



BLACKDUCK CITY COUNCIL EMERGENCY MEETING  
FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2019 @ 6PM  
EMERGENCY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

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**CALL TO ORDER:** The Blackduck City Council met in an Emergency Meeting on March 22, 2019 @ 6:00pm at City Hall. Meeting was called to order by Mayor Rudy Patch and the pledge of allegiance was recited,

**ROLL CALL:**

**Councilor Present:** Mayor Patch, Councilor Moore, Sellon, and Gulette

**Councilors Absent:** Councilor Kolb

**Staff Present:** City Administrator Christina Regas, and Public Works Supervisor Bob Klug Jr.

**Others Present:** Lewis Crombie from the office of Pete Stauber

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA** - Moved by Councilor Moore and seconded by Councilor Sellon to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC WORKS SUPERVISOR RESIGNATION** - Moved by Mayor Patch and seconded by Councilor Moore to accept the resignation of Public Works Supervisor Bob Klug Jr. Discussion continue as follows:

Councilor Gulette asked Klug if the City Council could change his mind and not resign. Mayor Patch asked Klug if resigning his position as Public Works Supervisor is his preferred decision or if Klug would like to request a leave of absence. Klug informed the City Council that due to a conflict of interest he could not request a leave of absence. Klug stated that National Rural Water would not allow him to work for the the organization and be on a LOA. Gulette acknowledged and stated that Klug could not show 'favorites. Klug further stated he would not be able to enter into a contractual agreement with the City of Blackduck to assist with water and wastewater license services as it too is a conflict of interest. Mayor Patch asked if Klug was completed set on accepting the new offered position with MNRW noting if the City would be able to match the wage being offered to Klug. Regas noted the wage being offered to Klug would be too high for Blackduck to meet. Regas further stated that the opportunity offered to Klug is an opportunity he "would be a fool not to accept". Regas stated if she were in his position, she too would accept the offer. Regas continued stating to the City Council that the offer reflects a lot on Klug and his position and knowledge he has gained working for Blackduck and noted it a compliment for Klug to be offered the position. Councilor Gulette asked if there are any conflicts with the union with releasing Klug of his position. Regas stated there are no conflicts with the Union as Klug is still considered an 'at-will' employee. Councilor Moore asked if the union would be 'dissolved' noting that only 2 members would be in it after Klug's departure. Mayor Patch stated no that in this type of union the



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number of employees does not dictate it. Mayor Patch asked Klug if he could still assist the City after the position is filled with a suitable replacement in training. Klug stated he was allowed to with his position with MNRW but he would not be able to come all the time as he will be assisting other cities training other apprentices and the position does require him to travel to other parts of Minnesota. Mayor Patch asked if there were any further questions. Klug asked if the City Council is offering something to keep him employed with the City of Blackduck. Regas stated on record that when she took the position as Administrator, her success was due to the collaboration and close working relationship with Klug. Regas stated she is sad to see Klug go. Klug stated so much has changed in his position in a short amount of time, and the responsibility of a water and wastewater operator are much different noting when he first started no reporting was done on a computer. Mayor Patch asked Klug again if there is a 'number' Klug could request that would assist in keeping Klug working for Blackduck. Klug did not know but could come up with a number. Mayor Patch stated he understands Blackduck could not meet the state offer. Klug stated he would like to be at \$33.50 to get close to what MNRW is offering further noting that isn't all they are offering. Regas asked Klug what he would like to do about allowing the City to consider a wage increase. Klug stated he is always open to negotiations noting he would do either, he would stay with Blackduck or he would take the position with MNRW but Klug would not be able to give the Council an answer at this time. Regas recommended the Council request a vote on the motion and if it 'dies' then motion to not accept the resignation but to attempt to negotiate the wage Klug would accept so that he remains with Blackduck. Councilor Moore asked if the Council agreed to negotiate Klug's wage would the personnel committee need to meet first. Regas stated it would be encouraged. Mayor Patch asked the Council if there are any further questions. Hearing no more questions or discussion on the motion Mayor Patch called for a vote on the motion. By a vote of 3 to 1; Councilors Gullette, Moore, and Sellon for and Mayor Patch against. Motion carries. Councilor Gullette wished Klug good luck; and Councilor Sellon noted he did not believe any amount of wages offered could exceed the amount of experience Klug would receive from the new position being offered to him. Councilor Moore agreed noting that new employees filling the position would find it interesting to note that from the experienced gained by working with the City of Blackduck an employee could move on to a better opportunity.

**SEVERANCE LIABILITY TO CITY** - Regas referred Council to the supplied liability to the City to pay vested sick time and unused vacation and compensatory time. Nothing further.

**APPROVAL TO ADVERTISE FOR POSITIONS** - Regas requested approval to post the Public Works Supervisor Position and to hire a second part-time maintenance employee. Moved by Mayor Patch and seconded by Councilor Sellon to post the position of public works supervisor and to post for a second part-time summer maintenance worker.



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Regas noted she will post the position on MN Rural Water website, League of MN Cities, Indeed, and the designated publication for the City of Blackduck. Klug stated part of his new position is setting up an apprenticeship program for the state of Minnesota stating that 50% of the current workforce in water and wastewater will be retiring in the next 5 years. Councilor Gulette stated if you consider the amount of failing infrastructure throughout the state of Minnesota and the position an operator has to be put in to do their job. Klug stated those operators are responsible so that everyone has safe drinking water and that is the most important utility there is, it is the only utility people consume. Klug stated that is a large liability for making their populations of their cities have safe drinking water. Klug also stated the wages are just now starting to ‘catch up’ to the responsibility that comes with the position. Councilor Moore asked with the position being union does the City need to hold the position for 45 days in case Klug wants to return. Regas noted that there was nothing noted in the union agreement requiring the City to hold the position. Klug stated his union rep never stated the position needed to remain open and that it is up to the City what it wants to do. Mayor Patch if the City needs to anything further in Klug’s absence for water and wastewater reporting. Klug stated no since Burmeister is already licensed. Mayor Patch asked the utility readings could be completed by another employee or the deputy clerk. Klug stated yes. Councilor Gulette asked if Burmeister will step into Klug’s position. Patch stated if he wanted to, he could apply. Hearing no further discussion on the motion Mayor Patch called for a vote on the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**ADJOURN** - Moved by Councilor Moore and seconded by Councilor Gulette to adjourn the meeting at 6:29pm. Motion carried unanimously.

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Christina Regas, City Administrator

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Rudy Patch, Mayor