

City of Auburn
City Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 7, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Berola with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance of all present.

Mayor Berola called for the roll. Present were Clerk Warwick, Mayor Berola, Treasurer Williams, Alderman Garrett, Alderman Hemmerle, Alderman Johnson, Alderman Karhliker, Alderman Marquis, Alderman Powell, Alderman Royer, Alderwoman Sheppard. Also present were Greg Onken for Attorney Moredock, Chief Campbell, Superintendent Henson, and Office Manager Ponsler.

Heather Harrison-Woods was present regarding her property at 15511 Kennedy Road. She stated that she is in the middle of a divorce and that her husband has moved out. She has some family that will be helping to cut the grass and clean up as much as possible. She is limited in moving the work vehicles because of the ongoing litigation. The council was happy she appeared and gave an update on the situation.

Clerk Warwick presented the meeting minutes for the council's review and approval. A motion was made by Alderwoman Sheppard to approve the meeting minutes, second by Alderman Marquis. Alderman Garrett had concerns that certain items were presented in the meeting minutes. Clerk Warwick asked Alderman Garrett if he could provide a list of the items missing, he would review them and make any corrections necessary that would be approved by the council later.

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

Treasurer Williams presented the bills list from August 17, 2021, to September 7, 2021, for the council's review and approval. A motion was made by Alderwoman Sheppard to approve the bills list, second by Alderman Royer. Alderman Garrett had a question on the breakout of expenses on the mower purchase from Sievers Equipment.

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

Treasurer Williams presented the August 2021 Cash Report for the council's review and approval. A motion was by Alderman Royer to approve the cash report, second by Alderman Garrett.

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

Treasurer Williams presented the Budget Report as of 08/31/2021.

Attorney Onken presented the second reading of Ordinance 1504-21, amending the city code to add a Class A Liquor License and remove a Class B Liquor License. The request was from Jackpot Gaming. A motion was made by Alderwoman Sheppard to approve Ordinance 1504-21; second by Alderman Johnson.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Attorney Onken presented the second reading of Ordinance 1505-21, amending the city's personnel code about vacation time. A motion was made by Alderwoman Sheppard to approve Ordinance 1505-21; second by Alderman Johnson.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Attorney Onken presented the first reading of Resolution 91-21 allowing the city to participate in the Safe Routes to School grant.

Chief Campbell reported that he is working with the school on the Homecoming parade which will be held on 09/24/21 and the homecoming will be held outside on school grounds on 09/25/21. He will also be retrieving data off the speed radar trailers this week, now that they have been on the streets for a month.

Superintendent Henson reported that a new bypass valve at the sewer plant is needed. It broke and they were able to temporarily repair it. The cycle time for a valve is 6 months because they are custom-made. The purchase of the hydro gate is \$6,463.60. Alderman Johnson made a motion to approve the purchase at a price not to exceed \$6,500.00; second by Alderwoman Sheppard.

Office Manager Ponsler reported that since there is a current dispute with Blue Cross Blue Shield and Springfield Clinic, she is working with our insurance agent to make a change in November per the council and employees' approval. She also reported that she is working through the payroll spreadsheet with KEB, we currently have a month-to-month contract, and our internal software will be able to do the work for our payroll needs. The module will be coming out in October 2021; it will address previous issues we had with the software. It was the consensus of the council that we do not work with KEB because we will be able to do payroll in-house. Office Manager Ponsler would like to look for part-time help in the office which will assist with busy periods. Alderman Johnson asked Kristy to check with the bargaining units so he can coordinate an Administrative Committee meeting, he would also like to cover the part-time position. She also reported that the September bills will be the last month to pay off the gas spike that we had back in February 2021. Once these payments are made, we can pay off our loan. There was a question about utility customers that did not pay off their owed amounts, Kristy responded that they would be treated like any other non-payment with a shut off in October on shut off day. If the utility customers are renters, then the past due amount would fall to the landlord. It was suggested that customers that have moved and still owe monies could be reported to the Illinois Recovery process so it would be deducted from their state income tax refund.

