

Bentonville City Council

Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2025



The City Council of Bentonville, Arkansas, met in regular session Tuesday, February, at 6:00 p.m., at City Hall, 305 S.W. A Street, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Present were Council Members Octavio Sanchez, Cindy Acree, Holly Hook, Chris Sooter, Aubrey Patterson, Gayatri Agnew, Beckie Seba, and Bill Burckart (via zoom). Also present were Mayor Stephanie Orman, City Attorney Nicholas Henry, City Clerk Malorie Marrs, the press, city staff, and the audience. Several members of the city staff and the public attended remotely via Zoom.

Mayor Orman called the meeting to order, and a Scout Member from Troop 36, led everyone present in the Pledge of Allegiance, which was followed by a moment of silence in support of our armed forces.

Motion was made by Council Member Sanchez to approve the minutes of the February 11th, regular council meeting as presented, second by Council Member Hook. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0)

A motion was made by Council Member Sooter to suspend the rules regarding the reading of all ordinances on three separate days, and further that all ordinances and resolutions be read by title only, second by Council Member Sanchez. Council Member Acree motioned to remove item number 1 under Utility Board from this motion Vote 2 Yes -Acree & Seba, Vote No 6: Motion failed. Council Member Sooter reissued his motion to suspend the rules regarding reading of all ordinances. Motion seconded by Council Member Sanchez There was no discussion. Motion carried (7-1 No, Acree).

Motion for Consent Agenda:

-Council Member Sooter motioned to move items 2, 3, 4, on Utility Board; to a consent agenda, seconded by Council Member Burckart. There was no discussion. Motion carried (8-0).

I. Consent Agenda Items *Utility Board*

Utility Board

2. Resolution 2-25-25 E: Resolution Accepting Offer of Financial Assistance from Arkansas Natural Resources Commission

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to accept an offer of financial assistance from Arkansas Natural Resources Commission (ANRC) in the amount of \$55,000,000.00 for improvements at

the City's Water Resource Recovery Facility. Utility Board approved 5-0. No budget adjustment is needed.

3. Resolution 2-25-25 F: Resolution for Signatory Authority Associated with Arkansas Natural Resources Commission Funding

A Resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute certain documents in connection with funding administered by the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission concerning water and wastewater projects. Utility Board approved 5-0. No budget adjustment is needed.

4. Resolution 2-25-25 G: Resolution Authorizing Change Order No. 1 for the CIPP Sewer Lining Project

A Resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to enter in to Change Order No. 1 with Gulf Coast Underground, LLC, increasing the contract amount by \$52,395.00. This change order is necessary to address significant groundwater infiltration issues in multiple areas before the CIPP liner can be installed. Utility Board approved 5-0. No budget adjustment is needed

City Attorney Nicholas Henry read the consent agenda items by title only. Motion to approve by Council Member Sooter, second by Council Member Sanchez. There was no discussion. Motion passed (8-0).

II. New Business

1. Resolution 2-25-25 A: Resolution Recognizing Twelve (12) Police Vehicles as Surplus and Available for Trade

Resolution declaring twelve (12) police department vehicles as surplus property, available for trade to Superior Automotive Group under their trade-in program for emergency vehicles. No budget adjustment is needed.

City Attorney Nicholas Henry read the resolution by title only. Motion to approve by Council Member Sanchez, second by Council Member Agnew. There was no discussion. Motion passed (8-0).

2. Ordinance 2025-47: Public Hearing and Ordinance Vacating a Utility Easement (VAC25-0001)

Hold Public Hearing and approval of Ordinance vacating Utility Easements located at Lot 18 of Crystal Bridges Museum Addition (VAC25-0001).

Mayor Orman opened the public hearing for anyone online or in person to speak. No discussion, closed the public hearing.

City Attorney Nicholas Henry read the ordinance by title only. Motion to approve by Council Member Sanchez, second by Council Member Agnew. There was no discussion. Motion passed (8-0).

3. Resolution 2-25-25 B: Resolution Setting a Public Hearing for a Utility Easement Vacation (VAC25- 0002)

Approve Resolution to set Public Hearing for March 11, 2025 for Utility Easement Vacations located at Lots 9, 10 & 11 of Robinnaire Heights Subdivision (VAC25-0002).

City Attorney Nicholas Henry read the resolution by title only. Motion to approve by Council Member Sanchez, second by Council Member Agnew. There was no discussion. Motion passed (8-0).

4. Resolution 2-25-25 C: Resolution Setting a Public Hearing Vacating Alley/Street Right of Way (VAC25-0004)

Approve Resolution to set Public Hearing for March 11, 2025 to vacate Alley/Street Right of Way located at Lots 2 & 3 of Curtis Addition (VAC25-0004).

