

Athens City Council
Committee Meeting
March 3, 2015

Those in attendance were Mayor Donald Neisler, Clerk Debra Richardson, and Aldermen: Ron Canterbury, Bobbie Dowell, Harry Nichols, Chris Reichert and Deni Wilson. Alderman Larry Buhr was absent. Linda Wasilewski was also in attendance.

Mayor Neisler opened the meeting by reporting that the City has issued all liquor licenses. Mayor Neisler stated that the video gaming revenue balance is approximately \$25,000.00. Alderman Reichert suggested that the City authorize more funds towards the fireworks display. Alderman Wilson indicated that she would like to have nice flower barrel's placed on Main Street. Wilson stated that she would like to work with the agriculture department at the school to provide plants for the barrels. Wilson stated that the project should be able to be done for less than \$1,000.00. Alderman Canterbury stated that he would like for the council to consider looking for property to purchase for a burn pile. Mayor Neisler stated that the current contract for the burn pile would not expire until 2017. Mayor Neisler suggested that the City lease one acre at the West Cemetery farmland for a burn pile and then give the West Cemetery Association a monthly payment for the use. Wilson stated that she is also working on a walking and bike trail that would run from Capital Airport to Cantrall. Wilson indicated that she would like to see the trail extended into Athens.

Mayor Neisler reported that there was a written water and wastewater report from Jason Upton. Mayor Neisler indicated that water and wastewater operator Upton has submitted his resignation with March 6, 2015 being his last day. Mayor Neisler stated that all required reports and testing for February have been completed. He noted that there have been problems with valves freezing at the wastewater plant, and the engineer's are looking into that. Mayor Neisler stated that he has sent a letter to IEPA regarding the City's plans for the closing of Well #3. He indicated that the letter also stated that the City is in the process of locating all water valves and hydrants. Mayor Neisler asked that a committee be formed and then meet with the fire department and work on documenting the flushing and flow testing. Alderman Nichols suggested that the council approve the hydrant flushing now, and meet with them at a later date.

Mayor Neisler recommended that the council consider a water rate increase. Alderman Nichols reported that he had been looking at work sheets to come up with figures to present to the council. Nichols stated that there are 1686 water customers, which includes 801 in town, 518 out of town, and 367 in Fancy Creek. Nichols proposed that the rates be raised one dollar for water minimum and 5% on overage, and one dollar on sewer minimum and 10% on overage. Nichols noted that the lime tower loan would be paid off soon, and with the additional monies the total revenue will be approximately \$70,000.00. Mayor Neisler stated that \$53,000.00 is needed each month to be used towards the bond fund. Mayor Neisler indicated that a water and sewer rate increase is needed.

Mayor Neisler informed the council that he is working on adding a drainage drop box on Washington Street by the post office. He indicated that he has found the first plat for the High Prairie subdivision. Mayor Neisler reported that he thinks the roads were excepted and the drainage issues need to be addressed. Alderman Nichols stated that the entrance was not excepted by IDOT. Nichols indicated that Jim Ley's attorney is working on the entrance issue. Mayor Neisler stated that he called Ley and told him the City was working on this.

Mayor Neisler stated that he had spoken with Jeff Stott and Stott indicated that they would like to provide children's games and possibly rent a bounce house for the July 4, 2015 celebration. Mayor Neisler stated that he would like to give money to be used for this purpose. He suggested a donation of \$200.00 to be taken from the video gaming fund. The hours for the

festivities are from 4:00 -7:00 PM. Alderman Canterbury asked if there would be alcohol served that evening. Mayor stated that there would not.

Mayor Neisler suggested that a committee be formed to research mayoral duties for the future. Mayor Neisler stated that he would like to have one alderman from each ward for the committee. The current mayor is paid \$600.00 per month. Alderman Reichert suggested that the council consider a pay increase for council members.

Mayor Neisler indicated that the IMR report is still being worked on, but should be available soon.

Linda Wasilewski stated that the West Cemetery committee would be having a clean up on March 14 and 15, from 8:30 - Noon each day. Wasilewski asked that the City provide the street sweeper for cleaning up the leaves. She indicated the committee would be meeting on March 26, 2015, at 6:30 PM at city hall.

Council left for conference room for executive session on personnel matters at 7:54 PM.

Council returned to meeting room to review bills at 8:19 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM.