

Athens City Council
Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 9, 2017

Those in attendance were Mayor Bob Dowell, Clerk Cindy McFarland, and Aldermen: Chris Basso, Ron Canterbury, Tom Croft Sr., Tom Herman, and Harry Nichols. Alderman Buhr was absent. Persons in the audience included Linda Wasilewski, Shirley Hall, Chief Tim Becker, Merle Messersmith, Rex Kieffer, Gary Richardson, Robert Bluett, Michael Lockwood, Karissa Carls, Hayley Yokum, and Treasurer Ryan Seifert.

Mayor Dowell opened the meeting by asking that all Veterans stand to be recognized for their service. He thanked the Veterans for their service and for all they have done for our country. Chief Tim Becker presented the Police Report. He said that the new 2018 F150 squad truck has been picked up, equipped with lights and radios, and is fully operational. The old squad truck was sold by sealed bid at a profit. Mayor Dowell asked about the recent undercover alcohol sting. Chief Becker said that all businesses had been compliant except for the Village Market and they have been cited and fined.

Treasurer Ryan Seifert presented the treasurer's report. The Mayor said that the Streets & Alleys Report and the Water Report would be presented Monday. Robbie Bluett presented the Sewer Report. He said that one of the pumps had burned up over the last month. Robbie submitted four quotes to replace the pump as it would be more cost effective to replace the pump than repair it. There was also discussion about sludge removal from the lagoon to be done by Metro Ag. The Mayor inquired about other companies that provide this service but they are more expensive. Robbie also submitted information about programming to be done at the plant by Integrated Controls and noted that yearly maintenance had been completed today. The Mayor said that the vote for the pump replacement and the sludge removal will be on Monday's agenda.

Alderman Canterbury submitted the Cemetery Report. Discussed was the farm ground lease. Bids will be accepted December 1 – 31, 2017. Linda Wasilewski talked about the medallions for the veterans at the cemetery from Norm Flowers. Also discussed was tree removal and possibly moving the burn area.

Next Mayor Dowell explained that the Library and the Food Pantry are not charged for their water and proposed to the council that the Fire Department also receive their water free of charge. Alderman Basso said that the Fire Department does a lot for the city and Alderman Nichols said this should be on the agenda Monday for vote.

Next on the agenda was discussion of an ordinance amending Athens City Code Chapter 1, general penalties within the city of Athens. This amendment states that prior to the sale of any city owned property or issuance of any city license or permit, all outstanding fees, fines, assessments, judgements or debts owed to the city must have been paid in full. The vote on this ordinance amendment will be on the agenda for Monday night.

Mayor Dowell went on to give an update on problem properties. The Mayor met with a citizen who has several problem properties and is currently being fined and again offered assistance from the city. However, the person declined the offer and stated that the fines will be paid and the property cleaned up.

The employee/council Christmas Party was next on the agenda. The mayor asked if the council would be interested in a party and he has gathered some catering quotes. The vote will be on the agenda for Monday.

Under Old Business, there was discussion regarding the bids on the property at 504 W. Jefferson. Mayor Dowell has taken bid information to the city attorney and it was approved. Also, the city received a nice thank you from the Athens High School Leadership Committee for

their donation to the food drive. This was the largest collection of food items in their 20 year history. It will go to many families in need in our area.

Under New Business was the issue of city street lights. Many of the lights are old and dim or completely burned out. Mayor Dowell has reached out to Ameren several times but has not heard back from them. He will continue to try to make contact and will make sure the lights are repaired or replaced. There were several comments from those present giving examples of dimly lit areas.

The Mayor asked if there were any public comments. Gary Richardson asked if anyone knew what business would be going in next to the Subway. The Mayor heard that it may be another pharmacy. Another person asked if it would be possible to run the names of the owners of problem properties in the newspaper. The Mayor said that would be a question for the city attorney. Alderman Herman asked if we send registered letters to problem property owners. Chief Becker answered that we do and we receive the confirmation receipt back. Murle Messersmith asked what we are going to do about the Meyer property. This issue has been going on for too long. The Mayor answered that Mr. Meyer has made a recent payment and has a deadline to be in full compliance.

Motion made by Alderman Croft, seconded by Alderman Canterbury, to adjourn and enter into executive session at 7:32pm.

Council returned to the meeting room at 7:53pm to review bills.