

City of Auburn
Monday, May 18, 2020
Zoom VideoConference Meeting Minutes

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

Clerk Barnhill took roll call. Due to 20-7 Executive Order issued by the Governor of Illinois waves the “in person” to participating via remote because of the COVID19 Pandemic.

Present in Council Chambers: Tom Berola, Julie Barnhill and Chris Warwick

Present via ZOOM Teleconferencing: Lori Basiewicz, Jason Garrett, Larry Hemmerle, Rod Johnson, Bill Karhliker, Joe Powell, Ben Royer and Tracy Sheppard.

Absent: None

Department Heads Present via ZOOM Teleconferencing: Attorney Greg Moredock, Chief Dave Campbell, Superintendent Mike McCarthy and City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler.

Department Heads Absent: None

I. Mayor’s Comments

Mayor Berola welcomed everyone to the zoom videoconference.

II. Visitors/Public Comments

III. Zoning

A. Zoning Board Meeting May 13, 2020

Alderman Sheppard informed the Council that the Zoning Board meeting scheduled for May 13, 2020 was cancelled.

IV. City Clerk’s Report – Barnhill

A. May 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Clerk Barnhill presented the Council the May 4, 2020 meeting minutes for their review and approval.

Motion by Sheppard second by Basiewicz to approve the May 4, 2020 minutes. (7-1-0-0)

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

NAYES: Royer

ABSENT: None

B. Amend July 2, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Clerk Barnhill presented the Council with approved meeting minutes from July 2, 2018 that Alderman Garrett pointed out that needed to be corrected. Barnhill shared with the Council that the following needed to be corrected:

Mayor Berola informed the Council that he has received a resignation letter from Alderman Seth Williams. Mayor Berola thanked Alderman Williams for his years of service as Alderman of Ward #4. Berola presented Alderman Williams with a plaque as appreciation for his service. A motion was made by Johnson to approve the resignation of Ward 4 Alderman Seth Williams effectively July 3, 2018, second by Sheppard.

To the following:

Mayor Berola informed the Council that he has received a resignation letter from Alderman Seth Williams. Mayor Berola thanked Alderman Williams for his years of service as Alderman of Ward #2. Berola presented Alderman Williams with a plaque as appreciation for his service. A motion was made by Johnson to approve the resignation of Ward 2 Alderman Seth Williams effectively July 3, 2018, second by Sheppard.

Motion by Garrett second by Johnson to approve amending minutes from July 2, 2018. (7-1-0-0)

AYES: Basiewicz, Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker and Sheppard

NAYES: Royer

ABSENT: None

V. City Treasurer's Report – Warwick

A. Bills List May 5, 2020 to May 18, 2020

Warwick presented the Bill List May 5, 2020 to May 18, 2020 for the Council's review and approval. Johnson asked about payment being made to Agans and Office Manager Ponsler answered his question. Royer questioned about the cleaning services and was wondering if they had been here and that full service was received. Treasurer Warwick indicated that they had been in the office taking care of their responsibilities.

Motion by Johnson second Sheppard to approve the Bill's List from May 5, 2020 to May 18, 2020. (8-0-0-0)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

B. February, March, April 2020 CASH Reports

Treasurer Warwick presented the February, March and April 2020 Cash Report for the Council's review and approval. Warwick did ask Attorney Moredock for advice on whether we should have motions separately or if they can be all approved together. Moredock indicated that all together would be okay.

Motion by Sheppard and second by Basiewicz to approve the February, March and April, 2020 Cash Reports. (6-2-0-0)

AYES: Basiewicz, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell and Sheppard

NAYES: Garrett and Royer

ABSENT: None

Warwick also provided an update to the Council that the City of Auburn only has 77.2% of current residents that have completed the census. Warwick will be working on distributing items around town to help increase the awareness of the importance of completing census.

VI. Attorney – Moredock

A. First Reading: Resolution 84-20 A Resolution Authorizing A Non-Binding Referendum on Hens

Attorney Moredock shared with the Council the First Reading: Resolution 84-20 A Resolution Authorizing A Non-Binding Referendum on Hens for their review.

B. First Reading: Resolution 85-20, A Resolution Authorizing A Non-Binding Referendum on Operating Cannabis Businesses within the City

Attorney Moredock shared with the Council the First Reading: Resolution 85-20 A Resolution Authorizing A Non-Binding Referendum on Operating Cannabis Businesses within the City for their review.

