The Bennet Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Village of Bennet, Nebraska (the “Village”) held a special meeting due to the postponed business meeting on Tuesday November 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., at the Bennet American Legion Hall, 970 Monroe Street in the Village, the same being open to the public and preceded by advance publicized notice duly given in strict compliance with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 84, Article 14, Reissue Revised Statures of Nebraska, as amended, and having set forth (a) the time, date and place of the meeting: (b) that the meeting would be open to the attendance of the public; and (c) that the agenda for the meeting, kept continuously current, was available to public inspection at the office of the Village Clerk.

Chairman Ryan Cheney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announced the location of the Open Meetings Act. Village Clerk Michele Lincoln conducted roll call. Trustees in attendance were Ryan Cheney, Brad Ruzicka, Justin Dorn, Don Murray. Absent; Jerris Nider. A quorum being present and the meeting duly commenced, the following proceedings were taken while the meeting remained open to attendance by the public.

Murray moved and Cheney seconded a motion to approve minutes for the October 12, 2020 regular meeting. Roll call vote: Cheney, Ruzicka, Murray, Dorn voted YES. Motion carried.

A list of claims was considered with the additions for a payment to Lovell Excavating, One Call Concepts and SENDD. Cheney moved and Ruzicka seconded to approve the claims for payment. Roll call vote: Cheney, Ruzicka, Murray, Dorn voted YES. Motion carried.

Mike Olsson and Wayne Scritchfield with Kirkham Michael came before the Board to discuss the purposed Biosolids Dewatering System. Through the conversations with John Dunn, EPA and Gautam Bhadbhade, NDEE they determined the Village had two different options regarding the sludge handling. The first option would be to remove the approximate 3,000,000 gallons of sludge in lagoon cell 3 and continue operations as we have. This would be done by a contractor at an estimated cost of $200,000 and would need to be repeated every 5 years. It has the smallest upfront cost and the least amount of future maintenance but will likely be more expensive in the long run. The second option would require the sludge from lagoon cell 3 to be removed and install sludge thickening equipment to produce a compostable product that would be stockpiled onsite until it met the requirements for land application. In addition to the cost of removing the sludge from cell 3, the estimated construction cost is $606,000. NDEE was not in favor of this approach as it required additional staff to operate the equipment and tend to the compost, the equipment requires additional maintenance and is prone to breakage and it would require routine testing and additional paperwork. The board agreed that they were in favor of removing the sludge from cell 3 and continuing operations as we have. Mike Olsson suggested that since the Village was going out for bids for the city engineer it may be a good point to let the new firm finish the project.

Cheney moved and Dorn seconded a motion to approve the third reading of Ordinance 2020-9.1, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING §33.48 OF THE CODE OF BENNET BY INCREASING THE SALARIES PAID TO THE TRUSTEES TO $200.00 A MONTH FOR TRUSTEES AND $300.00 A MONTH FOR THE CHAIRMAN WITH $100 PER MONTH FOR TRUSTEES FOR EACH SPECIAL MEETING ATTENDED; AND REPEALING §33.48 OF THE CODE OF BENNET AS HITHERTO EXISTING, AND PROVIDING AN OPERATIVE DATE. Roll call vote: Cheney, Ruzicka, Murray, Dorn voted YES. Motion carried.

The Board of Trustees further discussed whether they were interested in conducting Blight and Substandard Determination Study and a Redevelopment Plan. Tim Keelan with Hanna-Keelan Associates, P.C. had submitted a proposal to conduct a Blight and Substandard Determination Study and General Redevelopment Plan for the Village of Bennet. This is something that the Planning Commission and Transition Team had discussed with Mr. Keelan. TIF (Tax Increment Financing) is a funding tool that can be used for economic and community development in blighted areas after a Blight and Substandard Determination Study and a Redevelopment Plan has been developed. Villages have the authority to blight 100% of the community whereas cities of the second class can only blight 50% of the community. The Board agreed that they were not interested in blighting 100% of the Village and therefore there is no rush in conducting a study prior to being declared a city of the second class. It was suggested that a development plan needs to be established prior to pursuing blighting the community for the availability of TIF funds.

