

**City of Auburn**  
**Second City Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, May 3, 2021**

Mayor Berola called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

Judge Grischow administered the oath of office to Alderman Joseph "Mike" Marquis, Alderman Jason Garrett, Alderwoman Tracy Sheppard, Alderman Rod Johnson.

Judge Grischow administered the oath of office to Mayor Tom Berola.

Judge Grischow administered the oath of office to Clerk Chris Warwick.

Mayor Berola recommended appointing Penny Williams to the position of City Treasurer to fill a two-year term until the next scheduled consolidated election. Alderman Hemmerle made a motion to accept the mayor's recommendation, second by Alderman Karhliker.

Alderman Garrett had questions for Penny Williams. About paying off debt and interest rates, particularly shopping around to find the best interest rate for the city. Williams replied that she must do that for her current job, so she is familiar with the process. She also stated that she would have to research to find out where the money is deposited and why. Alderman Garrett stated that the Treasurer can operate independently of the City Council. He would hope that she would look for the best rates.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Judge Grischow administered the oath of office to Treasurer Penny Williams.

Attorney Moredock requested a Closed Session at the end of the meeting.

There were no reports from the Department Heads and Committees for the new meeting.

Mayor Berola called for other business.

**Cybersecurity** - Alderman Garrett lead the discussion regarding Cybersecurity. Alderman Garrett indicated that there have been several ransomware attacks locally and that Chief Campbell had security concerns regarding the sharing of information between the City Office and Police Department. Alderman Johnson asked if we are under contract with CDS Office Technologies for computer services. Office Manager Ponsler indicated that the office has contracted services but not the police. Mayor Berola interjected that having the same company doing both may not be a good idea. Chief Campbell has looked at a few companies that could do an audit and security review. There is no true secured network, but we need to have the best options available, Alderman Johnson recommended cybersecurity insurance. Chief Campbell said Deloitte and Accenture are two companies that have been mentioned. Alderman Royer had a company that he was familiar with as well and there are many options available. Alderman Garrett pointed out that the police department needs its own server for their files. Chief Campbell backs data regularly. Chief Campbell will call around to get pricing and information. Office Manager Ponsler will investigate Cybersecurity insurance, she also mentioned the

billing data is stored in the cloud. Alderman Johnson also mentioned that certain best practices should be followed.

**Gas Rates** – Alderman Garrett, Alderman Powell, and Superintendent Henson met with Lindsay Enloe from USDI regarding the recent gas price spike in February. After we received the Operational Flow Order (OFO), we decided to read the gas meters five days early to help minimize the final impact to the customers. Even though we stopped the impact financial impact on the customers on their February utility bill, the billing continues at the higher rate because of the gas still being used and would be charged on the March bill. Garrett mentioned that there is an \$88,000.00 discrepancy on the city's end, Alderman Johnson stated that the discrepancy has been reduced to 1,100 dekatherms (dth). Some of that was made up during the March utility bill. The total amount lost was \$112,000.00 per Garrett. Normally there is a six percent loss on gas distribution, the percentage should be less than two percent. On a positive note, the new radio-enabled gas meters that have been installed in the city can read the meters at 12:01 AM on the final day of the month to get full usage information. Alderman Garrett has been asked what we can do to prevent this from happening again, Alderman Garrett proposed building in a cushion of \$0.71 per dekatherm so if an event happened again then the city would be able to absorb the costs or a \$ 5.04-meter fee. Mayor Berola asked if there is an insurance policy that can cover this type of event. Superintendent Henson said there is not one currently, but he thinks one will be forthcoming. Alderman Royer was concerned because we were gouged on pricing, does doing this accept the gouging. Attorney Moredock said that the issue is still being looked at from a legal perspective. The city would have to have rules around how long the money would be saved and what it could be used for. As a city, we could get an insurance policy, have savings based on dekatherms, or do nothing. Superintendent Henson said with the new radiometers we would have a more accurate picture of usage by the customer. Alderman Johnson had concerns because pooling all the usage in one group, could penalize customers that lowered their thermostats and conserved gas during the OFO. If gas was not conserved, then we could have had additional penalties and a much higher bill. Alderman Johnson was in favor of an insurance policy if one is developed. Superintendent Henson will investigate it further.

Motion by Alderman Garrett second by Alderwoman Sheppard to adjourn to a closed session according to 5 ILCS 120/2 C (2) COLLECTIVE NEGOTIATING MATTERS at 9:08 PM.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Motion to come back into the regular meeting from the closed session was made by Alderman Garrett, second by Alderwoman Sheppard at 10:00 PM.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Alderman Garrett recommended increasing the number of phone lines within the office to help with the bottleneck of calls.

Motion to adjourn was made at 10:01 PM by Alderman Garrett, second by Alderman Marquis. The voice was taken by voice, eight ayes, no nays, no present votes.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Warwick  
City Clerk