

City of Athens
Regular Meeting
May 9, 2016

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

All stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Clerk Debra Richardson called roll. Present were Aldermen: Anita Bednarko, Larry Buhr, Ron Canterbury, Tom Croft Sr., Bobbie Dowell and Harry Nichols. Also in attendance were Treasurer Darin Bowman, Brent Freesmeyer with Klingner & Associates, Gary Richardson, Merle Messersmith, Rex Kieffer and Linda Wasilewski.

Mayor Neisler welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman Dowell, to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2016 Regular meeting. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Treasurer Darin Bowman presented the treasurers' report stating that there was nothing out of the ordinary to report. He reported that the balance of the video gaming fund is at \$43,943.76. There were no payments for DCEO loan balances, with Bryant owing approximately \$15,000.00. Bowman indicated that a bond payment of \$20,000.00 is due in May. Mayor Neisler reported that the amount is due to Chase for an interest payment only.

Motion made by Alderman Nichols, seconded by Alderman Canterbury, to approve the police, treasurers', water and wastewater and streets and alleys reports. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Motion made by Alderman Dowell, seconded by Alderman Bednarko, to authorize the payment of the bills. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

City engineer Brent Freesmeyer addressed the council. Freesmeyer reported that Klingner had presented the council with an agreement for services regarding the Ethell Road water main extension. Services would include plans, specifications, IEPA permits, construction costs, water modeling, and Menard County highway crossing permit and coordination with road commissioner and utility companies. The agreement does not include obtaining easements for the project. Alderman Nichols asked the length of the proposed water main extension. Freesmeyer stated that the length is about 2 miles and would be available to five to seven properties. This would be a 6-inch water main line and cost approximately \$12.00 per foot to contract out the job. Freesmeyer noted that if the City did the work the cost would be around \$4.00 per foot. Freesmeyer indicated that the City had received a letter from IEPA concerning water violations issued to the City of Athens in 2014. He reported that Dr. Vern Snoeyink had made a recommendation that the City convert to a CO₂ system treatment at the water plant. Freesmeyer stated that the CO₂ system lowers alkalinity and is less likely to cause pitting of copper pipes. He noted that City personnel are planning to visit a water plant in Macomb that uses the CO₂ system. Freesmeyer estimated that a CO₂ system for the Athens Water Plant would cost \$200,000.00 and suggested that the City consider an IEPA loan for 20 years with an interest rate of 1.8%. He recommended that the council think about submitting two projects for a loan. Freesmeyer indicated that the original plan for Well #7 included a well house and since Well #3 has been abandoned they could use the housing and controls, which would reduce that costs by using a setup like Well #5. The cost could be cut in half to about \$225,000.00. He stated that the electrical components would need to be checked, but it should be able to be used. Freesmeyer reported that the bid proposal for the streets oiling has been signed and the bid letting would be done soon, with oiling and chipping done in June or July.

Mayor Neisler asked the council if they would like to move forward with the Ethell Road water main extension. Alderman Buhr stated that he did not see how the City could justify the expense for six to seven additional water customers and he feels that the City does not have the

manpower to do the job. Mayor stated that it would cost around \$100,000.00 to contract the project. Alderman Bednarko asked if the City is sure that all the property owners are interested in tapping on. Alderman Dowell asked if more than one person had agreed to tap one. Alderman Nichols stated that he did not agree with the cost estimated of \$3.00 to \$4.00 dollars per foot for City employees to do the job. Nichols noted that there would be additional cost for fittings and fire hydrants. Nichols asked if City employees would have the time to do the job. Mayor stated that he thought that they could, but that they may need to hire an additional person. Nichols stated that the tap fees could be increased, but there would not be a lot of income from 6 or 7 new customers. Mayor Neisler stated that there would not be a lot of income, but that there could be growth in the future. Alderman Bednarko indicated that she does not agree with even spending \$5,500.00 for engineering services because there will not be enough customers to cover the project costs and it would take a lot of manpower to do the job. Alderman Croft stated that with the problems with the water now the council should work towards making the water drinkable. Bednarko indicated that she agreed.

Motion made by Alderman Bednarko, seconded by Alderman Buhr, to not move forward with the Ethell Road water main extension. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Mayor Neisler asked that the council make a decision on the addition of a CO2 system at the water plant. He stated that they are going to tour a CO2 plant in Macomb later this week. Alderman Nichols asked who would be going to Macomb to tour the CO2 plant. Mayor Neisler indicated that himself, Robin Cawley and Bruce Smith would be going to Macomb. Nichols asked if operator Mike McCarthy would be going. Mayor Neisler stated that he probably would not be available to go since he has a full time job. Alderman Bednarko asked who Bruce Smith is. Mayor Neisler indicated that he was not sure what his expertise is, but Smith has assisted with some things at the water plant. Mayor stated that Smith has helped with three different areas of repair. Bednarko asked where Smith is from. Mayor Neisler indicated that he had no idea, but he has gotten the job done. Alderman Nichols asked if he is with Klingner & Associates. Mayor stated that he is not. Alderman Nichols asked how Smith gets paid. Mayor Neisler indicated that he is paid by contract. Alderman Buhr asked if the council should move forward with the CO2 system study.

