

**Lanesboro City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 4, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.
Lanesboro Community Center Meeting Room & Zoom**

Present:

Members: ___ Jason Resseman X Chase Bakke X Joe Goetzke

X Mindy Albrecht-Benson X Kathryn Wade

Staff: X Mitchell Walbridge X Darla Taylor ___ David Haugen

 ___ Mark Lawstuen ___ Jerod Wagner X Tara Johnson

X Joseph O’Koren

Guests: Blaise Sass, Deb Ristau, Hannah Wingert, Robert Wagner, Sandy Webb, Ceil Allen, Shirley Mulder, Sandy Webb, Delia Bell, John Nicol, Deane Benson, Lester Dunn, Root River Inn, Bonita Underbakke

Regular Meeting

Member Albrecht-Benson called to order the Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

A. Agenda: City Administrator Mitchell Walbridge requested additions to the Consent Agenda:

- Resignation of Jerod Wagner from the Lanesboro Fire Department
- Lodging License – Lanesboro House

Member Wade entered a motion to approve the agenda with the additions to the Consent Agenda; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

B. Public Comments: No public comments were shared.

C. Approval of Minutes:

a. Minutes of February 5, 2024, Regular Meeting

Member Bakke entered a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

D. Consent Agenda:

1. Accounts Payable
2. Resolution 2024-15: Resolution Accepting Donations
3. Buffalo Bill Days Temporary Liquor Permit
4. Buffalo Bill Days Gambling Permit
5. Buffalo Bill Days Fireworks Permit
6. Buffalo Bill Days Parade Permit
7. Jerod Wagner – Acceptance of Lanesboro Fire Department Resignation
8. Lodging License Issuance – Lanesboro House

Member Goetzke entered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Department Reports:

A. Fire: Member Bakke shared the fire department report.

- Year-to-date the department has responded to 6 calls: 2 lift assists, 2 fire alarms, a tractor fire, and one other. The department had a total of 26 calls in 2023.
- The fire department allocated \$111,000.00 to the City of Lanesboro’s Fire Equipment Fund. A \$750.00 donation was given to the Eagles Cancer Telethon.
- The Lanesboro Fire Department will be hosting the Tri-County Golf Tournament in 2024.
- The fire department hosted a pipeline safety training meeting in February.
- A communication workshop will take place in March.
- Jerod Wagner was thanked for his 20 years of service on the fire department.

B. Police: Police Chief Blaise Sass presented the police department report:

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- The Preston Police Department purchased new desktop computers in 2023 for use in their offices.
 - The purchase of a 2024 squad pickup was delayed due to price inflation. The purchase will be coming from a future budget.
 - The City of Preston hired Gabrielle Kreidemacher in September 2023 as a full-time officer. Currently the department has three full-time officers.
 - The police department took roughly 1,400 calls between the three contracted communities of Preston (559), Fountain (289), and Lanesboro (270).
 - Future capital outlay purchases for the department include squad car computers, radios, a squad car radar unit, and a squad car camera. All the needed equipment is to replace aging equipment.
 - The City of Preston is searching for part-time officers. There is a record shortage of officers currently.
- C. Ambulance/EMS: Director Deb Ristau provided the Ambulance/EMS Annual Summary:
- The EMS Service has 24 EMT's and 20 First Responders.
 - A recap of the EMS Department's 2023 events was shared.
 - A new ambulance was ordered for Lanesboro in October 2023.
 - The call volume for 2023 was 358 calls. Director Ristau shared that there have been more than 80 calls already in 2024.
 - Director Ristau answered questions about coverage and response times. Currently, Lanesboro provides coverage Monday-Friday and every other weekend. The response time average is 7 minutes.
- D. EDA: Member Goetzke shared an update of the Lanesboro Economic Development Authority:
- Michael Seiler is the chair of the Lanesboro Entrepreneurial Action Network (LEAN).
 - Cathy Enerson, EDA director, will attend the March REV meeting.
 - The Chill-Inn Grant work from the Blandin Foundation has been completed.
 - Almost all funding from the City's revolving loan fund has been disbursed. A grant application has been submitted to the USDA to recapitalize the revolving loan fund.
 - The EDA formulated a work group to create a strategic work plan.
 - Sparrow Valley Apartments, LLC hosted an open house for apartments at the former Methodist Church building.
 - The Agriculture Summit will take place on March 14 at Eagle Bluff.
 - SMIF is currently accepting Paint the Town Grant applications.
 - The Livability page on the City of Lanesboro website is updated monthly.

New Business:

- A. Downtown Commercial District Land Use: City Administrator Walbridge reported receiving concerns and inquiries about the permitted uses of properties within the downtown commercial district. Specifically, there is unease regarding the operation of VRBO and Airbnb in the retail spaces on the main floor of properties. Members expressed a desire to understand the available regulatory tools and requested a review of ordinances from comparable communities. Attorney O'Koren will provide examples of relevant city ordinances for city administration to share with council members. Member Albecht-Benson entered a motion to task the city's Planning and Zoning Commission and Heritage Preservation Commission with researching the downtown commercial district's land use ordinance. The goal is to provide recommendations to the council concerning the regulation of short-term lodging. Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Continued Business:

- A. Public Safety Aid Funding: City Administrator Walbridge presented an overview of the public safety aid funds received from the state and requested the council members consider allocating the \$31,639.00 between the fire department and police department. During the meeting, the council heard funding proposals from the police department, outlining the need for capital expenditure equipment upgrades such as squad car computers, radios, radar unit replacement,

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and squad car cameras. Chief Sass informed the council that Fountain had pledged \$5,000.00 of their public safety funds to support the Preston Police Department.

Fire Chief Robert Wagner discussed the fire department's plans, including the installation of a warning light system on Highway 16 to alert drivers when emergency vehicles are leaving the fire hall. The projected cost for this project is \$20,707.00. Additionally, the fire department received a quote for a siren replacement at the fire hall, with a total cost of \$19,654.00. Members deliberated on the fire department's priorities, including the truck replacement schedule, and Member Albrecht-Benson questioned the necessity of the siren replacement given the presence of civil service sirens in the town. City Administrator Walbridge informed the council that a grant application for \$5,000.00 had been submitted to the Lanesboro Area Community Foundation, potentially covering the difference if the public safety aid funds were split evenly between the police and fire departments.

Member Goetzke entered a motion to approve resolution 2024-16, allocating public safety aid funds.

The motion suggested distributing \$15,819.50 to the Lanesboro Fire Department and an equal amount to the Preston Police Department. Member Bakke seconded the motion; motion carried with all in favor.

- B. Former Employee Grievance Letter: Administrator Walbridge informed the council that a meeting of the committee investigating the grievance is set for March 7, 2024. The committee aims to reach a resolution and present its findings to the city council during the April 1, 2024 meeting. Member Goetzke entered a motion to table the business item; Member Bakke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Next Meeting: Monday, April 1, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Member Albrecht-Benson adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell Walbridge
City Administrator/Clerk