



**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the
Cedar Springs City Council**

Thursday, May 8, 2014

**66 S. Main St.
Cedar Springs, Michigan**

**Workshop
6:15 p.m.**

Members Present: Ken Benham, Daniel Clark, Gerald Hall, Robert Truesdale, Patricia Troost, Ashley Bremmer (arrived 6:50 p.m.)

Members Absent: Mark Fankhauser.

Also Present: City Manager Thad Taylor, City Clerk Linda Christensen, Finance Director Deb Brunett, DPW Director Tom Stressman, Fire Chief Marty Fraser and Police Chief Roger Parent.

The City Manager reviewed agenda items with Councilors.

**Meeting
7:00 p.m.**

1. The Meeting was Called to Order by Mayor **Mark Fankhauser** at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. <u>ROLL CALL:</u>	Mr. Ken Benham	Present
	Mrs. Ashley Bremmer	Present
	Mr. Daniel Clark	Present
	Mr. Gerald Hall	Present
	Mr. Robert Truesdale	Present
	Mayor Pro Tem Mrs. Patricia Troost	Present
	Mayor Mr. Mark Fankhauser	Present

3. PUBLIC FORUM.

Rock Wood, a candidate for district judge introduced himself to the audience.

John Teusink, 39 W. Beech St., made comments about former councilmember and Mayor **Ronny Merlington**, who recently passed away.

Kurt Mabie, Community Development Building Team, gave an update on the group's activities.

Rose Powell, 316 W. Cherry St., **Ronny Merlington** was a good man and a taught good government lessons to his students.

Kathy Bremmer, 205 E. Maple St., wanted the Council to remember that it was important that we know the City's police officers. She wasn't sure the County would have the vested interest that the police officers we have now, have.

Steve McBride, 139 N. 7th St., if the City wanted to pay respect to **Ronny Merlington**, the red flannel logo which had been removed from the Council chambers should be replaced. If there was going to be an investigation, there should be one regarding who took that down.

Roger Parent, said there was no need for an investigation; he was Interim City Manager when the logo was removed which was done under direction of the City Council following a letter from the Red Flannel Festival to remove and destroy City property which displayed the red flannel logo.

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS.

A. **Motion by Troost, supported by Benham, to open a Public Hearing on the proposed 2014/2015 Fiscal Year Budget.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

The Public Hearing opened at 7:18 p.m.

B. Staff Comments:

City Manager **Thad Taylor** stated approximately \$41,000 would be taken from the fund balance to balance the coming year's budget. Half of that money was necessary because of the State's repeal of the Personal Property Tax. Other monies were being used to offset expenses for a second siren, tree trimming and planting, a donation toward the Morley Park Pavilion project, a one percent salary increase for employees; health insurance premium costs, an additional mowing at the cemetery; Fire Department turn out gear and payback to the Motor Pool Fund for the Fire Department's rescue unit.

Benham questioned the need for a second siren.

Taylor said it was a 50/50 grant and aimed at better improving warning coverage for the middle school and south trailer park areas

Fankhauser said it was the Council's due diligence to provide for the safety of the citizens and this siren was an important component of that.

Truesdale said he would like the Council to rework the budget. He saw other areas and a lot of little items that could be tweaked.

Clark asked if projects needed to be done and suggested waiting until later in the year and amending the budget when and if the City received additional monies. He asked if the \$12,000 needed to be paid back right away.

Taylor responded the City needed fiscal discipline and municipalities got into trouble putting off paying monies back when they were borrowed.

Hall said he was not in favor of taking money from the contingency fund. He thought department heads should look at the budget again.

Fankhauser said he hoped the City Council understood the importance of planning for the future.

C. Public Comments:

Kathy Bremmer said the City needed to save for future needs.

Marty Fraser, Fire Chief, stated if the \$12,000 wasn't paid back each year, it would extend the need for another fire truck. I want a lot of things, he said, but what's in the budget is needed. There were no wants in the budget.

Tom Stressman, DPW Director, said he agreed with the fire chief. The department heads had worked the figures in the budget. I need you to tell me what services you want me to cut from the citizens, he said.

Ashley Bremmer said you could cut money and spend more five to ten years down the road.

Truesdale said he had trouble giving \$5,000 toward the pavilion when the City couldn't give money to the Red Flannel Festival.

Troost said the money being spent on the pavilion was helping a young man who wanted to do something for the community. The pavilion would be used by a lot of people throughout the year.

D. **Motion by Bremmer, supported by Troost, to close the public hearing.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:50 p.m.

