

Athens City Council  
Committee Meeting  
December 8, 2016

Those in attendance were Mayor Donald Neisler, Clerk Debra Richardson, Treasurer Darin Bowman and Aldermen: Larry Buhr, Ron Canterbury, Tom Croft Sr. and Bobbie Dowell. Aldermen Anita Bednarko and Harry Nichols were absent. Persons in the audience included Sergeant Derrick Fritz, Brent Freesmeyer from Klingner & Associates, Charles Herman, Justina Gudgel, Karissa Carls, Zoning Administrator Judi Harlan, Jack Harlan, Shawn Lash, Rex Kieffer, Merle Messersmith, Gary Richardson, Linda Wasilewski, Don Squires, DeWayne Collins, Ron Weeks, Christopher Collins and Ryan Seifert.

Brent Freesmeyer addressed the council regarding the Motor Fuel report. He indicated that the City has \$48,000.00 in MFT funds and until the SOI passes a budget, Athens cannot allot for more than the current balance. Freesmeyer stated that the agreement needed to be voted on soon. Freesmeyer informed the council that they would need to review the loan application for Well #7 and the CO2 system for the water plant. Buhr stated that he has received numerous complaints from citizens on the condition of the streets. Freesmeyer stated that the MFT funds do not amount to the cost of doing all needed streets work, but in the past the City has used general fund monies to catch up on the work.

DeWayne Collins addressed the council about his desire to open a new business next to the Subway, since All-Star Tumbling is vacating the building at the end of the year. Collins indicated that he is the owner of Subway and he is interested in opening a Turbo Fired Pizza at that location. He stated that he is the owner of a Turbo Fired Pizza in Springfield. Collins informed the council that they would only consider bringing the business to Athens if the City would issue the business a liquor license, and there would also be video gaming machines available to patrons. Collins stated that the business would be a family restaurant with seating inside. He indicated that the plans are to have wings and pasta on the menu. Collins indicated that if the City would approve a liquor license that the business could open in late March or early April.

Treasurer Darin Bowman presented the treasurers report. Bowman reported that the video gaming fund received \$2,387.00 for the month of November. He indicated that the balance for the meter deposit fund stands at \$163,605.00, and there were no payments received for the DCEO loan account. Bowman presented his letter of resignation to the council, since he has sold his home and would be moving outside of the City limits. Bowman thanked the council and citizens for allowing him to serve as city treasurer. Mayor Neisler and the council members thanked Bowman for his service.

Mayor Neisler introduced Ryan Seifert, whom he is recommending to the council as the appointee to fill the vacancy through May 2017.

Operator Robin Cawley presented the water and wastewater reports. Cawley indicated that they have been working on the winterizing the plants. She stated that upcoming projects are to repair the bathroom and replace the lime standpipe at the water plant. Cawley reported that they have received the phosphorus testing equipment and have begun baseline testing of the phosphorus, and the vegetation has been removed from the sludge lagoon. She indicated that they have removed a portion of the sludge from the lagoon and that should help until spring when they can be ready for the land application. Cawley stated that the water booster pump stopped and the estimated cost to replace the pump is \$2,787.00. Cawley reported that this not the first time that a pump has gone out and if they lose the one that they have, they would have nothing. Cawley indicated that the City has received the Johnson Road water installation permit from IEPA. Mayor Neisler stated that he is working on the easements for the project and he has spoken with Menard County about the installation of the water main across the road.

Mayor Neisler indicated that Police Chief Tim Becker was unable to attend the meeting due to his attendance of a meeting of the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, of which he has been appointed to by Governor Bruce Rauner.

Police Sergeant Derrick Fritz presented the police report. Sergeant Fritz reported that the new Ford Explorer has arrived and is in operation by the department. He stated that Officer Ben Hollis would be training officers on the Taser and radar sometime in December. Sergeant Fritz indicated that there were 7 ordinance violations issued, with two continuations for court cases that are continued until December 29, 2016. There were 84 calls for service, 77 traffic stops, 24 issued citations, 53 verbal warnings and three crashes in November. Sergeant Fritz stated that because of numerous complaints of speeding on Washington Street the department has put special emphasis on radar enforcement in the area. One speeder was stopped for 46 MPH and the next fastest vehicle clocked was 34 MPH.

Mayor Neisler stated that the Tax Levy ordinances would need to be passed at the Monday night council meeting. He indicated that the City is now required to pass an ordinance for the allowance of reimbursement of allotments for employee travel, meal and lodging expenses for the City. Dowell offered to call DOC to see if they have the current figures for the SOI.

Mayor Neisler indicated that the streets, water and wastewater department are in need of a 3-inch trash pump and the cost is approximately \$750.00 - \$1,000.00.

Mayor Neisler asked council members their thoughts on the water meter study that was presented in November. Canterbury stated that it is a good program, but it is very costly, and he does not know how Athens could handle the costs. He suggested that the City check into the project done in Mason City. Mayor Neisler stated that the costs would be from the increase of revenue from the loss of water from the old meters. He indicated that that would be the only way Athens could afford such a project. He feels that the City should check with other communities on how they feel about the change.

Dowell reported to the council regarding the purchase of a "Thank You Veterans" sign to be erected at the entrance to Athens. He would like to meet with the artist about replacing the emblems. Dowell asked that the council approve the purchase up to \$1,500.00.

Council left for conference room for executive session on personnel matters at 7:58 PM.

Council returned to meeting room to review the bills at 8:24 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.