

Minutes from the City of Berryville, Texas Council Workshop
January 7, 2025, City Hall

Attendees at the meeting: Sue Morgan – Mayor, Bobbie Evans – Mayor ProTem, Gene Fagelson, Clint Lax, Dennis Selby and Brenda Pulis – Council Members, Brenda Lankford – City Secretary

Guest: Thomas Freeman was invited to a portion of the meeting to answer questions regarding operations at the Berryville Volunteer Fire Department building and staff.

Meeting commenced at 11:03am with a brief discussion about the Berryville Volunteer Fire Department building, that department staff and their expenses. Thomas referred most of the questions toward Bill Johnston for answers, however, he did state that 2 apple computers had been purchased for the fire trucks and that they had been paid for by Bill Johnston. Clint is to contact Bill Johnston and obtain additional insight into spending and funds at the BVFD, especially regarding the computers and the cash received from the fundraiser last November.

Brenda P said the only contracts she has delved deeply into are the LiveOak and TVEC ones. Additionally, a copy of the Brightspeed and Optimum contracts need to be pulled and copied. Brenda P will get with Brenda L or Shanna for those two documents.

Dennis discussed the need for council members to ensure everyone is keeping copies of emails and stated the google cloud will be used to store info. Dennis is to research having a chat room on the web-site that the council could use and on-which the citizens could see the info in read-only mode. Dennis stated the google cloud system would also be useful for keeping up with legislative updates and proposals.

Brenda discussed the LiveOak contract terms and what they mean to the citizens. The cost for administrative support, i.e. City Staff, was discussed and decided upon. The letter from the Mayor will be discussed at the council meeting on the 14th of January and LiveOak will be present. Then, the letter and the Q&A page will be posted on the website, emailed to citizens, texted out, and a footnote would be placed on the bottom of the next water bill steering customers to the internet site for the trash pickup information.

The ARPA grant was discussed and called a huge success. John has been given the final paperwork.

City Maps and mapping was discussed and it was decided Dennis would get the maps current, printed, on the website and re-recorded at the county. Then, he is going to work with the US Census to get the City's statistics updated to reflect actual information for just those people within the city limits.

Future grants were briefly discussed and it was stated that we need to be in contact more often with Jacksonville, Frankston and other towns regarding their grants. No consensus was reached and no assignment was made on this topic.

The Berryville Volunteer Fire Department Building was discussed again next. Brenda L shared a folder from the past that showed the city took out a loan to build the firehouse on city land and the city out a loan to build the walls, etc. inside that building. The notes were paid off using fire donations on the water bills. Dennis is to research ownership of the building since the funds came from Berryville citizens, but were taken in under the premise of being a fire donation. It was stated the BVFD has not filed for 501(c)3 status.

Dennis discussed the city website and communications avenues. He has removed references on the website to the "inspection department" and removed references on it to "required recycling". He is continuing to look for areas on the website that contain erroneous information or old and will remove or correct it.

Brenda P discussed the review of existing City Ordinances. She has gone through all of them and marked up language that is not correct, out-of-date, or is concerning in today's environment. That information will be red-lined and sent to the council for comments at the next workshop as they will require quite a bit of time to work through. Sue is to discuss with Brenda L the status of the Zoning Ordinance that was approved at the end of 2024 as it needs to be added to the website and to the councilmember's handbooks.

Dennis discussed the issues experienced at Water Well #6 where pipe has corroded and where debris needs removing from the filtration area of the well. Total cost of the work is approximately \$20k, on top of the \$10K for inspection and removal of the bad pipe. This will be discussed and taken to a vote at the council meeting January 14, 2025.

Gene discussed the \$50k contract with SPI and what we would get from that. Questions were asked and answered about what the study will tell the City. It was noted that the reports data will be useful and necessary to gain access to grants in the future as it forms the majority of the city's justification for funds. The contract will be discussed and taken to a vote at the council meeting January 14, 2025.

Delegation of Authority and Purchasing policies were discussed by Gene. He will be getting with other cities, TML, SPI and other entities to see what is available from which to benchmark some policies for Berryville in this area. He will prepare a draft of such and bring that to the council at a workshop. There was also a discussion about the need to review the pay policy for salaried and hourly employees for call-out and how to handle call-outs for customer problems. Dennis pointed out this should be discussed in the coming months so we are prepared for the next budget season.

Gene discussed the investment policy and investment of funds. He stated he passed the required course to make such an investment on behalf of the city. Interest rates are running at 5% right now at Texas Municipal Investment Funds. A question was asked about what the investment amount should be as the city has over \$600k of cash in checking accounts at Austin Bank. Gene is to research how much running cash the city uses on a monthly basis and what anomalies (e.g. annual insurance payments) exist and bring a recommendation to the council regarding the first tranche. It was discussed that we may want to stair-step into this process to see how it works and see how quickly they (TMIF) respond when the City needs funds placed in the checking account for immediate use. There was discussion about having one checking account for every expense and coding the expense to the areas of expense. More discussion is expected around that.

Dennis announced he has a workorder reporting system close to complete for placement on the website – probably in a week. The workorder system would be used to report potholes, water issues (leaks, etc.), line locates, etc. Performance metrics could be drawn up from those statistics and we can tell citizens more about where their monies are being spent and what we are finding in the field and we can prioritize work.

Gene discussed the Smart Pavement Management program. He believes we would need smaller cities (like Frankston, Jacksonville, Palestine, LaRue, etc.) to band together and use these services to make it worthwhile and cost-effective.

The bullet regarding assignment of duties to council members and reporting requirements was covered in other areas of the meeting.

Brenda L shared the TxDOT new Municipal Maintenance Agreement (MMA) with all council members on November 26, 2024. There was discussion about how it could be used for projects around the city. Brenda P agreed to read it, red-line it and send it as a possible proposed new ordinance for the city.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10pm.

Brenda Lankford,
City Secretary