Proposals for Village Engineer were received from JEO Consulting Group and Olsson. The Personnel Committee consisting of Chair Ryan Cheney and Trustee Don Murray along with the Planning Commission Chair Josh Buck and Village Clerk Michele Lincoln will be conducting interviews on November 18th. The appointment and approval of contract will be on the agenda for the December 14th meeting.

Chad Yost with SpectrAir addressed the Board regarding providing internet service for the Village locations as specified in the contract dated March 11th, 2019. Chad explained that he is unable to provide that service without a clear line of sight and with Bennet having so many mature trees he is unable to get that line of sight. He stated he had approached the Farmers Coop to see if they would allow him to place an antenna on one of the grain silo’s to no avail and mentioned they may be more receptive if the village made the request. He did state that since he has been unable to uphold his part of the service agreement, he would pay for the services he has received.

Matthew Steinblock submitted a request that the Board of Trustees discuss the disrepair of several streets in Bennet including Garden Street east of Hwy 43 and Hackberry Street east of Garden. The Board agreed to have a reevaluation of the budget and street repairs on the agenda for the December 14th meeting.

Cheney moved and Murray seconded a motion to approve Resolution 2020-11.1, a resolution reappointing Ryan Moore as a regular member of the Planning Commission and Greg Pohl as the alternate member of the Planning Commission. Roll call vote: Cheney, Ruzicka, Murray, Dorn voted YES. Motion carried.

Cheney moved and Murray seconded a motion to approve Resolution 2020-11.2, a resolution approving a request by Windstream, Inc. to occupy right-of-way within the corporate limits of Bennet as detailed in Work Order #71500008100907; OSP-23109 (in the alleyway between Dogwood/Elm Streets and Monroe/Jackson Streets). Roll call vote: Cheney, Ruzicka, Murray, Dorn voted YES. Motion carried.

Cheney moved and Ruzicka seconded a motion to approve Resolution 2020-11.3, a resolution placing a lien on 155 Madison in the amount of $450.44 for unpaid water and sewer fees. Roll call vote: Cheney, Ruzicka, Murray, Dorn voted YES. Motion carried.

The Board agreed that due to the status of the Covid-19 Pandemic there would be no holiday dinner for the employees and elected officials.

Due to the resignation of Rose Butts as the Clerical Assistant, the position vacancy was posted in our three public posting locations, posted on the Bennet Facebook page and notice was put on the City of Bennet website. After receipt of some qualified applicants, interviews have been scheduled with the Personnel Committee for November 18th.

Cheney moved and Dorn seconded a motion to approve the pay request from Olsson for a payment of $15,960.00 to Constructors, Inc. for the Whispering Pines Park project. Roll call vote: Cheney, Ruzicka, Murray, Dorn voted YES. Motion carried.

The Clerk reported that the Drinking Water SRF Semi-Annual interest and principal payment is due to the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy December 15th in the amount of $20,419.48.

Cheney moved and Dorn seconded a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Roll call vote: Cheney, Ruzicka, Murray, Dorn voted YES. Motion carried.

Ken Maahs, the Utility Superintendent, reported that Vasa Construction got the power ran to the Christmas Tree in the park, there was a power outage at the dump and the speed bumps have been installed on Apple and Jefferson Streets.

Code Enforcement Officer Marlene Sturdy reported that the property at 155 Madison has been cleaned up except for the unlicensed /non running vehicle in the driveway. She has been working closely with Sgt. Horalek with the Lancaster County Sheriff’s Office to get the unlicensed vehicles addressed.

Resident Brandon Garvin has shown interest in the vacant position for the health care provider position on the Health Board. The Health Board will be appointed at the December 14th meeting.

Notice has been received from Zito that there will be a rate increase of $5 per month for cable services, $1 per month for Super Speed Internet and $2 per month for High Speed Internet effective on the December bills.

Cheney moved and Ruzicka seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:12 pm. Roll call vote: Cheney, Ruzicka, Murray, Dorn voted YES. Motion carried.

Michele Lincoln, CMC

Village Clerk