011.

Benwood Volunteer Fire Department turned in an invoice for \$11,015.75 from F.A.S.T for preventative maintenance & aerial certification for three EMS vehicles. Councilperson Ferrera made the motion to approve the invoice & Councilperson Kazemka seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilperson Ankrom moved to adjourn meeting, seconded by Councilperson Givens. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by,

Tiffany Ankrom
Tiffany Ankrom City Clerk/Treasurer

Walter W. Yates

Mayor Walter W. Yates