

City of Auburn
Monday, March 15, 2021
Minutes

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

Clerk Barnhill called roll call.

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

Present via ZOOM Teleconferencing: Alderman Jason Garrett (arrival 7:20 p.m.), Office Manager Kristy Ponsler, Chief Dave Campbell and Superintendent TJ Henson

Absent: None

I. Mayor's Comments

The Mayor indicated that tonight's meeting will happen via ZOOM Teleconferencing due to statewide COVID-19 pandemic

A. Appointment of Alderman Sheppard to Zoning Board

Mayor Berola addressed the Council regarding appointing Alderman Tracy Sheppard to the vacant position on the Zoning Board. Berola indicated that Alderman Sheppard has been doing the job since elected and should be appointed to the position.

Motion by Hemmerle second by Johnson to approve the appointment of Alderman Tracy Sheppard to the vacant position on the Zoning Board effective immediately.
(6-0-1-1)

AYES: Hemmerle, Johnson, Karhliker, Marquis, Powell, and Royer

NAYES: None

Present: Sheppard

ABSENT: Garrett

II. VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Visitors or Visitor Comments

1. Scouts Community Garden

Mayor Berola informed the group that the Scouts were wanting the approval to plant in the right of way. Berola indicated that is not something he can approve and does not support.

2. Steve Gwinn – Hot Slots

Hot Slots Owner Steve Gwinn addressed the Council with his concerns that the City of Auburn needs to add restaurant/bar establishment with gaming instead of additional gaming establishments. Gwinn believes that the restaurant/bar model could be added to the liquor license by only allowing business in this capacity, ie. smoke shop and food industry.

3. Billy Brand – Jackpot Gaming and The Roasted Bean

Jackpot Gaming and The Roasted Bean owner Billy Brand addressed the Council with his concern of adding another liquor license and gaming establishments within the City of Auburn. Brand feels it could be detrimental to the other gaming establishment owners. Brand shared with the Council that he feels we should cap the number of gaming license within the City because it is taking business away from everywhere else.

III. ZONING

Alderman Sheppard indicated that the Zoning Board met on March 10, 2021 and that Attorney Moredock will cover it in his report.

IV. CITY CLERK’S REPORT – BARNHILL

A. March 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Clerk Barnhill presented the March 1, 2021 meeting minutes for the Council’s review and approval.

Motion by Royer second by Marquis to approve the March 1, 2021 meeting minutes. (8-0-0-0)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

B. March 8, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes

Clerk Barnhill presented the March 8, 2021 meeting minutes for the Council’s review and approval.

Motion by Royer second by Karhliker to approve the March 8, 2021 Special Meeting minutes with the correction of omitting the sentence “Motion by Royer second by Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m. Passed by voice vote. (8-0-0-0)” under the Mayor’s Comments. (8-0-0-0)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

V. TREASURER'S REPORT – WARWICK

A. Bills List March 2, 2021 to March 16, 2021

City Treasurer Chris Warwick shared with the Council the Bills List March 2, 2021 to March 16, 2021 for their review and approval.

Motion by Sheppard second by Johnson to approve the Bills List March 2, 2021 to March 16, 2021. (8-0-0-0)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

B. February 2021 Cash Report

City Treasurer Chris Warwick shared with the Council the February 2021 Cash Report for their review and approval.

Motion by Royer second by Karhliker to approve the February 2021 Cash Report. (8-0-0-0)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

VI. ATTORNEY'S REPORT

A. Second Reading, Ordinance 1494-21 – Ordinance Amending the City Liquor Code to Add A Class A License

Attorney Moredock shared with the Council the second reading of Ordinance 1494-21 – Ordinance Amending the City Liquor Code to Add A Class A License for their review and approval. Representatives from the Gold Mine Gaming are seeking a Class A liquor license to open a gaming establishment in the old Medics First Building within the Save A Lot Plaza.

Motion by Johnson second by Marquis to approve Ordinance 1494-21 Amending the City Liquor Code to Add A Class A License for Gold Min Gaming. (7-1-0-0)

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

NAYES: Royer

ABSENT: None

B. First Reading, Ordinance 1493-21 – Ordinance Amending the City Code to Allow for Cannabis Business

Attorney Moredock shared with the Council the first reading of Ordinance 1493-21 – Ordinance Amending the City Code to Allow for Cannabis Business for their review.

C. Second Reading, ordinance 1496-21 – Ordinance Amending The City Code to Provide For The Keeping of Chickens

Attorney Moredock shared with the Council the second reading of Ordinance 1496-21 Amending the City Code to Provide for the Keeping of Chickens for their review and approval. A one-time fee of \$30 for chickens!

Motion by Royer second by Sheppard to approve Ordinance 1496-21 Amending the City Code to Provide for the Keeping of Chickens. (7-1-0-0)

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

NAYES: Johnson

ABSENT: None

VII. DEPARTMENT HEADS

Campbell

Chief Campbell indicated that he had applied for another IDOT grant and is thinking that the City of Auburn should receive it.

Henson

Mayor Berola shared with the Council that plaques have been graciously prepared by Alderman Garrett to present to Derek Lomelino for his 15 years of service and TJ Henson for his 20 years of service. These will be presented to them at the garage.

Superintendent TJ Henson provided an update on the old Lost Caboose location for sticks and leaves. The old lost caboose location will be open by city garage employees in the morning and the police department will close it at around 8 p.m. Alderman Hemmerle asked if speed bumps could be added as cars are speeding down the road. Signage will also be added that sticks and leaves are permissible, but stumps are not. No commercial dumping currently.

Henson also informed the Council that he has tried to reach Michael Hobrock from Ameren regarding the power on the square. He will continue to reach out and try to go higher up the chain of command.

Henson will be sending two of the three dump trucks to the shop for repairs.

Ponsler

Office Manager Kristy Ponsler provided an update on the information that was provided to the Council at the last meeting regarding the request from Alderman Royer. Royer asked Ponsler to check into increasing the size of the billing postcard so additional information could be placed on it. Ponsler indicated that the size could increase to a 6x9 with the same amount of postage for only a two-cent increase but received word from the post office that the price would be 17 cents additional cost. So, for a mailing that was originally costing \$470 it would now cost \$735. That is an increase of \$265 per month (\$3,180 annually). Alderman Garrett does not feel that the citizens should have to pay this increase when there are discussions about purchasing other means of communication. Garrett took an informal poll on social media and it revealed most people wanted to receive a text of the current issues that need to get out to everyone immediately.

Motion by Powell second by Royer to increase the size of the billing postcard to a 6x9 with an increased cost of \$265 per month (total monthly cost would be \$735) and will begin using in future months. (7-1-0-0)

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

NAYES: Garrett

ABSENT: None

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Administration – Johnson

Alderman Johnson did not have a report. Johnson did indicate that 3 unions are seeking negotiations for the future.

VOIP Phone System

Alderman Johnson indicated that Chief Campbell shared information regarding the possibility of purchasing VOIP Phone System at the last Council meeting. Since that meeting Office Manager Ponsler has been in contact with Frontier and remove the City of Auburn from the auto renew system and is on a monthly basis now and can be changed. Johnson shared with the Council that the new VOIP Phone System would involve a \$1841.57 upfront cost and \$232.70 monthly cost.

Motion by Johnson second by Sheppard to approve the upfront cost of purchasing VOIP Phone System not to exceed \$1900 being paid from the budget line of police department communications line and proceed with cancellation at the right suitable time of Frontier. ((7-0-1-0)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Royer

Public Works – Karhliker

Alderman Karhliker did not have a report.

Karhliker did ask Henson if the guys had thought about going over the roads for MFT. Henson indicated that they were working on that. Karhliker also pointed out that he was contacted about the rough shape of Lincoln Street. Johnson pointed out that the transfer cracks on Kennedy need to be sealed.

Public Utilities – Johnson

Gas

Alderman Johnson shared with the Council that the Public Utilities Committee will continue discussion about natural gas. Johnson is working with the office staff to provide a spreadsheet with the entire scenario on it of gas situation for each account.

Johnson informed the Public Utilities Committee that he would like to set up a meeting on Wednesday, March 24, 6:30 p.m.

Water & Gas Meter Radio Issues

Alderman Royer and Jamie Headen (Benton's) provided an update on the water and gas meter radio issues that the City is experiencing and working on resolving the problem.

Alderman Royer expressed his concern that as an Alderman, and someone who has more than a passing interest given his position with his employment that the "licensed band radios" purchased by the COA for the radio read meters are being interfered with by the legally used "unlicensed" band. He continued by saying that he would do what he could to correct the issue as best he could, however, that would not stop the interference by any other business in town that also chose to utilize the 906 frequency or any other in the unlicensed band. He recommended that filters be used to narrow frequency that the meters use so they would not be susceptible the "noise" from nearby frequency.

Alderman Johnson asked that the minutes reflect that the last meeting minutes reflected that the UGM amount was \$882,681 and the actual cost was \$859,920.01.

Health & Safety – Sheppard

Alderwoman Sheppard indicated that she did not have a report.

Health & Housing – Sheppard

201 W. Caldwell

Alderwoman Sheppard has been in contact with the resident of 201 W. Caldwell.

- 1) Fence that was installed needs to be under six feet in height. The City will be out to measure to make sure that is in compliance.
- 2) Dog Violations – the City will be making sure that they are only housing the maximum number of dogs.
- 3) Violation Letters – resident indicated that she did not receive the one about the number of dogs allowed but did receive one on fence violation.

Violation Letter from Attorney Moredock regarding the fostering of dogs and the fence violation (2-page letter) from December 31 will be provided.

442 S. 6th Street – Pearce

Alderman Sheppard indicated that the residents of 442 S. 6th still have violations unpaid. Attorney Moredock will prepare letter stating that violations fines need to be paid.

Parks – Hemmerle

Alderman Hemmerle indicated that Timmy Stewart (Bulldog Construction) has begun working on the dugout repairs and hoping to wrap up in a week or two.

Economic Development

Economic Development Representative Chris Warwick indicated that he did not have a report.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Garrett second by Royer to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 p.m. Passed by voice vote. (8-0-0-0)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Barnhill
City Clerk