

Athens City Council  
Committee Meeting  
February 5, 2015

Those in attendance were Mayor Donald Neisler, Clerk Debra Richardson, Treasurer Darin Bowman and Aldermen: Larry Buhr, Ron Canterbury, Bobbie Dowell, Harry Nichols and Chris Reichert. Alderman Deni Wilson was absent. Persons in the audience included Jeff Stott, Tom Croft Sr., Merle Messersmith, Rex Kieffer, Police Chief Tim Becker, Water and Wastewater Operator Jason Upton and James Ley.

Jim Ley addressed the council concerning his property at High Prairie. Ley stated that he does not know who to speak to about the drainage issue and is asking the City to work with him to remedy the problems. Ley indicated that he has been told that there is a retaining pond in the area, but he does not know where it is. Ley requested that the City provide him with a map of the subdivision. Ley stated that Nick Lott has told him he does not have a plat for the area. Alderman Buhr asked Ley if he bought the property from Jim Higginbotham. Ley indicated that he had. Ley stated that he would like for the City to check the information for him. Mayor Neisler stated that he would have to check this out and he would need some time to do so. Ley informed the council that the City has been pushing snow up to the property. Ley stated that there is a fire hydrant on his property and he would like it moved off of his property. He stated that there needs to be a maintained road and a place for the water to drain. Ley reported that he has seen the water across the road.

Jason Upton presented the water and wastewater reports. Upton noted that a four-inch water main broke on Main Street and it has been repaired without a boil order needing to be issued. Upton reported that the resent IEPA report was good, but they are requesting that the City abandon Well #3. Upton stated that he would like to keep the well in case of an emergency. He stated that the City is required to respond to the request within 45 days. Alderman Nichols asked if Well #3 could be changed over to a surface well. Upton stated that it would be very costly to do so.

Upton stated that a transducer froze at the wastewater plant, causing the wires to break. He stated that a new transducer has been installed. Upton indicated that the new sewer line in Circle Court was approved by the IEPA.

Police Chief Tim Becker presented the police report. Chief Becker stated that all vehicles are in great shape. He indicated that he had finished evaluations for the full-time officers. Chief Becker reported that there were four warnings and three citations issued for the month of January.

Darin Bowman addressed the council with the treasurers' report. Bowman stated that the gaming machine revenues are still high. He indicated that the bond transfers have been made and there was one DCEO payment received in January.

Mayor Neisler reported on the current fees for licenses in the City. Those fee's included garbage permit, gaming machine, gambling machine, beer garden and liquor license. Mayor Neisler asked if the council was agreeable to keeping the fees the same. Aldermen Buhr and Dowell both stated that the fees should be left the same.

Mayor Neisler stated that the IMLRA employee retirement report has not been completed and they have requested additional information about the library.

Mayor Neisler indicated that he has provided the council with a balance sheet for them to study and hopefully make a decision on a water rate increase at the Monday council meeting.

Jeff Stott addressed the council about the American Legion planning a July 4th celebration at the Salzenstein Park. Stott stated that they are working on having music and games for entertainment. Plans are for there to be food and beverages and the hours would be from 4:00 - 7:00PM. Stott asked if the City would allow them to borrow picnic tables from the Community Park.

Mayor Neisler stated that he has been asked by several council members to address the salary of the mayoral position. Mayor Neisler stated that the mayor gets a small salary and the mayor has major responsibilities. Mayor Neisler indicated that the council needed to decide how much the mayor should be paid before the next mayoral election in 2017. Mayor Neisler stated that the City needs someone with planning and management skills.

Mayor Neisler indicated that he has presented the council with the approved IDOT resolution for the maintenance of roads for 2015.

Mayor Neisler reported that he has provided the council with copies of a letter from Menard County Public Safety. They are requesting that a representative from the City attend a meeting to be held on March 5, 2015. Mayor Neisler noted that the meeting is being held the same evening as the committee meeting. Alderman Dowell suggested that the council change the date of the committee meeting.

Mayor Neisler informed the council that they have been unable to do water shut-off's because of the snow coverage. Mayor Neisler indicated that shut-off's would be done at the end of the month.

Alderman Buhr commented on the condition of the roads that were oiled back in September. Mayor Neisler stated that he has spoken with the engineer about this problem and there are several issues that have caused the peeling of the oil and rock. Mayor Neisler stated that the City was late on getting the roads oil and there was three weeks of rain before that. He indicated that there was significant moisture in the road and in the rock, and because of the lack of hot weather to seal the oil it has caused the peeling. Mayor Neisler stated that he hopes to oil earlier in 2015.

Council left for conference room for executive session regarding personnel matters at 7:45 PM.

Council returned to meeting room at 8:14 PM to review the bills.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM.