

Athens City Council
Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 8, 2018

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 Larry Buhr was absent. Persons in the audience included Linda Wasilewski, Treasurer Ryan Seifert, Norm Flowers, Gary Richardson, Merle Messersmith, Rex Kieffer, Judi Harlan, Jeffrey Moss, Robert Bluett, Karissa Carls, Nicole McCormick, and Chief Tim Becker.

Mayor Dowell opened the meeting and noted that we now have a podium for all our speakers. Chief Tim Becker presented the Police Report and noted that Officer Dalton Abrams-Meredith completed Breath Alcohol Testing Machine training and certification. Treasurer Ryan Seifert stepped forward and presented the treasurer's report. The Mayor went over the Streets & Alleys Report and said that the Water Report would be presented Monday. Robbie Bluett stepped up and presented the Wastewater Report and stated that the new pump had arrived from Connor Company and had been installed. The Mayor pointed out that Robbie was wearing the new city uniforms and they look very nice. Robbie went on to say that the new ORP meter is now being used to gather data and improve phosphorous levels. Also, the annual fiscal report and the semi-annual sludge report have both been prepared and submitted to the EPA. Alderman Canterbury said that the Cemetery Board did not meet but that the forester would be coming to look at the trees, and mowing bids will be accepted from the first week of March to the third week. Mayor Dowell then stated that Office Manager Karissa Carls will be presenting the Office Manager Report monthly. Often, Karissa updates us later in the meeting but moving forward, she will be presenting her information with all the other monthly reports. Karissa took the podium and went on to explain that she had spoken to Representative Raymond LaHood's office and his representatives will be here at City Hall on Tuesday, February 27th, from 10:30am until noon to answer any questions from the public. Karissa also presented information she had gathered from CUSI about their secure E-bill module which would ensure rapid delivery of city utility bills while saving the city money on costly bill production. If every customer signed up for E-billing, the potential savings to the city could be over \$9000 annually. The vote to add CUSI E-billing to the city system will be on the agenda for Monday. The Mayor thanked Karissa and said that he appreciates all her hard work to find substantial savings for our city.

First on the agenda was the Menard County 911 bill in the amount of \$1000. Chief Becker said that we were not made aware of this new fee and there is already a 911 charge on each person's phone bill. If we do not pay, 911 calls will still be dispatched. The vote to approve or not, or to table, payment of the bill will be on the agenda for Monday.

Next on the agenda was the chlorine system for the water plant. Mayor Dowell said that the current system reads that it is empty when it is actually at 30%. Ryne is gathering information and pricing and will present Monday.

Exploring the possibility of selling the bulk water building but keeping bulk water there was next on the agenda. The Mayor and the council discussed selling the building to the Fire Department. There would probably be costs associated such as attorney fees and appraisal. Alderman Canterbury said that he would rather put the money into cleaning up the building and keeping it. Alderman Herman agreed referencing back to safety concerns Alderman Basso has shared previously. Alderman Nichols said that if we did sell it, it should be put up for bid. The Mayor

summarized that he thinks it sounds like the council would like to keep the building and make it nicer and safer.

The Mayor went on to tell about his meeting with Brent Freesmeyer about our streets. Mayor Dowell said that we should get our bids in sooner for road work and that he would like the county road district to get more involved in bidding our streets in order to keep money within the county.

Next on the agenda was the City & Fire Department meeting/inspection with Rich Miller from the National Weather Service to make Athens a Nationally Certified Storm Ready City. We submitted our application packet about three months ago. There is no charge for this application. Working with Chief Crowe and EMS Chief Mike Burg, the inspections were done and everything looks promising and we should know something by the March or April meeting.

Under Old Business, the Mayor gave an update on problem properties. The property owner on Jefferson is working on his issues. We had another court appearance on January 25 about the Meyer case. The attorney asked the judge to add costs and legal fees incurred by the city through December. The next hearing date is February 28 and hopefully the judge will state what is owed to the city.

Under New Business Mayor Dowell gave an update on the 2018 Fall Festival stating that the bands have been booked. New City Road has been booked for September 28, Off the Wall has been booked for September 29, and the wrestling event will be back on the 29th. The Mayor said that he saw three mini horses recently while visiting at the hospital. He spoke to their owner and found that they are Mini Hoof Horse Therapy out of Taylorville. The Mayor asked if they would like to be part of our fall festival so that is a possibility.

Next under new business, the Mayor said that the Lions Club has asked if the city would like to donate money for the Easter Egg hunt. This will be on the agenda for Monday.

Next the Mayor asked the council and attendees if there were any questions. There was some discussion about the new roller. The Mayor asked if there were any public comments and there were none.

This ended the agenda for the evening. The Mayor thanked everyone and asked the council to review the bills.

Motion made by Alderman Canterbury, seconded by Alderman Herman, to adjourn at 8:08pm. Motion passed unanimously.