Motion made by Alderman Dowell, seconded by Alderman Nichols, to authorize a study of the CO2 system for the water plant. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Mayor Neisler asked for any updates on the Michael Meyers property at 500 N. Main Street. Alderman Dowell reported that he has spoken with Meyers and he has been paying \$50.00 per month on his fine. Dowell stated that he told Meyers that the council is ready to move forward with daily fines if there is not marked improvement soon. Meyers told Dowell that he has not had any one to help him with the project. Alderman Nichols stated that there should be daily fines. Alderman Bednarko indicated that she agreed with Nichols. Alderman Canterbury asked if there has been documentation with these issues, since he does not want to see this happen again. Dowell stated that Meyers has moved things around and has plans to use the material on the property and he has the guttering. Merle Messersmith stated that Meyers has not done much. Dowell stated that Meyers has said that he has plans to move there soon. Nichols stated that half of the maximum fine would be \$250.00.

Motion made by Alderman Nichols, seconded by Alderman Bednarko, to authorize the police department to access daily fines for Michael Meyers, at the rate of one half of the maximum allowed in the ordinance beginning May 10, 2016. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Alderman Croft suggested that the Athens police begin patrolling the City and compiling a list of problem properties, issue warnings and issuing fines to those not in compliance.

Motion made by Alderman Croft, seconded by Alderman Bednarko, to authorize the Athens police to immediately begin patrolling the City and compiling a list of problem properties, giving warnings and implementing fines after 30 days of non-compliance. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Motion made by Alderman Dowell, seconded by Alderman Canterbury, to authorize the purchase of a "Welcome to Athens" sign, to be paid from the video gaming fund at a cost of \$1,350.00. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Mayor Neisler indicated that he is recommending that the council authorize a 2.5 percent pay increase for City employees. Bednarko asked when the raise would take effect. Neisler stated that the raise would take effect with the passing of the budget and then be retroactive for May 1, 2016. Buhr asked if part-time employees would be included for the raise. Neisler stated that they would.

Motion made by Alderman Nichols, seconded by Alderman Buhr, to authorize a pay increase for all City employees at a rate of 2.5 percent. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Mayor Neisler recommended the promotion of Derrick Fritz to Sergeant and a pay increase to \$18.52 per hour and a merit pay increase for James Robinson to \$17.00 per hour. Buhr asked why the police department needed a sergeant for three officers. Dowell stated that there are eleven police officers on the police roster, with three full time officers. He indicated that Fritz takes calls when Chief Becker is not available and helped put together the police budget. Dowell stated that Fritz does a lot of extra work and takes care of most ordinance violations.

Motion made by Alderman Dowell, seconded by Alderman Nichols, to authorize a promotion to Sergeant for Officer Derrick Fritz and pay increase to \$18.52 per hour and \$17.00 per hour for Officer James Robinson. Both amounts include the 2.5 percent for City employees. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Mayor Neisler asked that the council approve placing the 2016 - 2017 budget on review for the next thirty days. Mayor stated that there would not be a \$250,000.00 bond payment for this year, but it would be due again in 2018. Alderman Buhr stated that in the budget there is a line item for the library for \$9,100.00 to be donated by the City. Buhr indicated that because of the expenses the City has coming up he feels that the City should not be obligated to make a donation this year.

Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman Canterbury, to remove line item 320 from the library budget in the amount of \$9,100.00. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Motion made by Alderman Dowell, seconded by Alderman Canterbury, to authorize the 2016 - 2017 budget is placed on review for thirty days. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Croft, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.

Mayor Neisler reported that he had received an estimate of \$2,000.00 for the treating of the ash trees in the City. Alderman Nichols asked if all the trees needed to be treated. Croft stated that even if the trees are treated it does not mean that the trees would not die. There were questions on the map of trees that were presented to the council.

Alderman Dowell reported that he would be meeting with a representative from Ameren about adding additional streetlights in the Timberbrook subdivision.

Alderman Bednarko asked what was decided about allowing horses on the property at the west end of Little Street. Mayor Neisler stated that he had not looked into that. Bednarko asked

about addressing the issue of excessive noise from the bands at local establishments. There was discussion on using decibels to monitor noise in the City.

Linda Wasilewski questioned the council about dangerous playground equipment at the park. She stated that children are going to get hurt if something is not done. Buhr suggested that the City remove the dangerous equipment immediately. Mayor Neisler indicated that he would have Don Squires take a look at the situation. Wasilewski asked how many chickens are allowed on a property in the City. It was stated that four are allowed.

Motion made by Alderman Buhr, seconded by Alderman Dowell, to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 PM. Ayes: Bednarko, Buhr, Canterbury, Dowell and Nichols. Motion passed.