

City of Auburn
Monday, August 3, 2020
Minutes

Mayor Berola called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present in Council Chambers: Tom Berola, Julie Barnhill, Chris Warwick, , Jason Garrett, Larry Hemmerle, Rod Johnson, Bill Karhliker, Joe Powell, Ben Royer, Tracy Sheppard and Attorney Greg Moredock.

Absent: Lori Basiewicz

Department Heads in Council Chambers: Chief Dave Campbell, Superintendent Mike McCarthy, Assistant Superintendent TJ Henson

Department Heads Absent: None

Present via ZOOM Teleconferencing: City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler

I. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Berola addressed the Council and the visitors with a heavy heart and read the retirement letter he received from Superintendent Mike McCarthy. McCarthy retirement letter reads:

“Please accept this letter as my official notification of retirement and my last official day of work at the City of Auburn will be September 4, 2020. As I close this chapter of my life, I am excited about my future as a retiree. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at the City of Auburn. I have truly enjoyed working for Auburn for approximately 28 ½ years and I will definitely miss my City of Auburn family. Because that is what you have become after working together, family. I will miss everyone and wish everyone the best. I have raised to beautiful daughters in the City of Auburn and now have my grandchildren growing up here as well. I have great memories of my work and my community. Thank you all for your friendship.”

Motion by Johnson second by Karhliker to accept the retirement of Mike McCarthy, Superintendent, at the end of business on Friday, September 4, 2020. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

B. Covid-19 Procedures for City Office

Mayor Berola informed the Council that City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler is seeking guidance on procedures for the City Office with Covid-19 cases in Illinois still rising. Berola indicated that as long as we are continuing to operate in Phase IV we will continue to be considered essential workers. Alderman Royer also agreed that the employees are deemed essential workers. Attorney Moredock indicated that we just need to continue to follow the CDC guidelines that are set out for us. Moredock also indicated that he will prepare a Covid-19 policy. This policy will hopefully clear up some of the confusion as to if being tested are you off for a length of time in quarantine.

Ponsler also indicated that the City of Auburn could receive up to 196,000 through the Local Cure program funds that will provide reimbursement for Covid related expenses incurred by the city not previously budgeted for. Additional information will be provided to the council as it becomes available.

II. Visitors/Public Comments

Mayor Berola took the time to applaud and thank the City garage employees for the storm damage clean-up process. Alderman Royer reiterated the thanks and a job well done. City crew and police department had all roads open by 7 p.m. that evening. Phenomenal job by all! Alderman Powell shared that Mike McCarthy and John Edie (ESDA Coordinator), per the County, were the only community coordinators to do it so well. Impressive job was again reiterated.

III. Zoning

Alderwoman Sheppard informed the Council that the next Zoning meeting will be held on August 12, 2020.

IV. City Clerk's Report – Barnhill

A. Amendment to July 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes

City Clerk Julie Barnhill presented the July 20, 2020 meeting minutes for the Council's review and approval.

Motion by Sheppard second by Johnson to approve the July 20, 2020 meeting minutes. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

B. August 17, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. – Biannual Review of Closed Session Minutes
City Clerk Barnhill informed the Council that the Biannual Review of Closed Session Minutes will take place prior to the next Council meeting, August 17, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

V. City Treasurer’s Report – Warwick

A. Bills List July 21, 2020 to August 3, 2020

City Clerk Julie Barnhill presented the Bills List for July 21, 2020 to August 3, 2020 in the absence of City Treasurer Warwick.

Motion by Johnson second by Sheppard to approve the Bills List for July 21, 2020 to August 3, 2020. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard
NAYES: None
ABSENT: Basiewicz

VI. Attorney – Moredock

A. Second Reading, Ordinance 1484-20, Ordinance Approving Variance at 625

W. Jefferson

Attorney Moredock shared with the Council for their review and approval the second reading of Ordinance 1484-20, Ordinance Approving Variance at 625 W. Jefferson.

Motion by Garrett second by Johnson to approve Ordinance 1484-20, Ordinance Approving Variance at 625 W. Jefferson. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard
NAYES: None
ABSENT: Basiewicz

B. Notice of Award to MB Construction

Attorney Moredock informed the Council that MB Construction cannot meet the 90% Illinois Labor Works Act (30 ILCS 570) at this time. MB Construction believes Illinois laborers cannot install this type of water system. With that said and the fact that Benton’s made the Notice of Intent to Award prior to the Public Works Act taking effect, approval of the notice of award is needed.

Motion by Johnson second by Hemmerle to approve the Notice of Award to MB Construction. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

C. Discussion on Reimbursement for Personal Devices used at Council Meeting

Attorney Moredock indicated that Alderman Johnson will discuss under the Administration Committee.

