

September 2, 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 Vislisl.

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

Public comment on agenda items: None.

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

- Sheriff's Report: Not received prior to meeting
- Prior Meeting Minutes from 8/5/2026 and 8/13/2026
- August bills (details below consent agenda items).
 - Unpaid Bills.....\$6538.72
 - Payroll.....\$4573.55
 - Payroll Claims.....\$606.04
 - Total.....\$11718.31
- Treasurer's Report for month ended .
 - Total Cash.....\$956,267.43
 - Total Investments.....\$314,810.67
 - Total Receivables.....\$320.45
 - Total Assets.....\$1,271,984.09
 - Total Liabilities.....\$2,224.38
 - Total Equity.....\$1,269,579.71 (details below)
 - Total Liabilities & Equity.....\$1,271,984.09
- Update on Nuisance Properties: Still on hold.

August Bills:

<u>Payee - Unpaid Bills</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Affordable Heating & Cooling	Heater for Shop	\$3,115.96
Alliant Energy/IPL	High Point Electricity	\$21.93
Alliant Energy/IPL	City Well Electricity	\$150.21
Alliant Energy/IPL	City Hall Electricity	\$61.72
Alliant Energy/IPL	City Park Electricity	\$21.93
Alliant Energy/IPL	Street Lights Electricity	\$506.24
Casey Business MasterCard	Casey's CC Service Charge	\$1.49
EMC Insurance	Legal Defense Deductable	\$1000.00
League of Cities	Annual Membership	\$300.00
Jared Vogeler	Water Operations	\$400.00
Lisa Berry	Reimb. 2 rolls of stamps	\$164.00
Microbac	Monthly Water Testing	\$19.50
SolutionWorks	Cloud Server and Remote Backup	\$200.00
Stephanie Vislisl	Basketball Nets X4	\$25.51

<u>Payee - Unpaid Bills</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Verizon Wireless	City Hall Phone and Internet	\$92.48
VISA (Kuehl)	Intuit Payroll	-\$97.45
VISA (Morahan)	Monthly Payroll Services	\$67.41
VISA (Public Works)	Credit Card Expenses	\$487.79
	Total Unpaid Bills	\$6538.72

<u>Payroll</u>		<u>Amount</u>
Lisa Berry		\$323.30
Benjamin Boelter		\$250.00
Gabby Bruns		\$281.13
Kirsten Goslin		\$470.89
Louise Hall		\$300.00
Craig Jones		\$300.00
Kevin Lurth		\$954.67
Laura Merchan		\$700.00
James Santee II		\$158.14
Danny Ties		\$351.41
Anthony Vislisel		\$134.01
Stephanie Vislisel		\$350.00
	Total Payroll	\$4,573.55

<u>Payee - Payroll Claims</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
IPERS	Retirement benefits	\$606.04
	Total Payroll Claims	\$606.04

Public Comment: Tamara had questions on the legal deductible, what it was for and if there will be more charges to the city. Mayor Merchan advised that there are allegations made by a council member that when they were investigated by an outside investigator they were found to be without basis or completely unfounded. She then filed a claim against the City of Bertram with the Civil Rights Commission, which made our insurance company become involved and they are providing the defense. The City of Bertram had to pay the deductible for legal defense and will incur expenses from our City Attorney as well. The only current council member involved is the filing party. These allegations took place prior to current council.

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

Vacating West 1st St. Hall will be no vote on this matter due to conflict of interest. Leo with Schnoor-Bonifazi was present and confirmed the width of the street is 80ft. Jones stated that after hearing from the public previously, he believes the value for the city to hang onto that parcel is greater strategically as far as future use for utilities such as future water expansion and later down the road

maybe even sewer because current residential lots are small and they are going to run out of space for septic systems. Jones made a motion to deny the vacation request. Boelter wondered for current residents, if City decides not to vacate, what is the best path that they are covered as far as their LP tanks and septic tanks that are currently in the ROW or "street". Attorney Shea indicated that there are several easements, and that to grant further easements will not require a public hearing because it is not selling city property. Hall questioned the ROW policy and who is maintaining it. That previous council sent letters to residents that they can not have things in the ROW, and currently there is a clothes line and LP Tank in the ROW. Mayor Merchan stated that unless an official complaint is filed or there is a hazard, that usage of the ROW by residents has been allowed. That the ROW policy is a separate issue and can be addressed at a later time. MSB Bruns to deny vacating. Approved: all in favor. Opposed: None. No Vote: Hall.

Attorney Shea was not at the council meeting where the open meeting violation was disclosed. When there is an open meeting violation there are two different remedies. One is to go through the court, which would incur the city expenses. The second is through the Iowa Public Information Board, they do an investigation and determine the consequences. There is no fee associated with the Iowa Public Information Board. Attorney Shea attempted to reach them to get further information on open meeting violations but was unable to prior to the meeting. Attorney Shea he could contact the advisory board with the council approval and report back to council what they recommend and council can choose how to proceed. Hall wanted Attorney Shea to also inquire if it is illegal to have a side conversation by text message and then tell council that they had just done that or do they need to tell council before they send a text. Attorney Shea confirmed he would ask about that as well. Boelter made a motion for Attorney Shea to contact the advisory board for recommendations for the city. Hall wanted to confirm again that Attorney Shea would ask the question she had. Mayor Merchan indicated that she believes the question was related to her sending a text to Ryan with Fahr Graham during the special meeting to get confirmation on the width of the road. She had stated during the meeting that she had sent him a text for confirmation but she wasn't impeding anyone's vote. Hall stated "nor was I". Mayor Merchan reminded that Hall had voted for Bill, but had told someone else to vote for Gabby. Hall stated she did not tell anyone to vote for Gabby, that she did not say you have to vote for Gabby. Mayor Merchan read previous text message between Hall and Jones "Can you make a motion for Gabby." Boelter again made his motion for Attorney Shea to contact the advisory board. MSB Vislisl. Approved: all in favor. Opposed: None. No Vote: Hall. Hall stated she was just trying to keep Mayor Merchans name out of it. Mayor Merchan stated she believes in being transparent. That during the meeting it was unclear the width of the road and she was working to get the confirmation, she was not committing voter fraud. Hall stated she was not doing it intentionally.

Vislisl had comments on the park. The drinking fountain was vandalized and public works was able to move it and put it in storage. The tennis court has a lot of cracks and needs to be resurfaced. Vislisl and Bruns are applying for a grant that is for \$15,000 to help cover the cost. Vislisl is working on getting quotes for resurfacing.

Attorney Shea stated that Planning and Zoning received a rezoning request and the meeting will be September 15th. Ella has submitted her resignation and they will be working to add another person, currently they have enough members for a quorum.

Boelter is still working with GoDaddy on transferring ownership of municipal email domain to the City of Bertram, however the documents that they are requesting are ones current council doesn't have. Another option would be to start fresh and get all new emails.

Jim wanted council to know that under the bridge there is a huge pile of logs that are against the support. Mayor Merchan will look into who to contact to remove them.

Boelter stated the new plow truck should be done by end of October beginning of November.

Tamra had questions on the ARPA Fund. Vislisel stated that it is gone. Tamra indicated that it still shows as available on our reports. Vislisel indicated that it had been used but it has to stay on the report this year but will not be on the report next year. Boelter acknowledged that the current reports show it as available and that the previous council had spent it, we just need to acquire the documents showing what it was spent on to be able to transfer it from one fund to another.

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

Kirsten Goslin
City Clerk

Laura Merchan
Mayor