City of Bedford

City Council Special Meeting

January 2, 2025

12:00 P.M.

*Minutes*

***Prayer****: Dan Bortner*

***Pledge of Allegiance:*** *Brad Bough*

***Call to Order:*** *Mayor Sam Craig*

The Common Council of the City of Bedford, Indianamet for a Special City Council Meeting on January 2, 2025, at 12:00 P M at Stonegate Arts & Education Center. Mayor Craig presided and called the meeting to order.

***Members in attendance*:**

* Judy Carlisle
* Ryan Griffith by Zoom
* Kathy Blackburn
* Brad Bough
* Larry Hardman
* Heath Hawkins
* Dan Bortner

***Members absent*:**

* None

**Old Business**

1. **Tabled- To consider Ordinance 1-2025 Amending 2025 Salary Ordinance 24-2024 Approving Salaries for Police and Fire-Mayor Sam Craig, Clerk Treasurer Billie Tumey**

* Mayor Craig brought the agenda topic to the council for any discussion.
* Dan Bortner asked if there were any additional comments from Chief Moore or Chief Pinnick, both stated that they would answer any questions anyone had.
* Brad Bough asked Chief Moore if he had another officer resign? Chief Moore responded that this morning he had an officer give him his resignation, which he was not expecting. He did have a heads up on Saturday that it might be coming. The officer has decided to attend nursing school. Brad Bough stated that this brings to the total to 14 that have resigned in the past year. With another one in the process of going to the Bloomington Department, which will make it 15 total.
* Judy Carlisle spoke, with us having the time to think about the issue over the holidays, she jotted down some things. We as a council need to ask ourselves what are we trying to accomplish today. Our goal is to develop competitive structures that match market rates. We want to attract and retain top talent while working with a limited budget. We have a very difficult decision to make. It is basically a no-win situation for the council. Replacing an employee costs one and half to two and a half times the regular salaries. When experienced employees leave, it disrupts department operations, it creates a backlog of tasks, and they take important knowledge with them when they leave. Police and fire hours, duties and risks are much different between the departments. At this point we are basically a training department for other cities. Other cities save money by hiring our employees we have trained so they can afford to pay more. We need to ask ourselves, where is our turnover greatest, and where are our vacancies. Which department has the biggest discrepancies between what Bedford pays and what agencies around us pay. The answer to this question is the police department and that is where our scarce resources should be focused. Both departments are important, we need both of them. We are blessed with great guys on both departments. Our payrates for fire are competitive but not for the police. That is why we have these vacancies, and we have another one today. Right now, unless I am wrong, there are no fire vacancies. Trying to pay different departments like the police and fire the same is causing problems instead of solving problems is an ongoing problem. It is not that we are trying to make one department over another department, we have limited funds and need to get this situation corrected.
* Larry Hardman stated that both the chiefs, there are other ways to keep jobs too. Come back with some incentives to us. If today doesn’t go the way for your department, whether its gym at the police department or increased clothing allowance, something like that. Those incentives as well will make you want to stay rather than going someplace else. Those are some things that I would like to see come to the council, it would be up to us to figure out how to fund it. I am talking about all of the police and fire, there are some incentives in our programs we could do, and it is not always about the wages anymore.
* Dan Bortner added, “We are acting like we are at a funeral here folks. Both departments are going to get a 7 % increase plus at least $6,000, so we are making progress. Is it perfect, no. The comment that they can afford to pay more in Bloomington it’s the tax base. They have a higher tax base; we are never going to catch that. We can’t try to catch that. What we can do is the best that we can do. To Councilman Boughs point, yes
