

August 5, 2026

The regular meeting of the City of Bertram was held on the above date at 7:00pm at City Hall. Mayor Laura Merchan presided over the meeting. Council members present were Benjamin Boelter, Craig Jones, Gabby Bruns, Louise Hall, and Stephanie Vislisel.

Mayor Merchan called the meeting to order. Boelter made a motion to approve the agenda. MSB Jones. Approved: All in favor. Opposed: None. Agenda approved.

Public comment on agenda items: None.

Vislisel made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. MSB Bruns. Approved: All in favor. Opposed: None. Motion approved.

- Sheriff's Report: Not received prior to meeting
- Prior Meeting Minutes from 7/8/2026
- July bills (details below consent agenda items).
 - Unpaid Bills.....\$16,314.14
 - Payroll.....\$3,275.65
 - Payroll Claims.....\$584.74
 - Total.....\$20,174.53
- Treasurer's Report for month ended 7/31/26.
 - Total Cash.....\$1,033,678.46
 - Total Investments.....\$314,810.67
 - Total Receivables.....\$905.99
 - Total Assets.....\$1,349,395.12
 - Total Liabilities.....\$1,573.58
 - Total Equity.....\$1,347,821.54 (details below)
 - Total Liabilities & Equity.....\$1,349,395.12
- Update on Nuisance Properties: Still on hold.

July Bills:

<u>Payee - Unpaid Bills</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
ABC Disposal Systems	Garbage Service July, August, September	\$89.25
Alliant Energy/IPL	High Point Electricity	\$24.95
Alliant Energy/IPL	City Well Electricity	\$166.91
Alliant Energy/IPL	City Hall Electricity	\$84.84
Alliant Energy/IPL	City Park Electricity	\$24.95
Alliant Energy/IPL	Street Lights Electricity	\$501.49
Casey Business MasterCard	Casey's CC Service Charge	\$1.49
Cedar Valley Humane Society	Stray Animal Shelter Care x5	\$650.00
Jared Vogeler	Water Operations for July, Replace Curb Stop, DNR Inspection	\$1828.00
Linn County Sheriff	1st Quarter Patrol Services	\$6192.00
Microbac	Monthly Water Testing	\$19.50
SolutionWorks	Anti-virus Update, Server Reboot, Cloud Server and Remote Backup	\$231.25
Student Publication Inc	Publication Fees	\$212.28

<u>Payee - Unpaid Bills</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
That Girl Tree Care	Tree Removal and Stump Grind	\$1392.75
The Northway Corp	Chlorinate Well	\$4000.00
Verizon Wireless	City Hall Phone and Internet	\$102.54
VISA (Kuehl)	Intuit Payroll	-\$97.45
VISA (Morahan)	Monthly Payroll Services	\$67.41
VISA (Public Works)	Credit Card Expenses	\$821.98
	Total Unpaid Bills	\$16,314.14

<u>Payroll</u>		<u>Amount</u>
Lisa Berry		\$702.90
Kirsten Goslin		\$612.54
Kevin Lurth		\$620.35
James Santee II		\$756.60
Danny Ties		\$155.98
Anthony Vislisl		\$341.22
Zachary Vislisl		\$86.06
	Total Payroll	\$3,275.65

<u>Payee - Payroll Claims</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
IPERS	Retirement benefits	\$584.74
	Total Payroll Claims	\$584.74

<u>Treasurer's Report 7/31</u>	<u>Beg Fund Balance</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>End Fund Balance</u>
General	\$691,833.77	\$936.47	\$12,438.69	\$680,331.55
Building Fund	\$17,812.22	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$17,812.22
Park Renovation	\$5,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,500.00
Road Use Tax	\$205,508.19	\$3,170.91	\$0.00	\$208,679.10
LOST	\$356,579.16	\$6,362.81	\$0.00	\$362,941.97
ARPA Fund	\$43,361.66	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$43,361.66
Water	\$30,209.22	\$6.51	\$1,020.69	\$29,195.04
Total	\$135,0804.22	\$10,476.7	\$13,459.38	\$1,347,821.54

Boelter made a motion to approve bills. MSB Bruns. Approved: All in favor. Opposed: None. Motion Approved.

Mayor Merchan contacted Linn County regarding the bridge. In 2026 they plan to design the bridge and contact landowners if they need to purchase more right of way. 2027 they will get bids for the project. 2028 they will begin construction.