C. First Reading: Resolution 86-20, A Resolution Authorizing A Non-Binding Referendum on the Sale of Recreational Cannabis within the City

Attorney Moredock shared with the Council the First Reading: Resolution 86-20 a Resolution Authorizing a Non-Binding Referendum on the Sale of Recreational Cannabis with the City for their review.

Moredock indicated that once these Resolutions are approved the next step will go to the County Clerk for certification.

D. SECOND READING: Ordinance 1477-19, Approving A Loan Agreement in the Principal Amount of \$5,500,000 with IEPA and providing for the issue of Waterworks Revenue Bonds in a Like Principal Amount of the City of Auburn for the Purpose of Defraying the Cost of Extending and Improving the Waterworks System.

Attorney Moredock presented the second reading of Ordinance 1477-19: Approving a Loan Agreement in the Principal Amount of \$5,500,000 with IEPA and providing for the issue of waterworks revenue bonds in a like principal amount of the City of Auburn for the purpose of defraying the cost of extending and improving the waterworks system. Alderman Johnson explained the way the loan would work and asked Jamie from Benton's to explain the process. This ordinance will authorize borrowing by issuing bonds up to \$5.5 million and covers Phase I and II with IEPA. This loan agreement is a requirement from IEPA. Alderman Garrett asked when the dollar amount will be known that will be charged to the residents of Auburn. According to Johnson, once construction starts, the 1st payment will be due six months from the start of construction. Alderman Garrett indicated that until he's satisfied that the City is getting the best interest rates from all monies held in savings, he would be not voting for any additional taxes or fees to the residents.

Motion by Johnson second by Royer to approve Ordinance 1477-19, Approving A Loan Agreement in the Principal Amount of \$5,500,000 with IEPA and providing for the issue of Waterworks Revenue Bonds in a Like Principal Amount of the City of Auburn for the Purpose of Defraying the Cost of Extending and Improving the Waterworks System.
(8-0-0-0)

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

E. Discussion on Potential Ordinance Requiring Registration of Vacant and Foreclosed Property

Attorney Moredock indicated to the Council that he is working on a potential ordinance requiring registration of vacant and foreclosed property. Moredock was thinking that maybe foreclosures and owner vacant or abandoned should be included. Treasurer Warwick and Attorney Moredock will work on including both foreclosures and owner vacant/abandoned in the ordinance and present it at the next meeting.

VII. Department Heads

A. Police Department – Campbell

Chief Campbell indicated that Troy Kissell should be taking his state test on Friday and graduate later.

B. Public Works – McCarthy

Superintendent Mike McCarthy provided an update on the following:

1) **Larry Hemmerle** – score boards at the baseball/soft fields

Electrical is complete and the I-beams and concrete are done.
2) **Lost Caboose** – dumping of yard waste (sticks and leaves only) is going very well so far.

3) **Budget** – McCarthy missed the Administration meeting and would like to still get the bids

for a dump truck and will have it available at the next meeting

4) Flooding & Sewer Backup

The rain gauge at the sewer plant indicated 6.4” of rain. 7.7.1 million gallons of water was taken in 6 hours. That was with only 3 storm pumps working at that time. Alderman Royer commended the City garage staff on the hard work that they do. Jamie Heaton indicated to the Council that it would cost over \$10 million to fix the infrastructure issues with the City of Auburn. Mayor Berola also indicated that hats off were necessary for the maintenance and garage guys for the time spent, weekend and after hours. Great Job!

Alderman Garrett shared that the City should have a public announcement reiterating where the sump pump discharge should be going into. Attorney Moredock shared with the council that the discharge of storm water needs to be on your own property and not onto neighbor’s property. Alderman Basiewicz reminded the Council that John Edie is continuing to contact sump pump users to provide them with information on where to discharge the storm water. Alderman Garrett asked if the City will not get involved in ordinance violation between neighbors. Garrett also encouraged citizens to mow away from street, clear leaves and not place in street. Alderman Garrett also encouraged citizens to clean their drains! It only takes a few minutes with a rake.

Alderman Sheppard asked if we ever heard from the IDOT regarding the Jefferson Street flooding issues. Mayor Berola indicated that he will contact them again.