Fankhauser introduced **Pete McGregor**, State Representative for the 73rd District who stated he was not running for this last term as a representative; but instead would be running for the 28th District's State Senate seat.

E. **Motion by Troost, supported by Bremmer, to open a public hearing on the 2014/2015 Kent County Community Development Block Grant allocation for the 2014/2015 fiscal year.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

The public hearing opened at 7:55 p.m.

F. Staff Comments:

Taylor said the City's allocation was going to be used toward sidewalk improvements.

G. Public Comments:

Powell said if the City was going to build sidewalks, she hoped the ordinances regarding sidewalks such as cars not parking on them and snow being plowed, would be enforced.

H. **Motion by Benham, supported by Bremmer, to close the public hearing.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

The Public Hearing Closed at 7:58 p.m.

5. **Motion by Hall, supported by Clark, to approve the agenda with the addition of New Business Item M motion to approve the extension of the option to purchase agreement with CS Brewery for the purchase of 95 N. Main Street and to move it to the first item under New Business.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

6. **Motion by Troost, supported by Clark, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the following:**
 - A. **approval of the minutes of the Regular meeting of April 10, 2014 and the Special Meeting of April 22, 2014.**
 - B. **approval of the Checks Paid Prior #s 36467 – 36516 totaling \$60,033.475; the April Accounts Payable #s 36517 – 36536 totaling \$38,251.23 and Electronic Transfers totaling \$3,118.08. The total of all checks and transfers was \$101,403.06**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

7. **Correspondence for the month included:**
 - A. **a public notice from Consumer’s Energy.**
 - B. **an announcement from Right Place.**
 - C. **a monthly update from Right Place.**

8. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS.**

- A. **Motion by Hall, supported by Clark, to approve Ordinance No. 187, an ordinance to amend Chapter 10. Buildings and Building Regulations; Article IV. Rental Dwelling Units; Section 10-68, Definitions; Section 10-69, Violations, Penalty; Section 10-70, Registration Required; Section 10-73, Rental Registration Form; Time for Filing; Notice of Changes, Removal from Registration and adding Section 10-74, Compliance with Legal Requirements and Section 10-75, Inspections as a second reading.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- B. **Fankhauser** stated he wanted to pay respect to former Mayor **Ronny Merlington** who had recently passed away. He was an educator who had truly touched and impacted the community by serving 28 years as a councilmember. He asked that the proclamation read at his retirement be entered into the record. **(attached Item A)**
A moment of silence was offered in memory of **Merlington**.
- C. **Fankhauser** stated there were some topics that had been brought to light that needed to be addressed, He said the council was a body of individuals who were elected by the constituents. The city manager was the first line of business and it was imperative that councilmembers first direct comments and questions to the city manager. If councilmembers sent emails, they should be copied to all councilmembers if the information dealt with the city council as a whole. If councilmembers wanted to visit departments, those arrangements should be made through the city manager. Councilmembers should not just drop in to see department heads; but should make

arrangements through the city manager to make sure the department head was available.

9. NEW BUSINESS.

- M. **Motion by Clark, supported by Troost, to extend the CS Brewery's option to purchase 95 N. Main St. for 60 days pending the City Attorney's review of the agreement.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- A. **Motion by Troost, supported by Benham, to approve Resolution No. 2014 – 12, a resolution to adopt the City of Cedar Springs' 2014-2015 Annual Budget.**

VOTE: 4 – 3 (Clark, Hall, Truesdale) Motion Carried.

- B. **Motion by Hall, supported by Bremmer, to approve Resolution No. 2014 – 13, a resolution to establish the millage rate for real and personal property in the City of Cedar Springs for the Fiscal Year 2014/15.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- C. **Motion by Benham, supported by Bremmer, to approve Resolution No. 2014 – 14, a resolution to establish the fee schedule for 2014/15.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- D. **Motion by Troost, supported by Clark, to approve Resolution No. 2014 – 15, a resolution to enter into an agreement with Vredevelde Haefner LLC for professional auditing services for Fiscal Years ending June 30, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- E. **Motion by Bremmer, supported by Troost, to approve Resolution No. 2014 – 16, a resolution to approve the Kent County Community Block Grant Allocation for the 2014-15 Fiscal Year using the monies for sidewalk improvements.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- F. **Motion by Benham, supported by Bremmer, to approve the drainage field farming proposal as submitted by Cory Wall contingent upon signing an agreement drafted by the City Attorney and City Engineer.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- G. **Motion by Hall, supported by Troost, to approve Steve Schmitz's farming proposal for the old lagoon site predicated on approval by Mary Rhoades and execution of a signed agreement drafted by the City Attorney, Mary Rhoades and the City Engineer.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- H. **Taylor** asked for direction regarding how Council wished to proceed with the goals it had recently prioritized.