Boelter presented his proposal for a plow truck. The two old trucks Bertram owns are in need of work and the one requires a CDL, limiting who can operate it. He proposed two options. Option 1, purchase a new truck. This vehicle would be reliable, any major repairs would be covered under warranty, it would not require a CDL, and the vehicle can be used for more than snow removal. The disadvantage is the upfront cost. Option 2: Purchase a used truck and keep the 1994 dodge ram. This would reduce the upfront cost. The disadvantage would be that they have a lot of wear and tear. Mayor Merchan wanted to know if we would be able to get it before winter. Boelter stated it takes approximately 12 weeks. The tractor can still be used as a backup and can pull out the vehicle if it were to get stuck. Hall made a motion to approve a new truck for under \$100,000. MSB Jones. Approved: All in favor. Opposed: None.

FIND THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BIDS.

Hall received bids from D&D Tree, That Tree Girl, and Franks Tree Service for removing dead tree and stump on the corner of Angle/Bertram St and grinding two stumps in City Park. Mayor Merchan received bid from James Santee for removal of tree and stump on corner of Angle/Bertram St. D&D gave bid of \$900, That Tree Girl gave bid of \$1,883, Franks Tree gave bid of \$1,500, James Santee gave bid of \$400 for removal of the corner tree. Dixie commented for future bids, that she had 3 tree stumps ground by Able Stump Removal and it was \$300. Mayor Merchan wanted to know when the trees were removed at the park. Hall stated they were taken down in the park 2-3 years ago, that they were dead after deracho. Visl. corrected that there are 3 stumps at the park, not 2. That the other stump is located near the pavilion, and if any of the stumps are getting done that it should be the one near the pavilion. Hall said that our insurance requires us to grind our stumps. Visl. corrected that our insurance agent confirmed with her that there is no verbiage in our policy that requires it, rather that we need to use common sense for removal. If we think that someone could get hurt, then best to remove it. Visl. also reached out to the Linn County Engineers Office, who informed her that they do not grind their stumps. Hall would not be in favor of taking down a tree and not removing the stump. Mayor Merchan reminded that the trees in the park had been taken down years ago and the stumps during all this time had not been removed or addressed. Boelter made a motion to approve D&D bid, and if they are able to grind the additional stump at the park for less than \$250, that it would be approved too. MBS Jones. Approved: All in favor. Opposed: None.

Special meeting regarding vacating West First Street is set for August 31, 2026 at 7pm. Mayor Merchan confirmed that the \$600 fee is non-refundable and does not guarantee that it will be vacated. The fee is used to set the meeting and pays for the research that might be needed.

Mayor Merchan was made aware that a text was sent during the selection of council member Gabby Bruns. After confirming the information, it was an open meeting violation of Iowa Code section 21.3 and 21.8, and is required to be disclosed. During the meeting, Jones participated by phone, and Section 21.3 allows for that. However, it does not allow text messages to be exchanged during an open meeting between council members, as it is a public meeting and communication must be open and available. Hall sent Jones a text "Can u make a motion for Gabby" I'm not saying you have to." "Thank you" with Jones responding "No Problem!". Mayor Merchan asked Jones if he would have voted for Bruns prior to receiving the text. Jones stated he had already decided to vote for Bruns before the text. Bruns wanted to know what action takes place with the violation. Mayor Merchan stated that it would be determined at a future meeting when Attorney Shea is present, and that this meeting was to disclose the violation to the public. Hall commented unless she just quits and makes it easy, and then council can get a new council member. Mayor Merchan stressed to Hall that if she made the choice to quit that it would be her personal decision. That the council can not and is not telling Hall to quit, that council can not just unelect someone, and if Hall chose to leave council it would be solely her decision.

Mayor Merchan stated that the council needed to determine whether or not Bruns' election was valid or not due to the violation. If it is determined that her election was not valid, then Council would need to speak with Attorney Shea on what impact that would have on anything Brun had voted since election.

Jones stated that he had already decided to vote for Bruns. Hall stated she would not have changed her vote/nomination. With Jones confirming his vote, even with Hall standing by her vote, the majority vote would go to Bruns. Vislisel made a motion for Bruns' appointment to stand. MSB Jones. Approved: all in favor. Opposed: None.

Vislisel stated that Affordable Heating and Cooling would be installing the new shop heater August 13th.

Penny wondered if we can make a motion to not have phones during the meeting. Mayor Merchan stated that it could be something discussed during the meeting when determining consequences of the open meeting violation.

Jones made a motion to adjourn. MSB Hall. Approved: all in favor. Opposed: None. The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Kirsten Goslin
City Clerk

Laura Merchan
Mayor