C. City Office – Ponsler

City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler indicated that she is working on updating the City Webpage. Ponsler indicated that she received a quote from Royell for \$60 per hour and it should take around 8 hours to help with getting rid of old codes for editing of the new city web page. Alderman Basiewicz reminded City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler of updating City businesses on the web page.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Administration – Johnson

FY 21 Budget Review

Alderman Johnson reported that the Administration Committee reviewed the final FY20 tax revenue amounts received and the resulting General Revenue surplus of \$263,000. He then shared budget revenue number projections for FY21. As he had indicated in previous meetings, he initially thought there would be a 20-30% decrease in tax revenues for FY21. The state projections are indicating a 13% decrease in State Income Tax and a

14% decrease in Sales Tax. The state projection for Use Tax revenue is to remain equal to last year. With this being taken into consideration, these projected decreases with respect to tax revenues received last year essentially put us back to the projected revenue amounts in the FY20 budget. As a result, preliminary general revenue income numbers do not appear to be as dire as originally thought. The total decrease in revenue for General Revenue is estimated to be approximately \$39,000 less than the budgeted revenues forecasted for FY20. Alderman Johnson set up an Administration meeting on May 27, 6:30 p.m.

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

Alderman Johnson indicated that he is requesting an Executive Session regarding Personnel 5 ILCS 120(c)(1) at the end of the tonight’s public meeting.

B. Public Works – Karhliker

Alderman Karhliker shared with the Council his thoughts on purchasing another sewer pump. Karhliker feels that we need to do this since the process has taken so long. Alderman Karhliker also shared that he is waiting on the State of Illinois for MFT process.

C. Public Utilities – Johnson

Unpaid Utility Bill Repayment Options and Timeline

Alderman Johnson shared with the Council that Alderman Basiewicz graciously prepared three different method options for repayment of past utility bills due to Covid-19.

Method 1: The City to set \$ amount to be paid each month, set repayment in full deadline. Alderman Johnson indicated that this repayment method may be “a little too rigid” on the customer in order to repay their unpaid utility bills since different factors such as status of unemployment, unemployment pay amounts, etc. may affect the customer’s ability to do so by the required due date.

Method 2: Allow customer to determine \$ amount to be paid each month, City to set repayment in full deadline.

Method 3: Suspend all late fees and shut-offs until the end of the calendar year all late fees and shut-offs are suspended against all citizens until December 31st, with the knowledge that all payments must be made in full by December 31st. Late fees and shut-offs would resume against any customer whose bill has not been paid in full on January 1, 2021.

Motion made by Johnson, seconded by Hemmerle to proceed with repayment Method 1 with the city to determine the repayment amounts per customer, repayment of unpaid utility bills to be completed by August 1, 2020, unless the customer has extenuating circumstances where they cannot complete repayment by August 1st, then the deadline will be reevaluated for that customer. (8-0-0-0)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Gas Surplus Spending: Equipment Purchase vs. Garage Loan Payment

Alderman Johnson referenced the latest budget report (enclosed as BUDGET REPORT AS OF 043020.pdf). The latest budget report dated May 11, 2020 indicates that a surplus of \$288,570 occurred in the gas account. With a surplus of this amount available, discussion was held with regards to the purchase of equipment and also an extra loan payment for the city garage.

- Alderman Garrett indicated during previous discussions held with regards to future utility surpluses that the Council should consider making an extra payment towards the city garage loan with UCB in order to reduce the amount of interest paid on the garage loan.
- City Superintendent McCarthy created a schedule for equipment replacement due to age and condition. Two equipment items with the highest priority to be replaced are the 1989 dump truck and a 2000 backhoe. Previous discussions were held with Asst. Superintendent T.J. Henson with regards to the preferred priority of these two items, with the priority being replacement of the '89 dump truck. The replacement of the oldest backhoe is not critical at this time. Previous estimate of replacement cost for the dump truck is approximately \$150,000
- Alderman Powell was concerned that the surplus amount of \$288,570 was not all available for spending stating that a certain amount must be kept back in Gas Savings. Alderman Johnson pointed out that the amount of \$288,570 was indeed surplus revenue per FY20 budget. Alderman Johnson pointed out the the Cash Report (enclosed as CASH REPORT AS OF 033120.pdf) indicates that the Gas Checking account has a balance of \$747,710.84 which includes the surplus amount of \$288,570 and also the gas meter fees collected over FY20 equal to approximately \$41,000. Transferring the surplus & meter fee to Gas Savings would leave approximately \$418,000 in gas checking and a new Gas Savings amount of approximately \$641,000.