* we have lost 15 people, but I just heard Chief Moore state one left to go to nursing school, that is not a financial decision unless it’s a career decision based upon finances. It doesn’t sound like he is leaving the police department for more money, leaving for education. Isn’t that correct? Chief Moore stated partly. Dan continued, It is a tough decision, even at the lowest rate, the 7% increase and the $6,000 on top of that, and even the bonus that we give. Something else has to be cut, it is not like we are producing the money. Something is going to happen here and something else in the city budget is going to pay for that. You guys and girls have chosen your vocation, and everyone admires you for that. I can’t imagine doing your job by any stretch of my imagination. Especially what you are getting paid to do it. We are trying to make inroads happen, doing what we can, we understand it’s a problem, we can’t fix it in one budget session its going to be ongoing. But we raise ours, they are going to raise theirs again. I just don’t think we can catchup, all we can do is try to keep chipping away at the stone.
* Kathy Blackburn stated that this personally is killing me. You are all amazing and there are people on both departments that I dearly love. And I hate it, but I signed up for this and I have to think with my head and not my heart. It’s a tough place to be in. You are all winners, but we have a job we have to do unfortunately and probably someone isn’t going to be happy about this no matter which way it goes. But we are so proud of you all and we are lucky to have you all.
* Heath Hawkins stating we are making inroads here. You have two of the hardest jobs in the city and deserve to be compensated for that financially the best way we can. I liked what Larry had to say about incentives for both branches here, to try to improve the workplace environment. A few thousand dollars here and there makes a big difference, but also your day-to-day enjoyment. Anything we can do as a council; I would like both chiefs and officers to let us know what can we do on top of salary wise. I feel like these are things that we can chip away at.
* Mayor Craig asks Ryan Griffith if he had anything to add. He stated no, everyone has done a good job.
* Mayor Craig commented that as the council has said here, we appreciate everything you all do, without a doubt. And the council, we have worked very hard for the last three or four years to increase your salaries the best we can. We even took a little step above that, trying to work with you when there was an issue with captains and battalion chiefs or captains and majors as far as pay offsets. We worked really hard to make that spread to where everyone felt like it needed to be. I hope that you do understand that everybody here appreciates what you do. As the council has stated, I wish there was enough money around to make everybody happy, but unfortunately public safety and our other employees are not necessarily always happy either with the job they have to do. If there is no more discussion, I would entertain a motion.
* Dan Bortner made the motion, (same one I did last time) to approve $6,000/$6,000 split across the board. The first passage of Ordinance 1-2025,
* Larry Hardman seconded the motion,
* Votes for Dan Bortner, Larry Hardman, Ryan Griffith and Heath Hawkins
* Votes against Judy Carlisle, Brad Bough and Kathy Blackburn
* ***Four votes in favor of the motion, three votes opposed, first passage passed.***
* Brad Bough made the motion to approve of the second passage of Ordinance 1-2025,
* Dan Bortner seconded the motion,
* ***All votes in favor of the motion, no one opposed, second passage passed.***
* Mayor Craig stated that if the ordinance is passed tonight, the clerk/ treasurer has confirmed that it will take effect for the first payroll of the year. Is there anyone that would like to make the motion to suspend the rules for final passage tonight.
* Brad Bough made the motion to suspend the rules and vote on the final passage of Ordinance 1-2025,
* Heath Hawkins seconded the motion,
* ***All votes in favor of the motion to suspend rules, no one opposed, motion passed.***
* Heath Hawkins made the motion to approve the Third and Final passage of Ordinance 1-2025,
* Larry Hardman seconded the motion,
* ***The Third and Final Passage of Ordinance 1- 2025, All votes in favor of motion, No one opposed, passed.***

**2. Discussion**

* Brad Bough would like to pass a tax on kiosks in the community that are taking place of workers and use the funds for public safety. This could make it possible to retain our police and fire.

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**3. Adjourn**

* Judy Carlisle made the motion adjourn.
* Kathy Blackburn seconded the motion,
* ***All votes in favor of the motion, No one opposed, meeting adjourned.***

**Bedford City Council 2025**

* Judy Carlisle, President \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Kathy Blackburn \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Ryan Griffith \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Heath Hawkins **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* Dan Bortner  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* Larry Hardman **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* Brad Bough  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Attest: Billie Tumey

Clerk-Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_