Alderman Johnson had no report since the discussion of an Administration Committee meeting had already been covered.

Alderman Karhliker reported information on the Illinois Safe Routes sidewalk program. There will be a meeting on 09/09/21 to discuss the streets and additional details on the grant information. Alderman Karhliker also reported that the Divernon Road Bridge project is in the design phase and hopefully we will move to the bid process in nine to ten months, then repairs.

Alderman Johnson presented IPEA Reimbursement Phase I – IPEA Reimbursement Packet # 12 for \$151,897.75 and he made a motion to approve that payment, second by Alderman Powell.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Alderman Johnson presented IEPA Reimbursement Phase II – IEPA Reimbursement Pack # 2 for \$277,951.82 and he made a motion to approve that payment, second by Alderman Powell.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Alderman Johnson spoke with Benton & Associates and Petersburg Plumbing has run out of PVC piping, they have another option, but it is a different thickness and would require different fittings. The cost would be at least \$30,000.00 more. Hurricane Ida rebuilding is also exacerbating the supply issue.

Alderwoman Sheppard reported that a \$50.00 banner has been purchased to be used for city events and will be used at the upcoming Trunk or Treat in October.

Alderwoman Sheppard made a motion to start fining 434 South 7th Street for tall grass and weeds, they have until 09/10/21 at 4:00 PM to abate the issue or they will be fined \$50.00 a day until the issues are abated, second by Alderman Royer.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Alderwoman Sheppard made a motion to start fining 514 North 5th Street for unsightly accumulations, they have until 09/10/21 at 4:00 PM to abate the issue or they will be fined \$100.00 a day until the issue is abated, second by Alderman Royer.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Alderman Garrett asked about properties that have drug activities at them and the ability for the city to fine those properties under a Health & Safety violation. The council was supportive of the idea.

Alderman Hemmerle reported that the OSLAD grant has been submitted, he mentioned that we need to look for funding during the budgeting process to keep the momentum going.

Clerk Warwick had no report for the Economic Development Committee.

Alderman Garrett asked about an update on the electrical box on the square that Ameren was to update. Superintendent Henson needs to follow up again with Ameren.

Alderman Garrett asked about the gap in water usage between what we purchase and the amount we receive payment from utility customers. Superintendent Henson indicated that he would not have that information until the annual report is done in January 2022, at that time he would have a more complete picture of any variances.

Alderman Garrett suggested having two absences from council meetings with pay because the current structure, which pays the Clerk, Treasurer, and Alderman a monthly stipend and per meeting. There were various ideas discussed, there were questions about potential conflicts with state statutes. Some council members were fine with the current setup. There was no action taken.

Alderman Garrett brought up that at the 08/16/21 meeting the council voted to payout vacation for a select number of employees to clear up a vacation error caused by a previous employee. Two employees asked to take the time in vacation rather than get paid, which is counter to what the council had voted on. Alderman Johnson polled the committee to see if anyone had an issue with the employees taking vacation time, he was going to bring it up at the meeting. Some council members were for and some were against changing the options. There was concern about the value of being paid out at a higher value.

Alderman Johnson made a motion to allow Devin Nance and John Edie to take their vacation overage with vacation time versus being paid out in a lump sum by March 31, 2022; second by Alderman Powell.

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

NAYES: Garrett and Royer

ABSENT: None

Motion by Alderman Royer to adjourn to a closed session according to 5 ILCS 120/2 c (1) PERSONNEL MATTERS at 8:12 PM, second Alderwoman Sheppard. Taken by voice vote.

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 Royer, second by Alderwoman Sheppard at 8:26 PM. Taken by voice vote.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Motion to adjourn was made at 8:26 PM by Alderman Garrett, second by Alderwoman Sheppard. Taken by voice vote.

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Warwick

City Clerk of Auburn