- Office Manager Ponsler did indicate that Jamie Benton with Benton & Associates suggested that a conservative estimate of \$350,000 would be needed for the purchase of gas meter radio heads for the infrastructure improvement project leaving approximately \$291,000 in savings. The extra garage loan payment and equipment purchase would come out of the \$291,000, potentially leaving \$81,000 if both the garage payment of \$60,000 and purchase of dump truck of \$150,000 are made.
- Alderman Royer mentioned the Governor's press release on the \$25 million Fast Track Grants for infrastructure projects and that our infrastructure may qualify for grant money under this grant program. Alderman Johnson indicated that Jamie Headen had e-mailed information regarding this grant program and is investigating the possibility of our project qualifying for this grant program.

Motion was made by Johnson second by Hemmerle to direct Office Manager Ponsler to make an extra loan payment of \$60,000 to UCB for the city garage.
(8-0-0-0)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Alderman Johnson did indicate that replacement of dump truck bid to follow once Superintendent McCarty secures the bids. Johnson also indicated that UGM – members should be on-line hedging agreement bid next week at meeting.

Award bid for Phase 1 of water main project

Alderman Johnson presented to the Council for their review and approval of the Project Award bid for Phase 1 of water main project. Jamie Heaton, Benton & Associates presented information regarding the bids that were received. MB Construction has been doing meter installation all over the country.

Motion made by Johnson second by Royer to approve the Notice to tentative intent to award for Phase I to MB Construction, LLC out of Monticello, Missouri, in the amount of \$2,986,352.50. (8-0-0-0)

AYES: Basiewicz, Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer, Sheppard.

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

D. Health & Safety – Sheppard

Alderman Sheppard indicated that she did not have a report.

E. Health & Housing – Sheppard

1. 521 E. Jackson –

Alderman Sheppard informed the Council that she was able to make contact the property management company and they were very positive about cleaning up the property. Since the phone call they have mowed and removed all of the extra debris and trash in the yard.

2. 12 Isabelle

Mayor Berola informed the Council that an Auburn resident is interested and is looking into the purchase of the property tax.

3. 508 N. Grand

Alderman Sheppard indicated that she would have a report for the next meeting regarding the property.

F. Parks – Hemmerle

Alderman Hemmerle presented information to the Council regarding the Parks Survey that was mailed to the households in Auburn to be completed and returned. Alderman Garrett shared with the Council that he had received word from the post office that they had a number of non-mailable flyers.

Alderman Royer updated the Council on the progress of the micro-library being placed on the southwest corner of the square. The concrete pad has been installed, Royer has power washed it and he is working with Sandy Jones and the AHS Student Council on the painting a mural on the pad.

G. Economic Development Committee – Basiewicz

Alderman Basiewicz indicated that she did not have a report.

IX. Other Business

Stay at Home Order & Business

Alderman Royer wanted to discuss the Stay at Home Order and Business. Attorney Moredock shared the legal aspects of trying to open too soon before the Governor changes the Executive Order. Alderman Royer stated that he, along with others, would like to see Auburn reopen.

Sidewalks

Alderman Garrett presented photos and a plan to replace sidewalks, tree removal at various locations throughout the City. Alderman Basiewicz expressed the opinion that she felt this topic should have come from the public works committee. Alderman Garrett indicated that he has been presenting this work to the council in this way for the last 3 years with no objection. Garrett went on to say that he had discussed these potential repairs in multiple meeting prior to this one before discussion. After a lengthy, and sometimes passionate discussion, it was decided that the repair agenda will go to Public Works Committee.

I X. Adjournment

Motion by Powell second by Basiewicz to adjourn to executive session to discuss Personnel 5 ILCS 120(c)(1) at 9:11 p.m. Passed by voice vote.

Motion by Royer second by Johnson to adjourn from executive session to discuss Personnel 5 ILCS 120(c)(1) at 9:35 p.m. Passed by voice vote.

Motion by Hemmerle second by Basiewicz to come back in to meeting at 9:38 p.m. Passed by voice vote.

Personnel – Non-Union Raises

Alderman Johnson discussed with the Council non-union raises for FY21.

Motion by Johnson second by Sheppard to approve a 3% raise, retro active to May 1, 2020, for full-time non-union employees.

AYES: Basiewicz, Garrett, Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Powell, Royer, Sheppard.

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Motion by Johnson second by Sheppard to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. Passed by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Barnhill
City Clerk