

Athens City Council
Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 7, 2017

Those in attendance were Mayor Bob Dowell, Clerk Cindy McFarland, and Aldermen: Chris Basso, Larry Buhr, Ron Canterbury, Tom Croft Sr., Tom Herman, and Harry Nichols. Persons in the audience included Gary Richardson, Merle Messersmith, John Tobias, Ryne Crowe, Linda Wasilewski, James Oller, Robert Bluett, Karissa Carls, Derek Fritz, Michael Lockwood, and Treasurer Ryan Seifert.

Treasurer Ryan Seifert presented the treasurer's report, Ryne Crowe presented the water report, and Robert Bluett presented the sewer report. Ryne presented information on the water meter for the sports complex. The city may be losing money due to the poorly functioning water meter at the sports complex. Office Manager Karissa Carls explained that the meter works for a few months and then quits. The vote for the new meter will be on the agenda for Monday. The police report and streets/alleys report will be presented Monday. There was no cemetery meeting this month. Michael Lockwood was introduced. He is working for the city assisting Don Squires on streets and alleys.

First on the agenda was the street maintenance program and resolution to approve the remaining \$24,000 motor fuel funds. Barn Hollow was scheduled to be rocked this year but residents have contacted the mayor and said that they would rather this was not done due to the dust and the close proximity of the houses to the road. Other city streets in need will be done instead.

Mayor Dowell said that the resolution for electric municipal aggregation had been approved last month and thanked Alderman Butch Nichols for his standing in as Mayor Pro-tem last month.

Next, Mr. John Tobias stepped forth to speak about the High School food drive in support of the Athens Food Pantry which serves over 70 families in the Athens school district. The Leadership Committee is very excited about the food drive this year. It is the 20th year for the food drive and the goal is 10,000 cans. Last year the city donated \$2000 to the food drive. This year the city would like to donate the same amount to be funded from the gaming fund. This vote will be on the agenda for Monday. The Mayor thanked Mr. Tobias for all he does for the community.

Next was a discussion of the Fall Festival carnival armband purchase. Alderman Buhr said we know the number of children in need of the armbands and that \$800 would take care of the need. Approval for purchasing up to \$800 worth of armband tickets for food pantry distribution to be paid from the gaming fund will be on the agenda Monday.

The Mayor moved on to the next item on the agenda, the Polk Street/ACF entrance to the park, stating that several people living on Polk Street had contacted him with concerns about the traffic entering the park from Polk Street. The Mayor did some checking and found that the houses on Polk Street had been built prior to the rear entrance to the park. Officials from ACF have closed the gate and will make sure only game officials and board members use this entrance. A sign will be posted. ACF will also pay for the dumpster during their season, except for during the Fall Festival when the city will pay.

Next Mayor Dowell stated that a letter has been sent to the DCCA loan recipient stating that this account must be put in order. Office Manager Karissa Carls checked with some credit agencies to assist collecting money due to the city. Information was presented by Karissa on Credit Collection Partners, a company which would collect fees due to the city with no up-front or maintenance fees. Karissa also noted that the city now is able to accept electronic water bill payments. The Mayor thanked Karissa for doing a good job getting this electronic payment set up for us. Use of Credit Collection Partners will be on the agenda for vote on Monday.

Next the Mayor said that IPWMAN, which we now belong to, is holding their annual conference October 17 & 18 in Bloomington. The regular fee is \$450 but this fee has been waved. The Mayor would like Don, Tim and himself to attend to gather new information.

Mayor Dowell provided an update on the Fall Festival planning. Council received a packet of information on the car show and schedule of events. All is progressing well. Community sponsorships have paid for pageant awards and crowns, car show trophies, the two bands, trash removal, etc. All the city will be responsible for is the alcohol. The Mayor thanked our community for supporting the Fall Festival.

The Mayor gave an update on 504 West Jefferson. The house has been torn down. Ryne Crowe, Robbie Bluett, and the Mayor worked on the clean-up today. The Fire Department loaned the city the brush truck to keep the dust down. Someone has already contacted the Mayor about possibly purchasing the property, and another to possibly build a house. Mayor Dowell said everyone has really done a good job and he appreciated everyone's help.

Next was discussion on the city's donation to aid Hurricane Harvey recovery. The mayor has spoken to the Red Cross and they would like to take the money and make purchases in the disaster area to help stimulate the economy.

Under Old Business, there was discussion of the upcoming city garage sales on Sept. 15 & 16, and document shredding and recycling dumpsters available at the park on Sept. 16. The Mayor said that while speaking to Affordable Shred, he asked what the monthly fee would be for their service. Affordable Shred would be \$29 with no contract needed, while the city is currently paying COPS \$40 per month. Changing to Affordable Shred would save the city money each month. The Mayor would like add this to the agenda for vote on Monday.

Another topic under old business is the fox problem. Mayor Dowell presented information from the Wildlife Hotline. The Mayor has also spoken to animal control, DNR and other wildlife organizations. Linda Wasilewski also offered information on the topic.

There was no New Business.

Public comments: Linda Wasilewski asked about flu shots and Mayor Dowell said that flu shots would be available at City Hall on September 12th. There was also discussion about dust caused by vehicular traffic, and safety problems caused by people parking on both sides of city streets.

Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman Croft, to enter into executive session at 8:01pm. All ayes. Motion passed.

Council left to the conference room and returned at 8:30pm to return to regular session. Council reviewed the bills and ended the meeting at 8:34.

Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman Croft, to adjourn the meeting. All ayes. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.