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CITY OF BRANSON

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NEWS RELEASE

December 13, 2011

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Action taken by Branson Board of Aldermen at December 13, 2011 meeting

CONSENT AGENDA - SECOND READING AND FINAL PASSAGE BILLS

Agreement with Tri-States Utility Water System to also collect sewer bills from Branson customers

Board continued an agreement with Tri-States Utilities to provide sewer billing services for the city of Branson. City sewer customers who are not connected to the city's water system but connected to Tri-States, and who don't pay their sewer bills, are now subject to termination of water service. Tri-States is charging the city \$4,400 monthly for this service. The agreement has resulted in city revenue increasing \$88,000 over one year from sewer customers on Tri-States water.

Board approves final year contract with Kansas City auditors

In 2007, Aldermen entered into a five year contract for auditing services with Cochran Head Vick & Co of Kansas City. The agreement was for one year with an option for an additional four years. The Board approved year five, which is the final year. Cost to the city in 2012 will be \$38,266 to audit the city plus \$135 an hour with a maximum of \$5,400 - \$6,750 for the convention center audit.

Employee health and wellness incentive approved

Aldermen approved a health and wellness incentive program for employees that will require smokers and those who don't participate in a wellness program in 2012 to pay 15% of their health insurance starting in 2013. Currently, the city pays 100% of all city employees' health insurance premiums. Employees will also be able to opt out of the city's health plan if they show proof of other coverage, and they'll receive \$100 monthly for opting out.

Money for Christmas lights approved

Aldermen approved taking \$23,000 from the Tourism Tax Contingency Fund to pay for the installation, maintenance and removal of the Christmas star lighting displays along Highway 76 for 2011. This at the request of the Branson Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB.

2012 Budget gets first approval

The city's 2012 budget totaling \$67 million has been balanced with a 28.5% reserve fund and has included some major capital improvements. They include \$986,000 to rehabilitate the

Veterans Boulevard Bridge, \$500,000 for pedestrian improvements and trails, \$739,000 for water meter replacement and \$200,000 for traffic signal improvements. Adding the capital improvements into the 2012 budget will decrease the reserve fund from 30% to 28.5%.

Stillwood Subdivision annexed

Aldermen approved the annexation of 15 properties in the Stillwood Subdivision, which is located along the north side of Bird Road and south of the Stone Valley subdivision in Branson Hills. These properties are currently located in the county, but are part of a larger island within the city's limits that have not had the opportunity to annex because they were never contiguous until now.

Board agrees to another payment for Branson Airport

Approved another payment to the Branson Airport, this time from the city's tourism tax reserve fund. The airport submitted a bill of almost \$196,000 covering the period January 1 to June 30 of this year. Under a 2006 contract, the city would pay \$8.24 for each visitor brought to Branson. The city can use tourism tax funds because they will partially reimburse the airport for a \$250,000 TV campaign in Chicago when the airport began regular flights to the city. The \$196,000 will be paid to the airport's Transportation Development District (TDD) to pay the airport's bond debts, also per the contract.

Contract approved to begin inspection of Veterans Boulevard Bridge

Board approved an agreement with Horner and Shifrin Engineers in Springfield for an analysis and design contract for the Veterans Bridge over Roark Creek downtown. Earlier this year, MoDOT studied the bridge and determined it had some deterioration issues that needed to be addressed. The engineers will conduct a detailed analysis and design repairs to the bridge. Cost of this contract to the city is \$93,930. When this phase is complete, Aldermen will be presented options for the solution, and a final design contract will be needed. City Engineer David Miller said the solutions may range from \$986,000 to \$5 million in cost. Horner and Shifrin were the designers of the Taneycomo Bridge rehabilitation and are familiar with this type of work.

Board approves project to mitigate future flooding

Aldermen approved an agreement with Olsson Associates of Springfield to do the engineering design of the Rainbow Shoals drainage problem. Rainbow Shoals subdivision is on the south side of Fall Creek Road. City officials have identified flooding issues that impact homes as most critical, and a major problem occurs during heavy rains in the northern section of Rainbow Shoals. Cost to the city for the engineering design is \$27,500.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS (1st Readings and public hearing)

Board amends city code in regards to water and sewer rates outside city limits

This amendment allows the Board of Aldermen to make modifications to water and/or sewer rates for customers outside the city limits, if the modifications would be beneficial to the city. These modified rates could be used by the Board as an incentive for property owners to sign a pre-annexation agreement for future annexation when the owners are already contiguous to the city limits, but the city does not want to annex their property right away. The modified rate could never be more than the current 2½ times the outside city limit rate or less than current in-city rates.

Bill requiring peddlers to be fingerprinted

Approval given on first reading to a bill allowing the city to fingerprint and do criminal background checks on door-to-door peddlers and solicitors before they can be issued a city license. The same procedures can be performed when the city hires employees.

Bid approved for a portable campground office

Aldermen approved a bid of \$36,637 for purchasing a portable campground office in the city-owned Lakeside RV Park along Lake Taneycomo. Selection of a portable office was due to the consistent flooding of the RV Park, and this will allow the office to be moved during high water without sustaining damage, and then quickly be put back in place when the water recedes. The low bid came from Modular Innovations of Hawthorn Woods, Illinois.

Bill to amend code regarding outside displays at businesses

Approval given on first reading to a code amendment that prohibits businesses from displaying their merchandise next to streets and highways, especially along Highway 76. For stores with small parking lots, like strip center businesses, merchandise could be displayed no further than 10 feet from the front of their building. And for stores that have huge parking lots, like the big box stores, merchandise would have to be at least 50-feet back from the street. The big stores would also have to obtain a special use permit for their displays, according to the proposed amendment.

New development approved at Highway 65 and Main St approved

The Board approved a preliminary plan for the Branson Professional Park located north of West Main Street and east of U.S. Highway 65. This development includes a new street that will be an extension of the north off ramp of U.S. 65 at Main at the traffic signals. The new street continuing north of Main will be called Loyd Street and connect with an extension of West Atlantic.

Resolution approving marketing budget of Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB

The Chamber is budgeting \$8,396,136 in revenue for 2012, of which \$1,968,715 will come from the city of Branson's 25% portion of the tourism tax. The Chamber plans to spend 70% of its revenues on media marketing with 76% of that going for television ads, 12.8% on the Web and 4% on print and outdoor.

This year, Branson's \$3.3 million advertisement investment generated nearly \$291 million in incremental visitor spending, equating to a return on investment of \$88, which is up from \$54 in 2010.

(Audio of the entire Board of Aldermen meeting can be accessed by going to www.bransonmo.gov and clicking on the "Agenda & Minutes" link in the upper left hand corner of the website.)