

Athens City Council
Committee Meeting
February 4, 2016

Those in attendance were Mayor Donald Neisler, Clerk Debra Richardson and Aldermen: Anita Bednarko, Larry Buhr, Ron Canterbury, Tom Croft Sr., Bobbie Dowell and Harry Nichols. Persons in the audience included Police Chief Tim Becker, Linda Wasilewski, Abbigail Stuebs, Jacqueline Stuebs, Kellie Conover, Gary Richardson, Rex Kieffer and Merle Messersmith.

Mayor Neisler noted that Robin Cawley had compiled the water and wastewater report. Mayor Neisler stated that the acid pump at the water plant is back in operation and running on automatic. He indicated that he had met with City engineer's regarding the construction of Well #7, which will be located near Well #4. Alderman Buhr asked if the City had researched an additional location for a well. Mayor Neisler stated that there has been discussion about that matter also.

Police Chief Tim Becker presented the police report. Chief Becker reported that the new Chevrolet Tahoe has been equipped and is now in service. Chief Becker indicated that he had received a quote for a LINK system to allow for enhanced communications with portable radios, at a cost of \$1,935.00. Chief Becker stated that part time officer Dalton Abrams-Meredith would begin his training this month. Becker informed the council that according to Public Act 099-352, each police agency in Illinois is required to have written procedures for handling an officer-involved death incident. He stated that he has provided a copy of procedures that would need to be reviewed and then adopted for the Athens Police Department Policies and Procedures manual. Becker indicated that the owner of property at 500 N. Main Street had been issued a citation and fined \$500.00. There were seven ordinance warnings for inoperable vehicles and thirty one citations issued.

Alderman Dowell asked if the City would be able to make DCEO business loans in the future. Mayor Neisler stated that the money is available to be used, but with stringent rules.

Mayor Neisler noted that Robin Cawley would be taking the water operator test again in March.

Mayor Neisler reported on the streets and alleys report. He stated that the Kubota tractor needs new rear tires. Alderman Canterbury asked about the supply of road salt and would it be enough to finish out the year. Mayor Neisler indicated that the City has a contract for 50 tons of salt and there should be enough to finish out the year.

Mayor Neisler reported that the contract the City has with Stone River for electric supply is about to expire and he would like for the council to give him the authority to negotiate and approve bids for those services. Alderman Dowell asked if this process would cost the City. Mayor Neisler stated that it would not.

Mayor Neisler indicated that the City is in need of the hiring of a part-time employee for spring and summer.

Mayor Neisler noted that the council would need to schedule about four budget meetings in March and April. Alderman Nichols suggested that the council set up the dates after the March council meeting.

Mayor Neisler reported that as of the January meeting he was authorized to enter into a contract with Stephen Sanderfield for contractual services as the wastewater operator. Neisler stated that he had stayed within the perimeters for the salary, and the City has a signed contract with Sanderfield for three visits per week at a cost of \$1,800.00 per month. Alderman Nichols asked if the contract had been submitted to the IEPA. Mayor Neisler stated that the contract has been submitted.

Alderman Buhr stated that he had asked Don Squires about the library needing a new flag. There was discussion on whose responsibility it is to replace the flag at the library. Alderman Bednarko indicated that the flag at the fire department is in need of replacing.

Alderman Nichols indicated that he had a call about the library needing to increase their surety bond. Mayor Neisler stated that he had not contacted the library about the audit recommendation.

Mayor Neisler stated that he had received a call from William Glass of First Mid State about the refunding of the bond on the water plant. He indicated that Glass has asked that he be put on the agenda for Monday night. Mayor Neisler reported that Glass would have an ordinance ready to be voted on, with an interest rate of approximately 2%.

Mayor Neisler indicated that Jason Bounds from Athens Football has requested to be on the agenda to discuss the lease of the football field.

Alderman Bednarko asked Mayor Neisler about addressing a letter that was sent to council members regarding the floodwaters and the operation of the City's wells. Bednarko stated that she feels the letter should be addressed. Mayor Neisler stated that the letter frustrated him because no decision had been made on the shutting down of the wells. Mayor Neisler stated that it was being said that the wells would need to be shut down because the water was close to being into the electrical components. Mayor Neisler indicated that he had spoken with Cawley about the conditions and that Cawley had told him that she was watching the situation and did not feel that the wells needed to be shut down. Cawley told the mayor that customers would have three days of water in the towers if everyone would conserve usage. Mayor Neisler stated that it then was all over town that the wells would be shut down.

Linda Wasilewski addressed the council concerning a mowing contract for the mowing of the West Cemetery. Wasilewski stated that the cemetery committee would like to place an ad accepting bids for the upcoming mowing season. Alderman Bednarko questioned whether the City could hire someone to mow the cemetery. Mayor Neisler stated that the City already has lots of mowing to take care of. Bednarko asked if the City would need to provide the equipment. Chief Becker stated that the City does have equipment that someone could use. Alderman Dowell asked if there would be a conflict of interest since the West Cemetery and the City of Athens are separate entities. Mayor Neisler stated that he would explore the options.

Rex Kieffer asked about the condition of the house at the corner of Polk and Washington Streets. Alderman Croft stated that he has mowed the grass on the property for the past four years.

Council left for conference room for executive session on personnel matters at 7:37 PM.

Council returned to meeting room to review bills at 8:50 PM.