

City of Auburn
Monday, October 5, 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 and Superintendent TJ Henson

Department Heads Absent: None

Present via ZOOM Teleconferencing: City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler

I. Mayor's Comments

II. Visitors/Public Comments

A. Alan Baker

Mr. Alan Baker, property owner at 508 North Grand Avenue, was present via ZOOM teleconferencing to discuss the conditions of his property since the home fire almost 2 years ago. Baker informed the Council that he currently has the property for sale with a realtor and has shown it twice since listing. Alderman Garrett asked Mr. Baker if he was selling the house as is and Baker indicated that he is willing to work with the prospective home buyer. Baker said that he understands the significance of this home to the community, since it was Dutch Leonard's home. Leonard was a professional baseball player from Auburn during the 1930s-1950s. Alderwoman Sheppard indicated that she feels we should provide Mr. Baker a timeline that the Council will set. Baker indicated that he has been dealing with some family medical conditions and that has really caused a delay in the clean-up. Baker did ask if they tear down the structure what would the ordinance be for securing the property with a hole in the ground. Mayor Berola informed Baker that when the structure is gone, the hole will need to be filled in or fenced off. After some discussion, the Council decided to proceed with a deadline.

Motion by Karhliker second by Garrett to allow Alan Baker, property owner at 508 North Grand Avenue, until December 7, 2020 to sell or clean up his property. (7-0-0-1)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

B. Jessica Lance – Trunk or Treat on City Square

Jessica Lance, owner of Bewitching Botanicals, presented to the Council the opportunity for the square (north, south and east side) to be blocked off on Friday, October 30, 2020 from 5-7 p.m. for Trunk or Treat on the City Square.

Motion by Royer second by Garrett to allow Trunk or Treat on the City Square, with the blocking of streets on the north, south and east sides on Friday, October 30, 2020 from 5-7 p.m. (7-0-0-1)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

C. David Stuva – RECC

Mr. David Stuva – Rural Electric Association spoke to the Council via Zoom regarding the RECC Franchise Agreement. Stuva shared information regarding the relationship with the City of Auburn that they have had over the years. He also informed the Council what a franchise agreement really means. Franchise Agreement is to grant the right to use the City's streets and/or right of way's for service territory in their town.

Stuva would like to see the City of Auburn extend the same franchise agreement to RECC as they do Ameren. Alderman Powell asked if the customers are paying the additional fees associated with a higher franchise fee and Mr. Stuva indicated that all of the fees are passed on to the customers. Alderman Garrett indicated if we do this we are moving backwards and not forward. We shouldn't be losing money. Mr. Stuva indicated that the savings from changing to a lower rate will be passed along to the customers, which are residents of the City of Auburn.

Mr. Stuva did sign off of Zoom indicating that the Council can discuss later in the meeting and Alderman Johnson was aware of how to contact of him if anyone had any additional questions.

III. Zoning

Alderwoman Sheppard informed the Council that the next Zoning meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2020.

IV. City Clerk's Report – Barnhill

A. September 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes

City Clerk Julie Barnhill presented the September 21, 2020 meeting minutes for the Council's review and approval.

Motion by Sheppard second by Royer to approve the September 21, 2020 meeting minutes. (6-0-1-1)

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

NAYES: None

PRESENT: Garrett

ABSENT: Basiewicz

V. City Treasurer's Report – Warwick

A. Bills List September 22, 2020 to October 5, 2020

City Treasurer Chris Warwick presented the Bills List for September 22, 2020 to October 5, 2020 to the Council for their review and approval.

Motion by Sheppard second by Powell to approve the Bills List for September 22, 2020 to October 5, 2020. (7-0-0-1)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

VI. Attorney – Moredock

A. Second Reading, Ordinance 1487-20 – Amending the Liquor Code to Prohibit Occupancy of Licensed Establishments During Certain Hours

Attorney Moredock shared with the Council the Second Reading, Ordinance 1487-20 – Amending the Liquor Code to Prohibit Occupancy of Licensed Establishments During Certain Hours for their review and approval.

After lengthy discussion regarding the research and development of brewing, Attorney Moredock is going to do additional research of his own on how to incorporate language to allow someone on the premise during the non-allowed hours because of the tasting of the brew. Moredock will get back to the Council.

Derek Lees, owner of The Slaughter House, indicated that he could put Attorney Moredock in contact with his attorney from Chicago for the language required.

Motion by Garrett second by Johnson to table the approval of Ordinance 1487-20 Amending the Liquor Code to Prohibit Occupancy of Licensed Establishments During Certain Hours until the proper language is adopted to accommodate business of craft brewery. (6-1-0-1)

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

NAYES: Royer

ABSENT: Basiewicz

B. Second Reading, Ordinance 1488-20 -- Amending the Liquor Code to Change the Number of Licenses Available

Attorney Moredock shared with the Council the Second Reading, Ordinance 1488-20 Amending the Liquor Code to Change the Number of Licenses Available for their review and approval.

Mayor Berola indicated that an additional site had turned in a liquor license application on Monday, October 19th for approval. He asked the ordinance to reflect that additional request under Class A to avoid any further delay in them obtaining a liquor license. All licenses beyond the approval of the ordinance would have to come before the council.

