

Athens City Council
Special Meeting
September 26, 2016

Mayor Donald Neisler called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM at Athens City Hall.

Clerk Debra Richardson called roll. Present were Aldermen: Larry Buhr, Ron Canterbury, Tom Croft Sr., Bobbie Dowell and Harry Nichols. Alderman Anita Bednarko was absent. Also in attendance were Linda Wasilewski, Barbi Gimondo, Rachel Thoele, Rex Kieffer, Merle Messersmith and Jack and Judi Harlan.

Mayor Neisler stated that he called this meeting to get recommendations from the council on the posting for hiring a wastewater operator. He stated that he thought that the council was interested in getting some additional help, and the average salary for a wastewater operator is about \$44,000.00, depending on location and experience. Mayor Neisler indicated that the City would need to look for someone with knowledge and experience, including UV technology SBR's, headworks, digesters, PLC, lab work, records and permits. He stated that Robin Cawley has her Class A water license and would be ready for testing for Class 4 in wastewater. Mayor Neisler indicated that at this time the City has a highly skilled operator signing off on the wastewater plant and he has brought the plant up to the point that there is one minor deficiency. Mayor Neisler stated that he would suggest that the City look for a \$10.00 an hour laborer. He informed the council that Cawley is more interested in the wastewater than water, but if she does not continue in water until February she would lose the time and she needs two more years in wastewater to operate the plant. Mayor Neisler noted that the City would be two years from being able to allow Cawley to run both plants and it would be much cheaper for the City. Alderman Dowell stated that it would not be fair for that new employee. Mayor Neisler stated that he feels that it would be fair. Dowell stated that if one person is operating both plants, they couldn't give the required attention that both plants need. Mayor Neisler indicated that at the Curran Gardner water district, which is comparable to Athens, there are two Class A operators and two Class C operators and one laborer. Mayor stated that in the future the City might need two operators. Dowell stated that with the problems that the City has had he believes that having an experienced operator at each plant would greatly benefit the City and it's water customers. He noted that it would take some time for someone to learn the plants. Alderman Nichols indicated that both of the contractual operators advised that there are many things that do not get done, and Cawley does not have the time to take care of both plants. Mayor Neisler indicated that he is looking at the cost and if the LESO money stops then water rates would need to be increased. He stated that the water makes money, but the wastewater is in a deficit. Alderman Buhr stated that if one plant goes down, then the other plant is neglected while the problem is fixed. Mayor Neisler stated that he feels that we have enough workers. Dowell stated that this is not fair to Cawley. Alderman Canterbury stated that for \$10.00 an hour you would probably not find good help. Mayor Neisler suggested that the council take some time to think about this. Dowell indicated that it would be hard to change his mind about this. Nichols asked if the council would agree to think about this decision.

Motion made by Alderman Nichols, seconded by Alderman Buhr, to table the decision to place an ad for the hiring of a wastewater operator until the next regular meeting. Ayes: Buhr, Canterbury, Croft and Nichols. Nays: Dowell. Motion passed.

Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman Dowell, to enter into execution session at 7:24 PM. Ayes: Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Council left for conference room.

Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman, to return to regular session at 7:39 PM. Ayes: Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman Dowell, to authorize increasing Robin Cawley's salary by \$3.00 an hour to \$18.00 an hour. Ayes: Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman Dowell, to adjourn the meeting. Ayes: Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 PM.