

MINUTES of the ST. CHARLES CITY COUNCIL
For Tuesday, November 25, 2014 held at 6:00 p.m. at
830 Whitewater Avenue
St. Charles, Minnesota

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilmen:

John Schaber (absent)

Dave Braun

Orv Dahl

Wayne Getz

Mayor Bill Spitzer

STAFF PRESENT:

Kristine Huinker (City Accountant), Kyle Karger (PW Supt.), Ken Frank (Chief of Police) and Nick Koverman (City Administrator).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jill Johnson (Winona County) David Kramer, Dan White, and Craig Hilmer (St. Charles Press).

1. ESTABLISH QUOROM/CALL TO ORDER

Quorum was established with Mayor Spitzer calling the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL of the AGENDA:

Motion to approve the agenda: **Wayne Getz**

No discussion.

Motion carried.

4. Notices and Communications. None.

5. Review of Financials. No discussion.

6. Farmer's Market Presentation. Jill Johnson from Winona County was present to provide a brief presentation on the events of the 2014 Farmer's Market. She reviewed the activities, changes, and moving forward as a Farmer's Market.

7. 2015 Proposed Budget. Admin. Koverman and City Accountant Kristine Huinker presented information related to the changes and recommendations received by Mike Bubany or those discussed by Council at previous meetings. The Capital Improvement Plan was also outlined for consideration. Clm. Braun asked about several items and the Council elected to discuss each item presented. The city car was reviewed for use, mileage, and age. While items could certainly be moved, City Accountant Kristine Huinker warned Council of the impact felt in years following. After answering the Council's questions, it was agreed to keep the car in the budget as outlined. The snowpusher for the loader was discussed. It was discussed how it made the loader a more effective snow removal tool especially for cul-de-sacs and parking lots. Clm. Braun expressed his understanding of getting the loader to simply replace the old unit, but that adding attachments was not agreed to. Supt. Karger expressed that they only other tool he could see being requested in the future was a pair of grappling hooks for easier removal of tree limbs when either cut or blown down. Mayor Spitzer expressed that he felt it necessary to provide the proper equipment to do the job and Clm. Dahl agreed. Clm. Getz said he could go either way and saw both sides, but if it didn't affect the budget as proposed he would be in favor of it. The Council discussed the 0 percent increase to the levy and said they were in favor of 0 percent which would amount to decreasing the general fund reserve by \$22,023. No further action was taken, but the final information will be presented for the Truth in Taxation.

- 8. Resolution #44-2014 Declaring Council Vacancy and Appointment.** The presented resolution reflected the Council's desire to appoint Clm. Wayne Getz to the vacancy that will exist January 1, 2015 when Clm. Schaber accepts the Oath of Mayor. The resolution appointed Clm. Getz to the Council for an additional 2 years.
Motion to approve: **Dave Braun**
No further discussion.
Motion carried.
- 9. Ordinance #572 Amending Sewer Rates (1st Reading).** Admin. Koverman expressed that the ordinance reflects the 0 percent increase to rates but adjusts them to better reflect the sanitary district's charges to the City.
Motion to approve: **Orv Dahl**
No further discussion.
Motion carried.
- 10. Ordinance #572 Amending Storm Water Rates (1st Reading).** Admin. Koverman reviewed the ordinance citing the recommendation from Mike Bubany of David Drown & Associates to increase the storm water fee for residential users from \$4.18 to \$5.00. He also indicated that Tom Wente of Smith Schafer & Associates has discussed the need for the city to readjust its rates to keep up with proposed projects.
Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**
No further discussion.
Motion carried.
- 11. Ordinance #574 Amending Water Rates (1st Reading).** Admin. Koverman highlighted the mandated requirement for cities who serve over 1,000 customers to adopt water conservation rates. In reviewing guidelines with the Minnesota Rural Water Association to better understand the Department of Natural Resource's goal, Koverman adopted a proposed structure that looked at the highest users for residential and would leave the majority unaffected. The goal as stated to him was to change the habits of users who water lawns or excessively use water. For commercial/industrial users, he reviewed several customers and sample structures. The rate structure proposed would see the same rate up to 102,000 gallons with anything above seeing the adjusted tiered rate. The Council understood the mandate and felt that the proposed structure would be least impact to the majority.
Motion to approve: **Orv Dahl**
No further discussion.
Motion carried.
- 12. Frozen Pipe Water Policy.** Admin. Koverman presented a preliminary frozen water policy. Through multiple resources and sample policies from various communities, he crafted a potential policy for consideration. The League of Minnesota Cities proposed that responsibilities and procedures be outlined as part of the proposal. The policy required residents to test their water temperature and when the temperature fell below 38 degrees they were to notify city hall. The policy utilized a past practice of running a pencil size stream which equated to roughly 10,800 gallons in 30 days if done so properly. Residents would be charged up to 2,500 gallons, but from 2,501 up to 13,300 gallons it would not be charged until after that amount. This would provide an adjustment, but would then make running more than recommended a choice. Admin. Koverman offered that the suggestion was only if the Council wanted to offer an adjustment. Discussion followed that Council felt most residents had their own thermometers, but that it was an inexpensive investment. Koverman suggested the Council could reconsider the item at the next meeting if they chose. However, Council agreed it addressed the needs and the issue and a motion was made to approve the policy.
Motion to approve: **Dave Braun**
No further discussion.
Motion carried.
- 13. Dangerous Dog Ordinance.** Admin. Koverman had the attorney review the language and in a section of the ordinance it called for no more than 3 dogs. Mayor Spitzer expressed that he felt limiting residents to any number of pets would create a backlash that could be avoided. The question of regulating puppy mills was discussed. After a discussion the Council agreed that removing language that limited the number of pets was directed. The ordinance will be brought back to the Council for a first reading upon publication of the required notice.
- 14. DESCASD Board Vacancy.** Mayor Spitzer expressed that he had spoken with Mayor-elect Schaber and that he would offer to continue to sit on the DESCASD board if the Council would allow him to do so. The Council briefly discussed if there were other interested candidates, but the members agreed that his experience and knowledge of current issues would be invaluable. A motion was made to appoint Bill Spitzer to the DESCASD board.

Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

- 15. Resolution #45-2014 Accepting OSHA Grant Award.** Admin. Koverman highlighted the fact that the security camera grant that the city had planned on applying to for OSHA was approved for half of the project costs. Mayor Spitzer offered that given the future police department expansion that a system big enough to accommodate additional cameras would be a good thing to investigate. Fellow Councilmen agreed. A motion to approve the resolution as presented was made.

Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

- 16. Resolution #46-2014 Accepting Grant from American Heart Association.** Kristine Huinker provided background information on the grant and its receipt that will provide an ECG monitor for one ambulance. The cost of the unit was \$25,000 and paid for by the grant. Ambulance volunteers were receiving specialized training and Mayo Clinic would be updating their system in order to receive the data collected by the wireless device.

Motion to approve: **Dave Braun**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

- 17. Winter Parking Exemptions.** A list of four annual winter parking exemptions was presented for consideration. Admin. Koverman then discussed a request from the Sherwood Trailer Park to utilize the Kieffer Park to park a semi tractor over the winter. According to the owner's lease agreement semi tractors were prohibited in that area. Koverman relayed that in a residential zone it is permitted as long as parked on private property, but not allowed to run more than 15 minutes prior to leaving. He explained that other alternatives of the Amish Ovens, behind Cenex gas station and at SE Skid Loader are usually offered as alternatives, or else the municipal parking lots. Council expressed concern for allowing one and then having more requests than they can accept. The annual permit was one possible solution Koverman offered so that it is a requested function. Council agreed that they did not want to allow the use of the park as the park lot was not designed to withstand semi truck weight. A motion to approve the winter parking exemption list was made.

Motion to approve: **Orv Dahl**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

- 18. City Hall Hours –Christmas and New Year's Eve.** Admin. Koverman expressed that historically the city council has provided Christmas Eve off as a benefit to employees, but with the holiday falling on Thursday, it made some sense to look at remaining open Christmas Eve for three full work days and closing Thursday (Christmas Day) and Friday. Council expressed that if employees were willing to utilize time off for the additional time they were fine. New Year's Eve City Hall closes its doors at 3 p.m. in order to conduct an end of the year close. This practice has worked well and allowed staff to shift information into the new year. A motion was made to approve both requests.

Motion to approve: **Wayne Getz**

No further discussion.

Motion carried.

UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Joann Wegman addressed the Council and thanked them for all of their support during 2014 for the Farmer's Market.

Motion to adjourn at 6:11 p.m.

Motion to approve: **Dave Braun**

Motion declared carried.

William J. Spitzer, Mayor

Attest: _____
Nick Koverman, City Administrator