Motion by Johnson second by Garrett to approve Amending the Liquor Code to Change the Number of Liquor Licenses (Class A) available from 14 to 15. (4-3-0-1)

AYES: Garrett, Johnson, Karhliker, and Powell

NAYES: Hemmerle, Royer and Sheppard

ABSENT: Basiewicz

Alderman Garrett would like a certified letter sent to current liquor recipients to keep them up to date on the change in licenses.

C. First Reading, Ordinance 1489-20 – Ordinance Authorizing the City to Begin Demolition Proceedings After A Specified Time Period

Attorney Moredock presented the First Reading, Ordinance 1489-20 – Ordinance Authorizing the City to Begin Demolition Proceedings After A Specified Time Period for the Council's review.

VII. Department Heads

A. Police Department – Campbell

Chief Campbell shared with the Council that Officer Lavin is doing well at school and will graduate on December 22, 2020. Alderman Garrett inquired of when Chief Campbell felt that Officer Lavin would be street ready and Campbell indicated mid-February.

Campbell also informed the Council that he again received an IDOT grant in the amount of \$14,263.36 to have extra officers on the streets. Garrett asked how long he had this money available to spend and he indicated one year (October 2021).

Campbell also informed the Council that he is still in the process of accepting applications for a full-time officer until October 9th.

B. Public Works – Henson

1. City Garage Employee

Superintendent Henson informed the Council that he would like to hire Josh Runyon pending background and physical/drug test for the available garage position vacated by Mike Lavin.

Motion by Johnson second by Royer to approve the hiring of Josh Runyon pending background and physical/drug test for the vacant public works position in City Garage with a starting salary set by union contract and start date set once all tests are completed. (7-0-0-1)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

Henson also updated the Council that there is a lot of activity around town with MB Construction and Petersburg Plumbing.

C. City Office – Ponsler

1. Deactivate McCarthy Corporate Card

City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler informed the council of the need for approval to deactivate Mike McCarthy's corporate card.

Motion by Royer second by Johnson the approval to deactivate Mike McCarthy's corporate card. (7-0-0-1)

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

NAYES: None
ABSENT: Basiewicz

2. Approval of Corporate Card for Superintendent TJ Henson

City Office Manager Kristy Ponsler informed the Council that approval is required to have a corporate card issued for Superintendent TJ Henson.

Motion by Royer second by Johnson to approve the issuance of a corporate card for Superintendent TJ Henson. (7-0-0-1)

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

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Administration – Johnson

Alderman Johnson informed the Council that they have received the new insurance rates and they did not increase. A meeting was set up with the employee and/or union representative to determine if they will remain with current plan or if they want to pursue a new plan. FOP and Garage Employees are remaining on the current plan. No word from the Office Staff. With the employees staying on the current plan, it gives the opportunity to the City to offer dental and vision insurance. Johnson indicated to Ponsler that someone from the City Office will need to reach out to him so they can get insurance taken care of.

B. Public Works – Karhliker

Alderman Karhliker – No Report

C. Public Utilities – Johnson

1. RECC Franchise Agreement

Alderman Johnson indicated that REA has contacted him providing a comparison of franchise fees for Ameren and RECC. The request from RECC was for the City to re-evaluate the current franchise fee that RECC pays the city annually. The franchise fee cost per customer for the two electric providers was provided as follows:

RECC = \$4000/\$167 customers = \$24.84/customer
Ameren = \$14,780/1742 customers = \$8.48/customer

Alderman Garrett questioned why the city would consider lowering the current rates as we had spent time on two previous matters that would only raise revenues for the City. This would be taking a step backwards.

Motion by Johnson second by Karhliker to honor the proposed RECC to be the same amount franchise agreement as Ameren franchise fee to \$1416.91 for the next 10 years. (6-1-0-1)

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

NAYES: Garrett

ABSENT: Basiewicz

2. IEPA Funds Request #2

Alderman Johnson, along with Jamie Heaton from Benton's, shared information regarding the second IEPA payment of funds.

Motion by Johnson second by Royer to approve the second IEPA fund request payment to MB Construction and Benton & Associate, Inc. for a total of \$65,552.54. (7-0-0-1)

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Basiewicz

D. Health & Safety – Sheppard

Alderman Sheppard – No Report

E. Health & Housing – Sheppard

Alderman Sheppard – No Report

F. Parks – Hemmerle

Alderman Hemmerle indicated that he needs to set a Parks Committee meeting and would like to do so on Tuesday, October 13, 6 p.m. Hemmerle also thanks the Scouts for taking care of the tattered flag on the square and disposing of it properly.

G. Economic Development Committee – Basiewicz

Treasurer Chris Warwick, also member of Economic Development Committee, indicated that Ryan McCarthy from the Sangamon County EDC will be at the next EDC meeting on Wednesday, October 7, 11:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers.

IX. Other

Alderman Royer informed the Council that he has been working on the military banners. He will be meeting with the Chamber of Commerce to discuss them helping out with this project. Royer is hoping to use the City street poles. He will share more information when it becomes available.

X. Adjournment

Motion by Garrett second by Sheppard to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Passed by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Barnhill
City Clerk