It was consensus of the Council to start with the goals listed as the top priority in each category and to go on from there as each is completed.

- I. Discussion regarding Police Service.
- Fankhauser** stated this discussion was necessary as the City Manager needed clear direction from the Council on how to proceed with the hiring of a new police chief since Chief Parent was retiring the end of August. The city had advertised the position and had applicants who were interested in the position. He did not feel it was fair to hire someone and within a few months decide to disband the City's police department and enter into an agreement with Kent County for police services. He felt the City's police department was a dynamic work force providing a one on one relationship with the citizens and understood the pulse of the community. He felt citizens would lose ownership with the County and did not believe the County could provide the same level of service as is currently being provided by the City's police force.
- Bremmer** said one thing that needed to be considered if police services were outsourced was the response time of officers. She also questioned if the County would employ all of the City's current police officers. If that did not happen, she was not in favor of going with the County.
- Fankhauser** said that an "apple to apple" comparison of services needed to take place. The Council's focus should be on what was best for the City of Cedar Springs and was what the County could offer the exact product as is being offered now.
- Benham** stated that an investigation of County services was done several years ago and the savings of one patrol car versus what we have now did not cut it for him.
- Troost** said she knew the City's officers and the Council received a report every month and did not want to give up her safety and security.
- Truesdale** felt the issue should be readdressed and felt a large amount of money could be saved.
- Troost** said when things were cut, services were cut.
- Hall** said that the City should get the numbers and compare them.
- Clark** suggested cutting back the current force to a 16 hour day and getting the County figures
- Bremmer** stated if the force was cut back to a 16-hour day, it would mean an officer would have to be cut.
- Clark** responded the City wasn't an employment agency. He felt it was the City's responsibility to protect the citizens within its means. How much assurance can we afford, he asked. It was time to take another look at the figures.

Taylor asked if the council was looking at a savings cost or service delivery. **It was the consensus of the Council that the City Manager meet with the County Sheriff and tell him what services the City currently provides and obtain figures as to what it would cost to continue providing those same services.**

- J. Motion by Troost, supported by Bremmer, to approve the replacement of two streetlights and the flagpole at City Hall at the cost of the insurance deductible of \$250.00.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- K. Motion by Troost, supported by Bremmer, to approve Resolution No. 2014 – 17, a resolution approving the CS Chamber of Commerce’s Summer Celebration as a Community Event.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

- L. Motion by Troost, supported by Bremmer, to approve Resolution No. 2014 – 18, a resolution approving the CS Chamber of Commerce’s Cedar/Solon Market as a Community Event.**

VOTE: 7 – 0, Motion Carried.

10. CITY MANAGER’S REPORT.

- A. General Information and Special Projects discussed included the following:**

- Employment of a new code enforcement officer.
- West Michigan Honor Cruise scheduled for June 25 at 6:30 p.m.
- The 2014 Fred Meijer White Pine Trail 200 Mile Relay scheduled for August 8-9.
- Discussion regarding the elimination of the Council Personnel and Compensation and Finance Committees.
- Police Chief applications.
- Administrative Assistant applications.

- B. Monthly Department Reports were offered by the following:**

1. Department of Public Works.
 - a. Infrastructure Alternative’s operational and maintenance report.
2. Police Department.
3. Fire Department.
4. City Clerk.
5. Finance Officer/Treasurer.
 - a. Cash Summary Report.
 - b. Revenue/Expenditure Report.
6. Minutes of the March 24, 2014 CS Library Board Meeting.

11. COUNCIL COMMENTS.

Troost – was at the clean- up of Cedar Creek and had a great time with the residents and City personnel in attendance. She appreciated the countless hours staff puts in for the City and took very seriously the service employees give to citizens.

Benham – appreciated the proclamation read for **Ronny Merlington**. He was an outstanding councilmember and teacher. He had taught him a lot about life. He expressed his condolences to the family and to Thad Taylor who had recently lost his father.

Bremmer – thanked the department heads for the passion they give to the community.

Truesdale – had a high regard for **Ronny Merlington**.

Hall – **Ronny Merlington** had been a good man.

Fankhauser – thanked the City Council for allowing him to read the proclamation for **Ronny Merlington** and thanked the Council for the blunt and honest discussion that evening. Thanked **Pete McGregor** for coming to the meeting.

12. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Linda Christensen, City clerk

Mark Fankhauser, Mayor

Item A

Proclamation City of Cedar Springs

Whereas, the City of Cedar Springs wishes to honor Ronny Merlington for 28 years of service on the City Council; and

Whereas, Ronny Merlington is a very special resident of our community; known to many as a civic-minded, knowledgeable and insightful individual who cares deeply for Cedar Springs and its residents; and

Whereas, Ronny is the son of Robert and Ruth Merlington, born in Pierson and lived on a farm in Sand Lake with his two brothers and sisters and graduated from Sand Lake High School; and

Whereas, Ronny met his future wife, Shirley Misner in high school where, in his words, “she pursued him” while he evaded her but let her “catch” him during their senior year; and

Whereas, Ronny and Shirley married July 11, 1958 living all their married life in Cedar Springs; raising their two sons and are now grandparents to three terrific grandchildren; and

Whereas, Ronny attended Ferris State University where he played football later transferring to Michigan State University where he met with Coach Duffy Daugherty who told him to go take a look at the football players and after doing so, decided Big Ten Football was not for him; and

Whereas, Ronny is one of Michigan State University’s most proud alumni and a dedicated and devote fan of its football and basketball teams; and

Whereas, Ronny inspired many students during his career as a government, science and math teacher first in Sand Lake and later teaching 38 years at Cedar Springs High School where he implemented Senior Speaker Sessions with local, county and state officials coming in to speak with his students; and

Whereas, Ronny spread his love of sports through coaching football, basketball and baseball and worked to improve the status of his fellow teachers by negotiating the first 18 teacher contracts at Cedar Springs; and

Whereas, he developed his love of politics while helping his father run for State Representative by working on his campaign, attending meetings in smoke filled rooms and handing out flyers, learning an important lesson along the way – Give back to your country and community. It doesn’t make a difference how you do it; just do it; and

Whereas, he was first appointed to a six-month seat on the City Council May 13, 1982, later running and winning seven consecutive four-year terms; and

Whereas, during his years of service on the City Council Ronny served as Mayor Pro Tem 15 years and Mayor for three years and worked with six City Managers; three City Treasurers; two City Clerks; four Assistant City Managers; three Police Chiefs; four Mayors; 22 Councilmembers and numerous staff members; and

Whereas, Ronny has served on numerous committees as a City Councilor, among them: the Downtown Development Authority's Façade Review Committee, the Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors; the Community Development Grant Board, the City Council's Finance and Personnel Committees and on the City's Zoning Board of Appeals since its inception in 1983 and as Chairmen since 1985 – never once missing any of the 117 meetings held over the years; and

Whereas, during his tenure on the City Council, Ronny has been a part of 182 public hearings; 74 executive sessions; passed 1,014 resolutions; 1,757 motions; 111 ordinances; made 239 Council Comments; listened to 575 Public Comments; approved 362 contracts; 45 Industrial Facilities Tax Exemption Certificates; attended 40 workshop sessions; purchased 18 police cruisers, three copiers, two fax machines, three snowplows, two cash registers and 40 computer and software purchases; and

Whereas, there are many accomplishments and improvements during his long and distinguished career with the City, notable among them: the construction of the City's wastewater treatment plant; the City's Rental Registration Program; the formation of the Downtown Development Authority; the creation of the Façade Improvement Program; the west side paving project; Main Street reconstruction; West and East Muskegon Street reconstruction; intergovernmental agreements with Nelson and Solon Townships; the creation of the 17 Mile Corridor; the computerization of City Hall; the extension of fire protection to a portion of Nelson Township; the establishment of the City's leaf vacuuming and composting program; but he may be best known, however, for his passion for the uncapping of the flowing well at the site of the old foundry; and

Whereas, his legacy will be his ability to recall the history behind decisions that were made and the "eagle eye" he kept on the City's finances often telling new Councilmembers "to be good stewards of the City's Fund Balance."

Whereas, the City Council and all City staff wish to thank Ronny for a job "well done" and wish him the very best the future holds and much happiness as he continues to enjoy hunting, fishing, biking, reading and gardening.

Now, therefore, I Charles P. Watson, Mayor of the City of Cedar Springs, Michigan, by virtue of the power vested in me under the Charter of the City, do hereby proclaim the day of October 14, 2010 as Ronny Merlington Day, a day in which all City residents shall recognize and honor Ronny Merlington for his contributions, leadership and dedication to our community and in witness whereof, I set my hand and cause the Seal of the City of Cedar Springs, Michigan to be affixed this 14th day of October, 2010.

Honorable Charles P. Watson, Mayor

Dated this 14th day of October, 2010