City Attorney Nicholas Henry read the resolution by title only. Motion to approve by Council Member Sanchez, second by Council Member Acree. There was no discussion. Motion passed (8-0).

5. Resolution 2-25-25 D: Resolution Setting a Public Hearing for Utility Easement Vacations (VAC25- 0005)

Approve Resolution to set Public Hearing for March 11, 2025 for Utility Easement Vacations located at Lot 1 of The Estates at Woods Creek Subdivision (VAC25-0005).

City Attorney Nicholas Henry read the resolution by title only. Motion to approve by Council Member Sanchez, second by Council Member Acree. There was no discussion. Motion passed (8-0).

6. Airport Advisory Board Appointment of Hayes Wade

City Council approval of Mayor Orman's recommendation to appoint Hayes Wade to the City of Bentonville's Airport Advisory Board. Mr. Hayes will be filling the unexpired term of Mark Slaughter that will end on October 24, 2026.

Motion to approve by Council Member Sanchez, second by Council Member Acree. There was no discussion. Motion passed (8-0).

III. Utility Board Non-Consent Agenda Items

1. Ordinance 2025-48: Ordinance Adopting Water Rates for the City of Bentonville, Arkansas

Adoption of an Ordinance amending section 98-356 of the City of Bentonville Municipal Code, setting water rates for the City of Bentonville, Arkansas. Utility Board unanimously supports the proposed rates. No budget adjustment is needed.

City Attorney Nicholas Henry read the Ordinance by title only.

Council Member Acree motioned to postpone/table the item until next (March 11th, 2025) meeting. Seconded by Council Member Agnew, asking first if public comment can still be heard during the current meeting.

Public Comment on item

Various members of the community discussed their concerns with the rate increase. Citing that they didn't have enough information, it seemed too expensive, noting an idea for a possible stair step increase, feasibility, and calling for the City to put out an FAQ to help the public better understand the rationale behind the rate increases.

Council Member Sooter mentioned he met with the water department and finance teams with the City, and was uncomfortable with the 100% increase in water. They looked at the idea of 50% now and 40% in January, but the reality is that it does not save a lot of dollars to the average homeowner. Sooter stressed that communication to the citizens is imperative at this time, so it does not feel so rushed for the public.

Council Member Hook was curious about engaging the public more, because its so complex & misinformation has been communicated, and wants to sure that up.

Mayor Orman understands how complex this is, and understands the need to have the community more aware of what's happening regarding the rate increase.

Council Member Agnew wants all to understand that water makes up one of 3 points of the increase, and that's a very important difference to make to the public. Agnew asked to open this up to committee of the whole, and also allow that to be the public meeting for discussion.

Council Member Burckart stated that the increase has to do with losses, and infrastructure. He wants everyone to understand that it is so important to set aside money to maintain the infrastructure, and we've run on a deficit for too long. He would like to see capital put away on a normal basis to help cover this, as the city has not done this for a long time, and now this is coming to a point of need. This would not be needed if there was not a deficit.

Council Member Patterson asked about the meter rates.

Director of Water and Sewer for the City of Bentonville, Mike Bender, spoke about how the entire utility package would roughly only increase a bill by about \$25 per month, but this does not include irrigation. The increase is on usage and volume.

Council Member Burckart also discussed the sewer rate increase, and how the city needs to be thinking about it, so the public is aware.

IV. Other Business

1. Motion by City Council to Change/Cancel the March 25, 2025, City Council Meeting

Council Member Sooter motioned to cancel, seconded by Council Member Hook, motion carried.

Council Member Acree motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Hook.

Meeting adjourned

Committee Reports

Council Member Seba- Public Art: Looking back at other submissions for the Water Tower Rd. project. There will be an assessment of the current public art. Bentonville West Student is doing the installation of the Bentonville Bat.

Council Member Sooter-Parks: Met: 6-7pm this Thursday is the public meeting regarding the Morning Star Park assessment/planning.

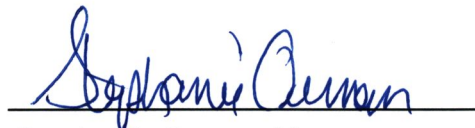
Council Member Agnew-Finance: ORT Contract is in the final review, and will be available at the March 11th Meeting.

Council Member Burckart: Proposal Update: waiting to see the final documents.

The next Bentonville City Council meeting will be on Tuesday March 11, 2025.



Malorie Marrs, City Clerk



Stephanie Orman, Mayor