D. Discussion on Credit Card by Phone Policy

After reviewing the policy, Attorney Moredock informed the Council that he is fine with credit cards being taken over the phone as long as it is the account holders credit card. If they want to pay their account with someone else's credit card, a verification process will need to be in place.

VII. Department Heads

A. Police Department – Campbell

Chief Campbell also provided compliments to Mike McCarthy and his crew.

Campbell shared with the Council that all the software is in, installed and working great.

B. Public Works – McCarthy

Superintendent Mike McCarthy shared information with the Council on the need to remove trees at 400 and 402 N. Grand Avenue. These trees are in very bad shape and need to come down. Bids have been received and he would like to recommend to the Council to go with the lowest bid of \$600 from Tim Hemberger. McCarthy would like to see it removed in December, 2020 due to the severity of the poison ivy growth in the tree..

Motion by Royer second by Johnson to approve the bid of \$600 to remove trees at 400 and 402 N. Grand Avenue in December, 2020. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

Other tree issues were shared by Council members, 524 W. Madison and 903 W. Adams.

McCarthy also reminded Council members to let their constituents know to move limbs to the edge of their properties so the City can finish up with the clean up and move on to City projects.

Alderman Garrett asked about the hangers (tree limbs stuck up in trees) on the square. Alderman Royer indicated that he could bring his truck in to remove those if the City pointed out and block off that area for him to do that.

McCarthy also informed the Council that some emergency tree trimming and electrical needs happened due to the storm. Bills from Shane Norris and Lewis Electric will be coming in for this reason.

C. City Office – Ponsler

City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler informed the Council that the disconnect for all past due accounts from Covid is approaching (August 10). They have 4 accounts that are 4 months past due, 3 past due for 3 months, 2 past due for 2 months, and 9 non-paying accounts.

On or before August 10, all accounts must be paid in full and current with the city office to avoid disconnect.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Administration – Johnson

Electronic Devices for Council members

Alderman Johnson had an Administration Committee meeting on August 3, 2020 to discuss electronic devices for council members. After considering various ways to do this, Alderman Johnson presented to the Council the review and approval of purchasing 11 City owned devices for elected officials.

Motion by Johnson second by Garrett to approve the purchasing of 11 City owned devices (devices to be determined) for elected officials. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

Recording Equipment for City Clerk

Alderman Johnson informed the Council that City Clerk Julie Barnhill will research and provide some information regarding what software is available.

B. Public Works – Karhliker

Alderman Karhliker – No report.

C. Public Utilities – Johnson

Alderman Johnson shared with the Council that the City of Auburn received a grant in the amount of \$52,404.61 from the State of Illinois and is to used like MFT funds, infrastructure and improvements. All Villages and townships received this grant.

FY 21 Budget Amendment to Reflect IEPA Loan Agreement/Reimbursement of Funds and payment of invoices.

City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler has asked that we move this item to the August 17, 2020 council meeting so that a revised appropriations ordinance could be presented in conjunction with all necessary budget amendments.

IEPA Fund Request #1

Alderman Johnson shared with the Council for their review and approval for the reimbursement of \$206,551.04 for design and construction engineering and legal fees associated with the IEPA – Illinois Water Revolving Loan. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

D. Health & Safety – Sheppard

Executive Session – Personnel (5 ILCS 120(c)(1))

Alderman Sheppard indicated that an Executive Session pertaining to Personnel 5 ILCS 120(c)(1) is needed at the end of the meeting.

E. Health & Housing – Sheppard

Alderman Sheppard indicated she is currently working with the property owner at 111 W. Jefferson on cleaning up property.

Sheppard indicated that she has sent numerous letters to 324 W. Maple for weeds and grass. Sheppard is recommending to the Council to declare a nuisance for weeds/grass if not cleaned up by August 7, 2020 and begin fining the property owners \$50 per day beginning that day.

Motion by Sheppard second by Royer to declare 324 W. Maple a nuisance for weeds/grass if not cleaned up by August 7, 2020. Fines of \$50 per day will begin on that day if not cleaned up. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

F. Parks – Hemmerle

Alderman Hemmerle informed the Council that Leonard Field sustained damage due to the recent storms.

Hemmerle also indicated that they would be addressing the results of the survey that was returned by the University of Illinois.

G. Economic Development Committee – Basiewicz

Alderwoman Basiewicz was absent so no report.

IX. Adjournment

Motion by Garrett second by Royer to adjourn to executive session to discuss Personnel 5 ILCS 120(c)(1) at 8:09 p.m. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

Motion by Sheppard second by Royer to adjourn from executive session to discuss Personnel 5 ILCS 120(c)(1) at 8:34 p.m. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

Motion by Sheppard second by Royer to come back in to meeting at 8:35 p.m. (7-0-1-0)

AYES: Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer and Sheppard

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

Motion by Johnson second by Royer to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. Passed by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Barnhill

City Clerk